

OPINION 8
ANATOMY OF A
HEAT SHIELD

WORLD 12
TRUMP LAUNCHES PLAN
TO END GOVT SHUTDOWN

SPORT 15
ARSENAL BEAT CHELSEA
2-0 IN LONDON DERBY

LUCKNOW, MONDAY JANUARY 21, 2019; PAGES 16 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



**DON'T FORCE
YOUR KIDS:
SOHA ALI KHAN
14 VIVACITY**

K'taka Cong MLA in hospital after brawl

Chest pain, says Cong, showcauses 4 MLAs for skipping CLP meet

KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU

As its attempts to keep its flock together, the Congress on Sunday sent showcause notices to four of its MLAs who skipped the legislature party meeting on Friday even as a Congress MLA Anand Singh was hospitalised after he and JN Ganesh, both from Bellary district, had a heated argument and came to blows on late Saturday night at the resort where the party MLAs are herded together.

In its notices, the party sought to know why action should not be taken against them under the anti-defection law for not attending the Friday's legislature party meeting that was a show of strength against BJP's alleged bid to dislodge the ruling coalition.

The MLAs who skipped the meetings are: Ramesh Jarkiholi, who was dropped as Minister in the recent Cabinet rejig, B Nagendra, Umesh Jadhav and Mahesh Kumatahalli, the Congress sources said.

Meanwhile, Anand was hospitalised after he was allegedly hit on the head with a bottle by JN Ganesh, another MLA from Kampli in Bellary district. The brawl took place at the resort on the outskirts of Bengaluru where they were housed fearing 'poaching' after the CLP meeting on Friday.

The Congress denied the reports but many leaders beelined to hospital to visit Anand, who is a mining baron from



- ◆ Congress sought to know why action should not be taken against them under the anti-defection law for not attending the Friday's legislature party meeting that was a show of strength against BJP's alleged bid to dislodge the ruling coalition
- ◆ The MLAs who skipped the meetings are: Ramesh Jarkiholi, who was dropped as Minister in the recent Cabinet rejig, B Nagendra, Umesh Jadhav and Mahesh Kumatahalli
- ◆ Anand Singh was hospitalised after he was allegedly hit on the head with a bottle by JN Ganesh, another MLA from Kampli
- ◆ The brawl took place at the resort on the outskirts of Bengaluru where they were housed fearing 'poaching' after the CLP meeting on Friday

Bellary district. He was also arrested in the illegal mining related cases.

A Minister Zameer Ahammed Khan confirmed that there was a skirmish between three friends and Anand had a minor injury to his eye.

"I have visited Anand Singh at the hospital. He is fine and will be discharged soon. It

was a friendly fight between three friends and he (Anand) had a minor injury."

Congress strongman DK Shivakumar and his MP brother DK Suresh denied any such fight had taken place at the resort and said he (Anand) was hospitalised due to chest pain. DK Suresh visited Anand at the hospital.

The two reportedly had an

argument over allegation that Ganesh was trying to defect to the BJP, reports said. However, senior Congress leaders denied the reports.

"I don't know about the fight. Anand is admitted in hospital due to chest pain. There are no injuries or anything. His parents are here at the hospital. Other issues are just speculation," Suresh said.

BJP TWEET

What more proof do we need to tell all is not well within Congress. Congress MLAs in Eagleton Resort indulged in physical fight & 1 MLA is admitted. How long will Congress be in denial mode & blame BJP for all their differences? When political party is lame, it loves to blame

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister G Parameshwara also downplayed reports of adverse events at the resort. "When one of our colleagues isn't well, if it's true, naturally somebody would've gone to see him. I don't know who the person is."

Another senior Congress leader and chairman of the coordination committee Siddaramaiah said he heard about the brawl but yet to get full information about the incident. He said, "I have heard about the news but yet to confirm it. I am away from Bengaluru. I will get the full information and comment on it."

In view of the embarrassing incident, Karnataka Congress-in-charge Venugopal is rushing to Bengaluru to douse the fire.

The jittery Congress fearing poaching by the BJP has moved all its 74 MLAs to

Eagleton Resort and the infighting has caused a major damage to the efforts of the party to keep its flock together.

The Opposition BJP was quick to react and wanted a criminal case filed against the MLA who has assaulted Anand.

The BJP tweeted, "What more proof do we need to tell all is not well within the Congress. Congress MLAs in Eagleton Resort indulged in physical fight & 1 MLA is admitted. How long will Congress be in denial mode & blame BJP for all their differences? When political party is lame, it loves to blame."

Another tweet read, "It's unfortunate that @KPCCPresident was unable to stop the fight in Eagleton resort. We hope Anand Singh is being treated & we pray for his speedy recovery. Unfortunately @dineshgrao can't even blame BJP now, MLAs were locked up under his watch at Eagleton. Whats your excuse now?"

Senior BJP leader and MLA R Ashok slammed the incident and called it shameful. He said, "Congress party is known for goondaism and it's shameful to the entire polity."

Another BJP leader and spokesperson S Prakash described the incident as Congress culture and said, "The incident has made political class bow down their heads in shame. They should explain to the people of the State. Police should file a case."

Warm welcome awaits NRI guests at Kashi

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas begins today



Sand art depicting 'Atithi Devo Bhava' ahead of the PBD event in Varanasi. Pioneer

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/VARANASI

The much-awaited three-day Pravasi Bharatiya Divas will start on Monday in Varanasi when Indian diaspora will be exposed to Indian tradition and rich culture. The event will take off with Ganga aarti and will end with the visit of delegates to Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj.

Around 2000 delegates from different countries are expected to take part in this three-day meet. Some of the delegates saw Ganga aarti on Sunday evening. "We have made all arrangements for foreign delegate to watch the Ganga aarti. Some may see it on ghats while others can watch it from cruise and bajra (big boat)," said a senior official on Sunday.

In all these days, the Ganga aarti will be performed on seven ghats, including Dashashwamedh.

The three-day event will be formally inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 22 while President Ram Nath Kovind will be the chief guest on the closing function on January 23. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will also hold talks with Mauritius Prime Minister Pravid Jugnauth who will be the chief guest on the opening ceremony on January 22.

The opening of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas will also be graced by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Union ministers Rajvardhan Singh Rathore along with MP

Continued on Page 4

BJP leader attacked

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A leader of the city unit of BJP was allegedly attacked on Sunday night by a group of youths fighting on road in Vishesh Khand when the former intervened to counsel them to bury the hatchet.

Manish Mishra of Vishesh Khand 4 in Vibhuti Khand police station area was returning home when he spotted two groups of youths having locked their horns and beating one another. Manish intended to end the fight, stepped in and asked them to stop. He later tried to calm down youths who were exchanging blows.

This irked some youths and they attacked him while threatening him a befitting lesson for the temerity. There were reports that the miscreants opened fire on the victim and fled when other commuters started flocking to the scene.

Initially, police claimed that Manish (50) suffered injuries in a road mishap. Later, it corrected its version saying the youths pushed down Manish causing him to suffer injuries. Manish is admitted to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital and the police were in talk with doctors to ascertain if Manish suffered any firearm injuries.

Stalin clears air on not echoing 'Rahul for PM' at TMC rally

Says DMK wants Rahul as PM but Opp parties will take a call later

PNS ■ CHENNAI

A day after attending Mamata Banerjee's show of strength in Kolkata, DMK president MK Stalin has again backed Congress president Rahul Gandhi as his party choice for next Prime Minister.

Reacting to criticism about his silence in the Kolkata rally over the PM's choice of the Opposition, Stalin rubbished speculation of a re-think on his part and said he did not repeat his endorsement of Rahul Gandhi in Kolkata "as the situation is very different in West Bengal".

Claiming that the people of Tamil Nadu want Rahul Gandhi as Prime Minister, Stalin, as per a report by the news agency ANI said, "I had said this about Rahul Gandhi in Chennai, what was wrong in it? It is the wish and aspiration of the people in Tamil Nadu. But in West Bengal, they have



decided to finalise it after the election. It is their wish."

The DMK chief said he proposed Rahul Gandhi's name at his party-held event here whereas the Kolkata rally saw the convergence of several Opposition parties who had decided to pick the PM nominee post Lok Sabha election in keeping with the unique political scenarios in their respective States.

"It was a DMK-held event where we had every right and we proposed Rahul Gandhi since people of Tamil Nadu expected and what is wrong in

it," asked Stalin addressing a function. Affirming that Rahul would be the next Prime Minister, Stalin said, "Wait and see if it happens or not," and added that no leader at the Opposition rally had questioned him for backing the Congress chief for the top post.

Taking a potshot at Stalin, the BJP said the fact that Stalin could not reiterate his "Congress chief Rahul Gandhi for Prime Minister pitch" in the Opposition rally at Kolkata showed that he has diverged from his avowed stand.

Continued on Page 4

Kumbh to generate ₹1.2L crore revenue: CII

PTI ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The mega Kumbh Mela, which began on January 15 and will continue till March 4, is expected to generate a revenue of ₹1.2 lakh crore for Uttar Pradesh, says apex industry body Confederation of Indian Industry.

Although the Kumbh Mela is spiritual and religious in nature, the economic activities associated with it generate employment for over six lakh workers across various sectors, CII said in a report.

The Uttar Pradesh government has allocated ₹4,200 crore for the 50-day Kumbh Mela this time, which is over thrice the budget of the Maha Kumbh in 2013, making the mega pilgrimage perhaps the costliest ever.

The hospitality sector aims at employing 2,50,000 people, airlines and airports around 1,50,000 and tour operators around 45,000. The employment numbers in eco-tourism and medical tourism are being estimated at 85,000, says a CII study.

Continued on Page 4

BJP road map for Pandits' rehab, return to Valley ready: Madhav

Says if situation gets conducive, will implement it

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Ahead of launching party's Lok Sabha campaign, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has once again raised the issue of 'safe' return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits in Kashmir valley.

Interacting with the media-persons here at party headquarters in Jammu on Sunday, BJP national general secretary Ram Madhav said, "The BJP has prepared a road map for the community's return and rehabilitation and it will be implemented only when the situation in the Valley turns conducive".

"When we formed an alliance Government in the State, we had a road map for them. We had tried to set up townships for Kashmiri Pandits at five or six places in the Valley and it goes to the credit of the Mufti Mohammad Sayeed Government that those places were also identified," he said.

He said further progress in the matter was derailed main-



BJP national general secretary Ram Madhav and party's State president Ravinder Raina address a Press conference in Jammu on Sunday. PTI

ly because of the prevailing security situation in the Valley. "Even today, it does not seem that they will be able to live in peace there," Madhav said.

"However, we are committed to safeguard their interests and political rights," he said, adding that the next step would be taken after discussions with the Kashmiri Pandit leadership.

The BJP had earlier attempted to start the process as it had accorded top priority to the issue of their return in its election manifesto of 2014.

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh had even directed then Chief Minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed to initiate process to bring back Pandits for settlement in "composite townships".

Separatists and mainstream political parties in Kashmir, including Congress, had opposed the move.

The BJP's former alliance partner PDP had also explained that they won't allow Israel-like ghettos for Pandits.

Continued on Page 4

Kulhads to make comeback at rly stations after 15 yrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Introduced first by then Railway Minister Lalu Prasad, kulhads are all set to make a comeback after 15 years.

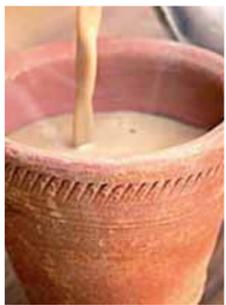
Railway Minister Piyush Goyal has instructed caterers at Varanasi and Rae Bareilly railway stations to use terracotta made kulhads cups and plates. The proposal had come in the chairman of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) who had written a letter to Goyal, suggesting that these two stations be used to generate employment for potters around the area.

The move will not only give passengers a refreshing experience but also provide a huge market for local potters who are struggling to make

ends meet. The circular has been issued by the board to the chief commercial managers of Northern Railway and the North Eastern Railway.

"Zonal railways and the IRCTC are advised to take necessary action to ensure use of locally produced, environmentally savvy terracotta products like 'kulhads', glasses and plates for serving items to passengers through all static units at Varanasi and Rae Bareilly railway stations with immediate effect so that local terracotta product manufacturers could easily market their products," the circular stated.

"We have been giving potters electric wheels which have increased their productivity from making 100 cups to around 600 cups a day. It was important to give them a market to sell their wares and gen-



erate income. With the railways agreeing to our proposal, lakhs of potters have now got a ready-made market," KVIC chairman VK Saxena said.

work eventually," he said, adding that he is expecting the daily production of pottery to reach 2.5 lakh to meet the demands of these two stations. Under the Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana, the Government has been distributing electric wheels to potters to increase their productivity.

In Varanasi, Prime Minister's parliamentary constituency, around 300 such wheels have been distributed with 1,000 more in the pipeline. In Rae Bareilly, the parliamentary constituency of UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, 100 have been distributed with 700 more to be given out.

"Overall, the KVIC will distribute around 6,000 electric wheels across the country this year, Saxena said. In 2004, Lalu had introduced 'kulhads'

to boost the dying pottery industry and also give passengers a taste of eco-friendly cups. He had made it clear that hot beverages should be served only in 'kulhads'. Though no specific allocation was made for 'kulhads' in the Rail Budget, railway officials said it was included in the target of sundry other earnings, placed at ₹1,072 crore.

However, efforts of the Railways did not get much traction from both passengers and vendors who complained about the poor quality of earthen cups. At most stations, paper and plastic cups are used to serve beverages. But with the present Government battling for the green and eco-friendly 'Made in India' produce, kulhads could have a longer innings this time, the officials said.

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Thirteen persons, including nine solvers, were nabbed in Lucknow and Kanpur for rigging the judicial services (UP Civil Court Staff Centralised Recruitment 2018-19, Group D) exam at different centres on Sunday.

In Lucknow, different teams raided exam centres in Aminabad, Madaion, Thakurganj and Hazratganj and nabbed nine solvers and an examinee on Sunday.

A solver was arrested for appearing in the exam in place of an examinee at Aminabad Inter College. A police team raided the college on a tip-off on Sunday morning and nabbed the solver, identified as Amit Kumar of Gaya district of Bihar. He was taking the exam in place of Amit Kumar Sagar

of Mathura. The police also arrested Amit Kumar Sagar with the help of Mathura police.

In a similar drive, the STF teams conducted raids at Queen's AS Inter College, Lalbagh, Bal Nikunj Inter College in Madaion, Exon Montessori Girls' Degree College, Rajajipuram and nabbed eight persons, including examinees.

Those arrested were identified as Diwakar Kumar Singh of Patna, Pushpak Kumar of Vaishali, Avinash Kumar of Nalanda, Vinit and Suchit, both of Moradabad, Ankit Kumar of Patna, Praveen Kumar Singh of Allahabad and Vikas Kumar aka Vicky of Mungher. Their aide, identified as Chandrakant of Amroha, managed to escape.

It surfaced that Diwakar

Kumar is the gang leader and worked as a solver. His aides, Pushpak Kumar, Avneesh Kumar, Vikas Kumar aka Vicky and Ankit Kumar, work as solvers for an exam while Suchit used to work as middlemen for the gang. The arrested youths, identified as Praveen Kumar Singh and Vinit, were the examinees.

It came to light that Avinash Kumar was taking the exam in place of Vinit at Bal Nikunj Inter College in Madaion, Vikas Kumar aka Vicky in place of Chandrakant at Exon Montessori Girls' Degree College in Rajajipuram and Ankit Kumar was taking the exam in place of Praveen Kumar Singh.

The raid was conducted by three teams and the cops recovered seven mobile sets.

Continued on Page 4

Yogi govt to hold next Cabinet meeting in Kumbh tent city

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yogi Adityanath government is all set to create a record by holding its next Cabinet meeting at the tent city in Kumbh Mela Area in Prayagraj. The meeting is likely to be held on January 29. All Cabinet ministers have been asked to attend the meeting.

"First, the ministers will take a holy dip at the Sangam and then take part in the Cabinet meeting in the Kumbh City," Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya said.

He said that several important decisions would be taken in the meeting and probably it would be the first time that the Cabinet meeting would be held out of Lucknow and particularly in the Kumbh Mela Area.

The Yogi government generally holds Cabinet meetings on Tuesdays, barring some exceptions when it was held on other days like this week when the Cabinet met on Friday to approve 10 per cent reservation

A political gimmick, says UP Congress

Lucknow (PNS): Uttar Pradesh Congress has questioned the wisdom of holding Cabinet meeting at Allahabad (now Prayagraj) during the ongoing Kumbh. It said there was no justification for holding the Cabinet meeting at Prayagraj and the move was only a political gimmick to divert the attention of the people from the government's failures and mislead religious leaders and the common man.

UP Congress general secretary Omkar Nath Singh said here on Sunday that holding the Cabinet meeting at the tent city in Kumbh Mela Area at Prayagraj was an extravaganza, wasteful expenditure of the tax payers' money and an

unnecessary burden on the state exchequer. Singh said the presence of a large number of VIPs in the Kumbh Mela Area could create serious trouble and inconvenience to the pilgrims.

He said former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee during the 2001 Kumbh had declined to visit Prayagraj as it would have caused inconvenience to the pilgrims and forced the mela administration to focus its entire attention on the VVIPs' visit rather than looking after the well-being of pilgrims.

"The Yogi Adityanath government has paid scant regard to the precedent set by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari

Vajpayee and a large number of VIPs, including Union ministers, have already visited the Kumbh Mela," Singh said.

The state government has tried to downplay the VVIP visit, saying that the ministers visited the Kumbh Mela in personal capacity as pilgrims.

The UP Congress general secretary said as per the established convention, it was the duty of the state government to provide all facilities and make adequate arrangements for the millions of pilgrims visiting the holy city during Ardh Kumbh. He said the efforts of the state government had always been to ensure the safety of pilgrims at Prayagraj and their safe return to their native place.

Chief Minister's busy schedule at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas programmes in Varanasi.

The Cabinet meeting at Prayagraj would be important one as several important policy decisions would be taken by the state government.

BJP MLA apologises for remarks on Mayawati

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After triggering a political storm with her derogatory remark against Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati, Bharatiya Janata Party lawmaker Sadhana Singh tendered an unconditional apology, saying she did not intend to hurt anyone.

However, BSP local leaders lodged a complaint against the BJP MLA from Mughalsarai in this regard. Sadhana Singh had on Saturday accused Mayawati of compromising her dignity for power.

"This statement is against women and entire Dalit community. Sadhana Singh, who belongs to upper caste, has willfully used those words against the BSP chief and a case should be filed against her," BSP chief zonal head (Varanasi) Ram Chander Gautam said in his police complaint.

As her comment boomeranged into a political issue, Sadhana Singh issued a written unconditional apology, saying she did not intend to hurt anyone and if her words had hurt the sentiments of a section of society, she was really sorry.

Addressing a rally in Chandauli on Saturday, Sadhana had said: "I don't think the former CM of UP is a woman or a man. She does not understand the concept of dignity. Draupadi was a victim of sexual misconduct. She vowed to take revenge. She was a self-respecting woman. Look at this woman, everything was looted from her, but despite that, she sold all her dignity to get power."

Pankaj Singh, son of Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and BJP MLA from Noida, was also present at the event.

BSP-SP alliance a project to make money: BJP MLA

Lucknow (PNS): Surendra Singh, the Bharatiya Janata Party's controversial MLA from Bairia assembly seat in Ballia, hit out at the Bahujan Samaj Party-Samajwadi Party alliance, alleging that the new gathbandan was a money-spinning project.

"After the BSP's defeat in 2014 and again in 2017 in UP assembly polls, BSP was desperate to earn money by selling Lok Sabha tickets with the help of SP," he told media persons on Sunday.

The BJP MLA said everyone knew that the fate of the BSP and the SP would be the same, but the alliance would give an opportunity to BSP chief to earn some money by selling the tickets.

The BJP MLA alleged that Mayawati was responsible for instigating Dalits to lodge fake cases against non-Dalits under Prevention of Atrocities Against SC, ST Act even when people of other backward castes were also targeted. Surendra Singh is known for his controversial statements in the past like advising Hindu families to have at least five children to counter the Muslims and to make the country a Hindu nation.

Widespread condemnation

Lucknow (PNS): Opposition parties and even a Bharatiya Janata Party ally have condemned the derogatory statement of ruling party MLA Sadhana Singh against Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati.

Republican Party of India leader and Union Minister Ram Das Athawale took a serious note of the BJP MLA's derogatory remark against Mayawati. "Our party is with BJP but we don't agree with disrespectful remarks against Mayawati. She is a strong lady of our Dalit community and a good administrator. I would have definitely taken action if it was someone from our party," Athawale said here on Sunday. "Action should be taken against such leaders to prevent recurrence of such incidents in future" he said.

Appalled by the statement, BSP leader Satish Chandra Mishra slammed BJP MLA Sadhana Singh as "mentally ill". "This shows the BJP's level, and their disappointment and frustra-

tion with the BSP-SP alliance. They do not have strength to win even a single seat in UP. The level of language shows their mental illness. Such people should be admitted to mental hospital in Agra or Bareilly. They have lost their mental balance in fear of losing the election in UP," he said.

BSP's foe-turned-ally, Samajwadi Party, also condemned the statement. "The kind of words used for Mayawati by BJP's woman MLA from Mughalsarai is highly objectionable. I condemn the statement. The BJP has become completely bankrupt when it comes to morals. They are just frustrated. The statement is an insult to the women of the country," SP chief Akhilesh Yadav said. UP Congress president Raj Babbar also condemned the statement of the BJP MLA saying "there can never be any place for such language in public life". The National Commission for Women has taken suo motu cognisance of the objectionable statement and will issue a notice.

Kumbh: 2nd auspicious bathing today

Allahabad (PNS/agencies): Sangam — the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati — will bask under the full moon on Monday on the occasion of Paush Purnima, which will mark the second auspicious snan (bathing) at Kumbh. A day before the second auspicious bathing day, all roads led virtually to the "Sangam as devotees from across the country thronged the city. Paush Purnima also marks the beginning of Kalpwas, the period of austerity.

An estimated 20 lakh devotees are expected to bathe in the holy river on Monday. The devotees had taken the first dip in this year's Kumbh on Makar Sankranti.

"Paush Purnima is a significant day for Hindus and falls during full moon in the month of Paush according to the Hindu calendar. On this day, devotees from different parts of the country assemble at Sangam to take a holy dip," said Swami Adhokshjanand Deo Tirth, adding, "Even Lord Krishna had said that he represents the month of Paush."

After Paush Purnima, there will be four major bathing festivals left in the Kumbh 2019. These are Mauni Amavasya (February 4), Basant Panchami (February 10), Maghi Purnima (February 19) and Mahashivratri (March 4).

The security personnel from UP Police

and Central Para-Military Forces kept a tight vigil at Prayagraj railway station, Civil Lines bus station and other areas frequented by the visitors.

The Kumbh Mela Area spread over 3,200 hectares of land has been demarcated into nine zones and 20 sectors. Over 20,000 police personnel, 6,000 home guards, 80 companies of central force and 20 companies of PAC have been deployed there for security. Anti-Terrorist Squad commandos, anti-sabotage commandos with snipers, bomb disposal units, sniffer dog squads and intelligence units have also been deployed in the Kumbh city.

अमृत-स्नान की वेला है शुभ अवसर है, शुभ मेला है

चलो कुम्भ चलो

पौष पूर्णिमा स्नान 21 जनवरी, 2019

मुख्य आकर्षण

- गंगा आरती • रामलीला • योग कार्यक्रम • जलमार्ग पर्यटन • संगम बाँक • प्रवागराज हेरिटेज बाँक • कुम्भ के इतिहास पर लेजर-शो • संस्कृतिक काम • सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम • एम्प्युजमेंट पार्क • फूड कोर्ट • वर्चुअल रिवॉल्यूटी क्विजोस्क • सेल्फी चौइंट

श्रद्धालुओं हेतु सुविधाएं

- मेलों का कुल क्षेत्रफल 3200 हेक्टेयर • 1500 प्रीमियम टेंट सहित सिटी व 20,000 लोगों के लिए ट्रेन बसेरे का प्रबंध, 1,22,500 शौचालयों का निर्माण • 5 लाख से अधिक चाहनों की पार्किंग सुविधा • शटल बस और सीएनजी व ई-रिक्शा की उपलब्धता • प्रतिदिन 92 मिलियन लीटर पेयजल की व्यवस्था • प्रवागराज एयरपोर्ट पर जेबे टर्मिनल का निर्माण • 9 ट्रेलवे स्टेशनों का नवीनीकरण • 10 उपरिगामी सेतुओं का निर्माण

Online booking portal: www.uttarpradesh.gov.in
Helpline number: 18601801364

सूचना एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

चु.पी. नहीं देखा, तो इंडिया नहीं देखा.

Detail of Kumbh Mela Special Trains

As per decision of Railway Administration, No Mela Surcharge will be charged during Kumbh Mela

For the pilgrims for Kumbh Mela 2019, Time Tabled Mela Special Trains will run as per following schedule :

Date of Mela Special Trains running from originating station		Bathing Day					
21, 22 & 23 January 2019		21 January 2019 - Paush Poornima					
Ex. Allahabad Jn. Special Trains (Time Tabled) towards Kanpur							
Sr. No.	Spl. Train No.	Source	Destination	Stoppages	PF No.	En closure	
1.	00101	Allahabad Jn.	Fatehpur	07:10	Subedarganj, Bharwari, Sirathu, Khaga	2 & 3	4
2.	00102	Allahabad Jn.	Kanpur	11:30	Subedarganj, Bharwari, Sirathu, Khaga, Fatehpur, Bindki Road	2 & 3	4
3.	00103	Allahabad Jn.	Fatehpur	12:20	Subedarganj, Bharwari, Sirathu, Khaga	2 & 3	4
4.	00104	Allahabad Jn.	Kanpur	21:30	Subedarganj, Bharwari, Sirathu, Khaga, Fatehpur, Bindki Road	2 & 3	4
Note: Mela Special Train No. 00104 will not run on 22 & 23 January 2019.							
Ex. Allahabad Jn. Special Trains (Time Tabled) towards Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay Jn./Chunar/Chopon							
Date : 21 January 2019							
1.	00201	Allahabad Jn.	Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay Jn.	13:00	All Stations between Allahabad Jn. to Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay Jn.	4 & 5	3
2.	00202	Allahabad Jn.	Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay Jn.	16:00	Naini, Meja Road, Manda Road, Vindhyachal, Mirzapur, Chunar	4 & 5	3
3.	00203	Allahabad Jn.	Chopon	23:10	All Stations between Allahabad Jn. to Chopon	4 & 5	3
4.	00204	Allahabad Jn.	Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay Jn.	23:00	All Stations between Allahabad Jn. to Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay Jn.	4 & 5	3
Date : 22 & 23 January, 2019							
1.	00201	Allahabad Jn.	Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay Jn.	13:00	All Stations between Allahabad Jn. to Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay Jn.	4 & 5	3
2.	00202	Allahabad Jn.	Chopon	23:10	All Stations between Allahabad Jn. to Chopon	4 & 5	3
3.	00203	Allahabad Jn.	Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay Jn.	23:00	All Stations between Allahabad Jn. to Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay Jn.	4 & 5	3
Date : 21, 22, 23 January 2019							
Ex. Allahabad Jn. Special Trains (Time Tabled) towards Satna/Banda/Jhansi							
1.	00301	Allahabad Jn.	Jhansi	21:30	All Stations between Allahabad Jn. to Jhansi	1	1
2.	00302	Allahabad Jn.	Satna	17:30	Naini, Jasra, Shankargarh, Bargarh, Dabhaura, Manikpur	1	1
3.	00304	Allahabad Jn.	Banda	21:00	Naini, Jasra, Shankargarh, Bargarh, Dabhaura, Manikpur	1	1
Ex. Naini Special Trains (Time Tabled) towards Satna/Banda/Jhansi							
1.	00303	Naini	Satna	19:30	Jasra, Shankargarh, Bargarh, Dabhaura, Manikpur	3	3
2.	00306	Naini	Jhansi	04:30	Jasra, Shankargarh, Bargarh, Dabhaura, Manikpur	3	1
Ex. Allahabad Chheoki Special Trains (Time Tabled) towards Satna/Banda/Jhansi							
1.	00305	Allahabad Chheoki	Jhansi	03:00	Jasra, Shankargarh, Bargarh, Dabhaura, Manikpur	2 & 3	2
2.	00307	Allahabad Chheoki	Itarsi	15:30	All Stations between Allahabad Chheoki Jn. to Itarsi	2 & 3	2

Note: Apart from the above time tabled Mela special trains, additional Mela Special Trains will also run as per requirement.

Mela special trains towards Varanasi, Faizabad, Pratapgarh, Sultanpur, Basti are being planned to run from Prayagraj / Prayag Ghat stations of Northern Railway and towards Manduadhri, Varanasi from Allahabad City (Rambagh) / Jhusi stations of North Eastern Railway.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

@ CPRONCR North central railways

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Lucknow only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

Transfers of inspectors by top cop trigger debate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A debate is doing the round among Lucknow cops on the recent selection of inspectors for their posting at different police stations. While some of the officers said it was the choice of district police chief and his prerogative, others said it was always difficult to find a 'yardstick' required for getting a posting at a police station.

On January 6, SSP Kalanidhi Naithani transferred the SHOs of Manak Nagar, Mahanagar, Itaunja and Vibhuti Khand. Mahanagar inspector Vikas Pandey was shifted to the surveillance cell at SSP camp office to fill the vacancy following the transfer of surveillance cell head DK Sahi to another district. Itaunja SHO Shiv Shanker Singh was posted in Mahanagar, while inspector Rajeev Dwivedi was posted as Vibhuti Khand SHO after DK Upadhyay was sent to anti-dacoity cell. Similarly, Manak Nagar SHO Santosh Kumar Kushwaha was posted as Itaunja SHO and his place was filled by inspector Dharendra Kumar Kushwaha.

On Saturday night, the SSP

WHILE SOME OFFICERS SAID IT WAS THE CHOICE OF DISTRICT POLICE CHIEF, OTHERS SAID IT WAS ALWAYS DIFFICULT TO FIND A YARDSTICK

posted surveillance cell incharge Vikas Pandey as PGI SHO replacing PGI SHO RN Rai who was posted at Gudamba SHO. The SHO's post in Gudamba fell vacant after former Gudamba SHO TP Singh was removed following a controversy. TP Singh was seen smugly sitting at the police station with a woman complainant touching his feet and pleading justice for her son Akash who had died during work at a plywood factory on Friday.

The debate kicked off among the policemen after the Saturday list was made public. "On the day the transfer list came out on January 6, the police spokesman had said Mahanagar, Manak Nagar and Itaunja SHOs were transferred as they were posted for a long time

at those police stations and so a change was needed. But two weeks after his transfer to surveillance cell at SSP camp office, the former Mahanagar SHO was again given posting at PGI police station. This sounds as strange," some of the inspectors said. Sources in Police department said two incidents (murder of BJYM leader Pratyush Mani Tripathi and murder of a minor girl) took place in Mahanagar during the last few months. "Both these incidents brought severe criticism to Lucknow police but no action was initiated against the former Mahanagar SHO. "Mahanagar SHO was removed from his post and was attached to the surveillance cell, which is supposed to be less important in police parlance," the sources said. They said the transfer of former Manak Nagar SHO to Itaunja was also surprising as no sensational crime was reported there as yet. "It was equally surprising that no action was initiated against Alambagh SHO despite the sensational murder of businessman Amanpreet and police failure in nabbing the killers," the sources said.

Constable, accomplice accused of conspiring murder of corporator

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A constable and his aide were accused of conspiring the murder of the corporator of Ayodhya Das Ward-I in Khadra of Hasanganj on Sunday. The incident came to light after residents nabbed one of the attackers and handed him over to the police. Police are probing into the allegations.

As per reports, Musavvir Ali Manshu of Deendayal Nagar, along with his brother Anwar and supporters Chand, Shekhu and Abid, was going to his office on foot. "I was standing at the gate of my office when my brother Anwar spotted a youth who was taking out a pistol from his waist. Anwar screamed and pushed me down. This created a stampede-like situation and people started fleeing helter-skelter. We later caught one of the attackers, who was later identified as Harvinder Singh of Shahjahanpur," Manshu told police. Manshu alleged that he had a rivalry with constable Jamaluddin and property deal-

er Dharendra Maurya. "I have a hunch that they had sent the miscreant to kill me," he alleged. Police are verifying the claims made by Manshu.

BURGLARS MAKE OFF WITH MOBILES, CASH

Burglars broke into a mobile shop and decamped with mobiles and cash worth Rs 5 lakh under Vibhuti Khand police station on Sunday.

The incident came to light around 5 am when shop-owner Nalinikant alias Bablu, a resident of Vinamra Khand, was informed that the shutter of his shop was open.

He rushed to his shop in Viraj Khand and was shocked to find a plenty of mobile phones and cash missing. Vibhuti Khand SHO Rajiv Dwivedi said that burglars also attempted theft in another mobile shop but failed.

"Burglars made off with mobiles and cash worth Rs 5 lakh. The shopkeeper, however, suspected the role of market guard. The probe is on into the matter. There is no CCTV camera in the area," he added.

Metro trial from airport to Munshipulia today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Lucknow Metro will be running on the entire length from CCS Airport to Munshipulia as integration of the systems of balance and priority section of North-South corridor takes place from Monday till first week of February. Till now, the integrated and signalling trials were only being carried out at the balance section of the corridor — from Charbagh to Munshipulia. These trials had commenced on January 12.

A senior official from Lucknow Metro Rail Corporation (LMRC) said the trains would run on the entire corridor from 11 pm till 6 am. He said that on the priority corridor, the number of passengers was 11,000-12,000 per day.

"The number goes up when there is some examination held in the city. We expect the number of passengers to go up when the entire corridor becomes functional. Most of the commuters with the paying capacity come in the balance section," he said.

He added that it had been decided that the a Metro muse-



LMRC has decided to set up a museum at Hazratganj Metro station

um would be made at Hazratganj station. "The museum will have all details about construction along with models and selfie points," he said.

The official said they had selected Hazratganj station because it was centrally located and a heritage part of the city and attracted a large number of commuters. He said LMRC was looking into the prospect of property development at these stations. "People will be interested in taking up space on the stations only when the entire corridor becomes operational. Eateries have come up at Charbagh station," he added.

Doc: POR a big challenge for specialists



Mayor Sanyukta Bhatia and doctors at the inauguration of a CME at a city hotel on Sunday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Failing ovary and poor ovarian response (POR) is a big challenge the world over for specialists treating infertile couples, said Dr Gita Khanna, a well-known infertility and IVF specialist, at a CME to discuss the challenge of poor ovarian response in infertile couples. The CME was organised by a research organisation at a city hotel on Sunday. About 400 specialists from Lucknow and its surrounding areas were present on the occasion. The CME was inaugurated by mayor Sanyukta Bhatia and RML Institute of Medical Sciences director Dr Deepak Malviya.

Speaking on the occasion, the mayor said it was due to the hard work of doctors that women at the age of 60 and 65 were able to receive the joy of becoming a mother. She said it was because of the expert doctors in the country that they had been able to decrease the maternal and infant mortality rate.

Dr Gita Khanna said that ovaries were the main organ to provide eggs needed for fertilisation to produce babies. "Eggs are produced by the ovarian follicles and their number is fixed at the time of birth and at a given age and this is called ovarian reserve. It starts significantly reducing after 35 years of age in both quality and quantity. Hormonal drugs are needed for ovarian stimulation to produce eggs but it is difficult to know that how much a patient will respond to them and also it is difficult to know what response will come. Thus, a poor response to ovarian stimulation is a cause of concern and is now a distinct clinical disease," she explained.

"Various markers have been designed to know about ovarian reserve at a given age. Certain patients despite normal ovarian reserve tests may not respond meaning thereby unexpected poor ovarian response. The challenge of expected poor ovarian responders is found in cases with previous ovarian operations for cysts and endometriosis, diabetes, smokers, thalassemia, chromosomal defects, certain infections, post chemo-radiotherapy, lifestyle issues like obesity and late marriages due to carrier issues," she added.

Experts gave a message to the young couples to marry at the right age and do not forget to complete the family at an appropriate age before ovarian reserve declines with age.

After warm Sunday, rains likely today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

It was a warm sunny day on Sunday with the maximum temperature soaring five notches above normal at 26.7 degree Celsius. However, the Meteorological department has forecast rains on Monday. The prediction is for mainly clear skies becoming partly cloudy with rain and thundershowers likely in some areas. The maximum and minimum temperature is expected to be around 26 degree Celsius and 8 degrees Celsius, respectively. As for state, rain and thundershowers are likely at isolated places over east UP and western UP. There is warning of hail storm at isolated places over the state.

विदेश मंत्रालय
Ministry of External Affairs

Government of Uttar Pradesh

नये भारत के निर्माण में प्रवासी भारतीयों की भूमिका
ROLE OF INDIAN DIASPORA IN BUILDING A NEW INDIA

15^{वां} प्रवासी भारतीय दिवस
15th PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS
जनवरी 21-23, 2019 वाराणसी, उत्तर प्रदेश

वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्
THE WORLD IS ONE FAMILY

Inauguration of
Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas
&
Uttar Pradesh Pravasi Divas
on 21st January, 2019 at Varanasi, 9:30 AM onwards

Chief Guest		Sushma Swaraj Minister for External Affairs, Govt. of India
Special Guest		
Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore Minister of State (Independent Charge) Youth Affairs & Sports, Govt. of India	Himanshu Gulati Member of Parliament Norway	Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi Member of Parliament New Zealand

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DAY	
Programme	Venue
Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas	Trade Facilitation Centre
Uttar Pradesh Pravasi Divas	Stadium
Plenary Session I: Engagement with younger members of Indian Diaspora	Trade Facilitation Centre
Visit of Youth PBD participants to B.H.U. for interaction	B.H.U.
Cultural Programme	Trade Facilitation Centre

NRI Department, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh

Banana disease managed with community-based efforts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

AUP community-based organisation has set an example for banana-growers. Director of Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture (CISH) Shailendra Rajan said community-based efforts were so effective that the disease which was unmanageable in Southeast Asian and Australian countries was effectively managed in a participatory mode along with ICAR scientists.

It was shocking for the banana farmers of Sohawal in Ayodhya when they came to know that their fields were attacked by a deadly disease called 'Panama wilt', causing losses to farmers worth billions of dollars and also unmanageable in other countries. Their banana plants were infected and within one year, they could see the drastic losses inflicted by the disease," Rajan said. In June 2017, there was a sudden epidemic of 'Fusarium wilt' in Sohawal block of Ayodhya. It is a devastating disease of banana and particularly affects the Grand Naine (G-9) variety. "The disease caused huge losses to the banana growers and spread rapidly in soil and water. The fungus can survive in soil for more than 40 years and is very



difficult to be eradicated completely. The Asian and Australian countries have incurred huge losses due to the disease in the past and are striving hard to develop the management practices for the control of the disease," he pointed out. The scientists of Central Soil Salinity Research Institute (CSSRI), RRS, and CISH confirmed the presence of 'Panama wilt' through various morphological and molecular techniques. The survey reports also confirmed the presence and spread of the disease in other districts like Barabanki, Maharajganj, Kushi Nagar, Sant Kabir Nagar and Gorakhpur.

It was at this juncture that the research team came up with a unique bio-formulation

during this year where 95% of the disease was controlled in all the intervened plantations of the affected villages in Sohawal," he said.

Banana growers like Jai Singh, Anand Prabhakar Apte, Shoba Ram, Shalik Ram, and Ram Ganesh Verma played a key role in spreading and implementing the technology among the affected growers.

"Shoba Ram from Mangalsi village of Sohawal block in Ayodhya stood as an example in implementing the technology and generated an income of Rs 2.5 lakh from his one acre field which was initially affected with more than 60 per cent incidence. He had constructed a farm house and dedicated it for the use of the Kela Utpadak Sangh as office for helping the farmers of the state. According to him, nearly 350 banana growers are associated with the technology. As a venture for mass control of the disease, CISH, CSSRI and RRS has initiated a memorandum of understanding with Uttar Pradesh Kela Utpadak Sangh for disseminating the technology and participates actively in the control of the disease in the state. Based on these results, the scientists have taken the technology to Bihar.

comprising a new strain of antagonistic fungi and bacteria. The team also developed a farmer-friendly application protocol to control the disease. The formulation was tested over 72 fields of the affected farmers comprising more than 48 acres of banana plantations.

Rajan said that to overcome the spread of the disease and to create mass awareness among the growers, an association of banana growers of the state (Uttar Pradesh Kela Utpadak Sangh) was formed to unite the growers for fighting against the dreadful disease.

"The plants were nurtured and fortified with the formulation right from the nursery stage till harvest. The technology received a huge impact

Conference on health and beauty held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The 17th annual conference on health and beauty of the All India Cosmetologists and Beauticians Association (AICBA) was held on Sunday. Mayor Sanyukta Bhatia was the chief guest released the souvenir. She appreciated the services being given by doctors and beauticians to the public for generating awareness in the field of health and beauty and gave a message to maintain the standards and norms in beauty clinics. She laid emphasis on 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' slogan terming it the need of the hour.

Dr Sanjay Arora spoke about prevention of hypertension and changes in lifestyle while Dr Neha Radia, a dermatologist from London, demonstrated facial rejuvenation procedures. A panel debate was held on dental rejuvenation procedures in which Dr Vijay Kumar, Dr Ankit Bahal, Dr Neelima Mishra and Dr Aman Bhumri spoke in detail.

General surgeon and founder secretary general Dr Rama Srivastava spoke on prevention and treatment of neck wrinkles. Make-up designer Richa Agarwal from Chandigarh demonstrated bridal make-up on 'Mrs India' Dr Sangeeta Singh from Bhopal. Aromatherapist from Delhi Dr Blossom Kochhar explained the role of aromatic oils in hair regrowth. The 6th conference is scheduled to be held at Tashkent, Russia, in April later this year.



Vehicles stuck in a traffic jam at Hazratganj on Sunday

Pioneer

Doctors' training by RRTC a shot in the arm for health facilities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The training of doctors by Regional Resource Training Centre (RRTC) and workplace mentoring has brought a radical change in the health facilities of the state. A daylong workshop was organised at a city hotel to share the various achievements of four medical colleges affiliated to this centre for the past one year. For the second phase, planning and orientation of four newly-added medical colleges was also discussed.

Dr Seema Tandon from Technical Support Unit (TSU) of Uttar Pradesh highlighted the journey of RRTC during the past one year. She said that in the first phase of training, 220 doctors from 50 referral units of 25 high-priority districts (HPDs) benefited with the support of King George's

Medical University, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, Aligarh Muslim University, Motilal Nehru Medical College and Baba Raghav Technical Medical College (Agra), Banaras Hindu University (Varanasi), and Uttar Pradesh University of Medical Sciences (Safai), and in just two-and-a-half months' time, 37 new referrals units got linked to the centre. Explaining about the RRTC in detail, she said that during the three-day-long residential training all the experts associated with maternal,

neonatal and infant health were trained and motivated to practise. After three months of training, a team of senior doctors does a follow-up visit of the workplace and analyses the work undertaken by the doctors post-training and wherever gaps and challenges are being identified, the senior doctors undertake a reorientation of the doctors to ensure the best service delivery.

Dr Seema Tandon also said that the training turned out to be a huge success as the doctors across government hospitals and medical institutes had not only increased their confidence but the exercise like dummy sessions had given them hands-on training to handle the emergency cases actively. Nodal officers of eight medical colleges associated with the RRTC participated and shared their experiences in the workshop.

CITYBRIEFS

FLOWER SHOW

The two-day Annual Rose and Gladiolus Show, organised by National Botanical Research Institute, concluded on Sunday. Sixty-eight exhibitors showcased a total of 915 entries. A total number of 26 running cups, shields, trophies along with 326 prizes were given to the winners (pic right). HAL, Accessory Division (Lucknow), walked away with nine cups, shields and trophies, followed by HAL, Korwa Division (Amethi), which bagged four cups and trophies. Tata Motors won two trophies. Meanwhile, NBRI transferred knowhow technology of herbal soft drink (NBIRA) to a private company.



President of Kerala Samajam Jensen James welcomed all the families while Denny Mathew Jacob (Mathona Church) gave a Christmas message to the gathering. Cultural secretary KR Ramakrishnan conveyed the message of social responsibility of the community and that of each individual towards the community and the country and requested the community to donate for a cause. The programme began with a Saraswati 'vandana' by Vyshali and semi-classical dance by Kalanidi Kavya and group of students from Kalashree. A special programme on stress

management was carried out by Neha Anand while Rakesh delivered a lecture on how to choose a career.

INEQUALITY REPORT

Oxfam will release its 'Inequality Report: 2019' on Monday. The report highlights public good vs private wealth and different forms of inequality being promoted by flawed economic policies. Oxfam India is a rights-based organisation that fights poverty and injustice.

LYRICAL ACADEMY

Lyrics Academy organised its annual event, 'Lamps Fiesta Season 7' on Sunday. Children

from Indiranagar and Rajajipuram campuses participated in the event and presented Kathak, Bharatnatyam, western and Bollywood dance numbers.

UNIFEST

The second day of 'Unifest 2018' on Sunday was marked by youthful energy. The day saw an award ceremony for the meritorious students, an alumni meet, fete and ramp show. Yogya Tiwari and Aftab Rizvi were adjudged 'Ms and 'Mr Unifest' respectively. The meritorious students were awarded medals and certificates.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

KUMBH TO GENERATE...

Apart from this there will be around 55,000 new jobs in the unorganized sector comprising of tour guides, taxi drivers, interpreters, volunteers etc. This will lead to increase income levels for government agencies and individual traders. Attracting a massive number of foreign tourists from various countries like Australia, UK, Canada, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, New Zealand, Mauritius, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka, the Kumbh is a festival of the world. "The 'mela' is expected to generate a revenue of Rs1,200 billion for Uttar Pradesh, the state where it is being held, while neighbouring states like Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh will also benefit from the enhanced revenue generation with a large number of national and foreign tourists expected to explore other destinations. The Uttar Pradesh government has allocated a hefty amount of Rs 4,200 crore for the Kumbh Mela held in Allahabad, which has become the costliest pilgrimage till date. "The UP government has allocated Rs 4,200 crore for 2019 Kumbh Mela. The previous state government had spent around Rs 1,300 crore for the Maha Kumbh, which was held in 2013," state Finance Minister Rajesh Agarwal told PTI.

The area of Kumbh Mela has also been doubled to 3,200 hectares as compared to 1,600 hectares in the previous melas.

The Kumbh is a unique and massive gathering of both rural and urban population and also has a huge dispersal factor as people travel long distances across the country. In order to house this multitude, authorities have erected a mini-city of more than 4,000 tents. The city is being lit by installing over 40,000 LED lights, say local authorities. Overhauling of key infrastructure is being done, including upgrading nine railway stations and construction of a new airport terminal in Allahabad. The setting up of this new city in the huge Mela area involves 250 km roads and 22 pontoon bridges, which will make it the largest temporary city in the world. The Kumbh, a sacred Hindu pilgrimage, is thus expected to generate direct and indirect business activities, the fruits of which would hopefully benefit the economy not only of Uttar Pradesh, but that of India as a whole, the CII document says. The Kumbh at Sangam city Prayagraj, as Allahabad is now known, dates back to a hoary past, whose first mention of was made some 2,000 years ago by the Chinese traveler Hsuan Tsang who visited India during the reign on King Harshvardhana.

Based on a complex astrological calculation, the alignment of the stars determines the time and place of the 'Kumbh' in one of the following four river-sites: Haridwar, Prayagraj, Nasik and Ujjain.

It is a celebration of an ancient tradition - a dip in the holy waters where the mythical Saraswati, Ganga and Yamuna meet. These riverside festivals and the city that springs up around them are attended by millions, making the 'Kumbh Mela' the largest religious gathering, perhaps the oldest, and the largest temporary city in the world. Learned seers believe that a dip in the waters would endow an individual with religious merit. Masses of devotees gather on the riverbank to attain spiritual enlightenment, some in the belief that doing so will lead them worldly success, others simply to purify their souls. The Kumbh Mela gets its worldwide reputation as a mega-event not only because of the sheer number of people who attend the fair but also for a widespread display of cultural traits of a nation, which is bound by ties of faith and traditions. Around 12 crore people are expected to visit the Kumbh between now and Maha Shivratri on March 4, when the Mela will come to a close on Maha Shivratri day.

The first 'Shahi Snan' (royal bath) of Kumbh on January 15 drew a record crowd of 2.25 devotees, said Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who has been meticulously supervising minute details personally to make the event "Divya Kumbh, Bhavya Kumbh".

STALIN CLEARS...

"Stalin said Rahul Gandhi will be the PM candidate in Chennai. He could not say so at Kolkata," BJP Tamil Nadu unit president Tamilisai Soundararajan said here adding such contradictions outlined the contours of the Opposition front. Later, speaking to reporters in Madurai, the BJP leader said, "Had Stalin been consistent in his stand why did he not say that he proposed Rahul Gandhi for the post of Prime Minister at the mega Kolkata rally attended by over 20 parties." Apparently blaming Stalin for diverging from his previous stand of supporting Rahul Gandhi for the post of Prime Minister she said, such deviation showed "his hesitancy and obstacles."

NINE SOLVERS HELD...

Rs 6,100, 4 Aadhaar cards, four admit cards, 2 ATM cards and several other documents. In Kanpur, different teams, led by Special Task Force (STF), conducted raids at Khalsa Inter College and HP Shiksha Niketan Inter College and arrested three solvers. Those

arrested were identified as Amit Kumar aka Rahul Yadav, Abhinav Yadav and Aditya Yadav, all of Kannauj. As per police, Abhinav Yadav was taking the exam in place of Kuldeep Yadav at Khalsa Inter College while Aditya Yadav was taking the exam in place of Avaneesh Yadav at HP Shiksha Niketan Inter College.

Both Abhinav and Aditya were interrogated at the police station after their arrest. They disclosed the name of Amit Kumar Yadav aka Rahul Yadav as their mentor. On the revelation, a team raided a house in Kanpur and nabbed Amit Kumar Yadav too. The cops recovered five mobile sets, a tablet, a car, three ATM cards in the name of Amit Kumar Yadav, a driving license, three voter identity cards and three Aadhaar cards from the miscreants. Amit Kumar Yadav disclosed that he used to take ₹2-4 lakh from those seeking 'help' in competitive exams and used to give ₹1 lakh to each solver. He admitted that he also used to appear in exams in place of an examinee in case solvers were not available.

It surfaced that Amit had charged ₹2 lakh from each examinee for taking the Sunday exam at these centres. He had taken ₹90,000 through cash transfer in his bank account while the remaining sum he had taken as cash. Police said examinees Kuldeep of Farrukhabad and Avaneesh Yadav of Kannauj succeeded in escaping their arrest and a hunt for them was on.

WARM WELCOME...

from Norway Himanshu Gulati and MP from New Zealand Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi. The opening day will be dedicated to Pravasi Youth Day and UP Pravasi Divas. On the first day, the first topic of discussion will be 'Engagement with younger member of Indian diaspora'. After the lunch to be hosted by Union minister Rajvardhan Singh Rathore, the delegates will interact with students of BHU. On January 22, after the inaugural session, the PM will host a lunch for the dignitaries while two sessions will be held on "Role of Indian diaspora in capacity-building for affordable solar power and 'Giving back to India'. On the last day, seminars on 'Indian community organisation working for Indian nationals in distress situation', 'Role of Indian diaspora in capacity-building for affordable waste management', and 'Indian diaspora role in capacity-building for artificial intelligence in India'. "Developing cyber capacity of India," will be held before the valedictory session to be attended by President Ram Nath Kovind. The President will also give away awards to

around 30 Pravasi Bharatiya for their contribution. In a statement, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said that it would be a historic event as there was a three-fold increase in the registration of foreign delegates. "These are the people from other countries, who either belong to Uttar Pradesh or they have roots here," she said. "The discussions will be around emergence of a 'new India' and the contribution to be made to it by the Pravasi Bharatiya," Shushma Swaraj said. The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas has drawn a big attraction this time due to its link with Kumbh and Republic Day parade and around 6000 foreign delegates have registered themselves. There are several programmes to be organised during the three-day event, including cultural programmes. BJP MP and cine star Hema Malani and her troupe will perform on January 22 evening.

"This time government is focusing to attract youths of the Bharatvanshi families, whose forefathers had left the country and settled in far-flung countries," Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said. The UP CM will host a dinner for delegates on Monday while Sushma Swaraj will host a dinner on Tuesday night. The delegates, numbering around 2500, will visit Kumbh on the morning of January 24 and from there they will leave for Delhi by train. In Delhi, on January 25, delegates will be facilitated with Delhi Darshan and on the next day, they will be taken for the Republic Day parade.

BJP ROAD MAP...

Commenting on the possibility of forging any pre-poll alliance in the State, Madhav said while his party would most likely go it alone in the upcoming Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections. "There is the least possibility of a pre-poll alliance with any party for the Assembly elections in the State. The BJP will emerge (as) the largest party after the elections and will give a stable Government to the people with some friends," Madhav told reporters here. Due to the special circumstances in the State, "we have no hesitation in joining hands with others" to form the Government, he said. The BJP leader said Prime Minister Narendra Modi will kick start the party's campaign for upcoming parliamentary and Assembly polls in the State during his visit on February 3. "While the parliamentary elections are scheduled for April-May, the BJP is ready for the Assembly polls in the State as well. It is up to the Election Commission to decide whether the two polls are held together or separately," Madhav said.

Mystery shrouds girl's death

Lucknow (PNS): A 15-year-old girl died under mysterious circumstances at a child protection home (in Naka on Sunday. According to a police spokesman, the girl was sent to the protection home on December 8, 2017. "The protection home got instructions about admission of the girl from Balrampur on December 6, 2017. The 15-year-old girl had developed health issues and was admitted to KGMU and discharged on January 9. On Sunday, she took ill again and was rushed

to the Trauma Centre where she was declared brought dead on Sunday," the police spokesman said, adding that the case was being investigated. The police spokesman said that the girl had been identified by the protection home as Suman. "The girl was mentally unstable as was unable to tell her name and address," he added.

ARRESTED

Two persons were arrested for looting gold chain and mobile phones from innocent

in Ghazipur police station area on Sunday. The accused, identified as Sooraj Kashyap (22) and Abhishek Kashyap (19), both residents of Gomti Nagar, were nabbed from Kukrail Pul when they were planning to sell looted mobile phones. The miscreants confessed to their crime and said they took to crime to meet their expense on alcohol and lavish life style.

Ghazipur SHO Rakesh Singh said that the miscreants used to sell mobile phones at half rates to passersby.

SCHOOLSCAN

CMS TABLEAU

City Montessori School will be presenting a unique tableau on 'Aisa Mastishk Banao, Jaisa Tha Babu Ka' at this year's Republic Day parade, celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The tableau was shown to mediapersons on Sunday. CMS founder Jagdish Gandhi explained the different aspects of tableau saying that it was based on the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and would be spreading the mes-



sage of religious harmony, 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam' and 'Jai Jagat'.

SATSANG

Speaking at the World Unity Satsang on Sunday, founder-director of City Montessori School Bharti Gandhi said all religions are similar, therefore, it is necessary to teach lessons of religious harmony to children. "Since God loves to all people, why do we humans differentiate? We must endeavour for creation and not

destruction. A world where there is love, prosperity dwells. All the basic amenities should be provided to the people for bringing prosperity. The entire humanity wants peace and not wars. When everyone gets food, clothes, home, education and medical facilities, an environment of peace and unity will be established," she added. Earlier, CMS music teachers presented bhajans while the students of Kanpur Rod campus presented various educational-cultural items.

"Form No. INC-26"
[Pursuant to rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014]
 Advertisement to be published in the newspaper for change of registered office of the Company from one state to another
Before the Central Government Northern Region
 In the matter of sub-section (4) of Section 13 of Companies Act, 2013 and clause (a) of sub-rule (5) of rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014
AND
 In the matter of **Sudoyg Infraprojects Private Limited** having its registered office at Baldev Plaza Golghar Gorakhpur, UP-273001
Petitioner
 Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the Company proposes to make application to the Central Government under section 13 of the Companies Act, 2013 seeking confirmation of alteration of the Memorandum of Association of the Company in terms of the special resolution passed at the Extra Ordinary general meeting held on 18th January, 2019 to enable the Company to change its Registered Office from the "State of Uttar Pradesh" to the "NCT of Delhi".
 Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the Company may deliver either on the MCA-21 portal (www.mca.gov.in) by filing investor complaint form or cause to be delivered or send by registered post of his/her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest and grounds of opposition to the **Regional Director at the address B-2/Wing, 2nd Floor, Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex, New Delhi - 110003** within fourteen days of the date of publication of this notice with a copy to the applicant company with a copy of the applicant company at its registered office at Baldev Plaza Golghar Gorakhpur, UP-273001.
For and on behalf of the Applicant
 Sd/-
Date : 21.01.2019 **Kaustubh Prasad**
Place : Gorakhpur **Director**

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, निर्माण मण्डल,
उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निगम लिमिटेड, गार्ड टिस्टरी
 दूरभाष : 01976-239111, E-mail: selahrippeyal@gmail.com
 पत्रांक 85 / 508 / 07, **ई-निविदा सूचना** दिनांक : 18.01.2019
1. कार्य का नाम - निर्माण शाखा उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम, मुनि की देवी के अन्तर्गत विकास क्षेत्र-नरेंद्रनगर की खोली पालकोट ग्राम समूह (पिमिग) पेयजल योजना फेज-प्रथम एवं द्वितीय नाराई कार्यक्रम के अन्तर्गत वितरण प्रणाली एवं तत्सम्बन्धी निर्माण कार्य।
2. कार्यदायी संस्था - निर्माण शाखा, उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम, मुनि की देवी।
3. अनुमानित लागत / कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि :- ₹0 1500.00 लाख / 18 माह
4. निविदा प्रारिप की अंतिम तिथि :- दिनांक 06.02.2019 समय 17.00 बजे अपराह्न
5. निविदा मूल्य :- ₹0 10,00,00.00 + जीएसटीएल 18%
6. परीक्षार्थ चयनादेश :- ₹0 30.00 लाख
 विस्तृत ई-निविदा नोटिस एवं निविदा प्रपत्र **www.uktenders.gov.in** पोर्टल पर दिनांक 21.01.2019 को 17.00 बजे प्रकाशित की जायेगी।
अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
 "जल संयंत्र-जीवन संयंत्र" कृपया जल स्रोतों को प्रदूषित होने से बचायें।
 वैधानिक चयन-जल स्रोतों को प्रदूषित करना दण्डनीय अपराध है।

Min's remark proves graft in Rafale: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Launching a fresh attack over Rafale, the Congress on Sunday alleged that Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's remarks about "corporate warfare" proved that the Modi Government had given preference to corporate interests over national interest.

Congress spokesperson Priyanka Chaturvedi said Sitharaman's recent statement has "conclusively proved that this is a Government of the suited-booted, for the suited-booted and by the suited-booted". Accusing the Opposition of spreading misinformation on the Rafale deal, Sitharaman on Saturday wondered whether parties were becoming pawns in corporate rivalry and whether the procurement of 36 fighter jets was being "sabotaged".

"By bringing this argument about 'corporate warfare', the Modi Government's 'defenceless' Defence Minister seals and stamps the Congress party's charge that the ₹30,000 crore offset contract and ₹1 lakh crore life cycle cost contract in the Rafale deal was given to his crony friend's company which had zero experience and was brazen 'cronyism' at its best," Chaturvedi alleged at AICC Press conference.

Chaturvedi said the Congress wants answers from the Defence Minister as to what was the compulsion to "snatch" the Rafale contract from HAL, even though a work share agreement worth approx-

imately ₹36,000 crore was already signed on March 13, 2014. The Modi Government needs to explain why it cancelled the UPA deal of 108 aircraft and announced a fresh RFP for 110 MMRCA aircraft on July 6, 2018, after four years of assuming office, Chaturvedi said.

The Government has to reply as to why it rejected the Air Force's need and demand for 126 fighter aircraft and decide to buy only 36 jets, she said. The Congress leader also alleged that Sitharaman claimed HAL did not have the capability to produce 108 aircraft in India and asked whose corporate interests was she defending.

Chaturvedi also slammed Sitharaman for her reply in Parliament on the Rafale deal, alleging that the defence minister said she cannot divulge the offset partners in the deal, but

Statue of Unity reminder of Patel's vision, courage, says V-P Venkaiah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday said the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's statue in Gujarat, known as the Statue of Unity, was a way of correcting the imbalance in presenting the historical narrative of India, which justified the amount spent on it.

Naidu visited the 182-metre-tall statue in Kevadiya in Gujarat's Narmada district and said only a partial account of Patel's role and contributions in the freedom struggle was documented. "This Statue of Unity is a firm reminder of the vision, courage, capabilities and contributions of Sardar Patel in the making of modern India. In the true sense, it is a way of correcting the imbalance in presenting the historical narrative of our country," Naidu was quoted in a statement issued by the Vice-President's office.

Justifying the money spent on the statue, Naidu said given the significance of the structure, "the amount spent on erecting it was worth it and it is a priceless investment". He also complimented Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his initiative to build the statue and said it should serve as a reminder to uphold unity among all Indians.

Known as the "Iron Man", Patel was the country's first deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister. Citing a letter written by Patel to Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's first Prime Minister, in which he had cautioned about the threat from China, Naidu said the situation after the 1962 Sino-India war could have been different if



Patel's words had been heeded. "We all know that one of our neighbours waged war against us in 1962 and its result. Had Sardar's concerns been taken seriously, the situation could have been different. All other issues raised by Sardar Patel still remain relevant," he said.

Underlining the importance of the unification of the erstwhile princely States after Independence, Naidu said getting freedom from the British was a milestone in the country's modern history, but the integration of the 565 self-governed States that existed at the time of Independence was another equally important milestone.

"Without Patel and his vision and resolve, many of these 565 princely States would have preferred and remained as independent countries. Had this happened, the map of India would have been vastly different from what we have today," he said.

The people of India would forever remain grateful to Patel for realising his dream and vision of consolidating the country with a steely resolve, Naidu said. "For this act of courage and determination, Patel is rightly called the 'Iron Man of India'," he said.

MHA TWEAKS TRAVEL NORMS

Indians over 65, under 15 can use Aadhaar to visit Nepal, Bhutan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Aadhaar cards are now valid travel documents for Indians under 15 and over 65 travelling to Nepal and Bhutan, according to a Home Ministry communique.

Indians other than those in the two age brackets will not be able to use Aadhaar to travel to the two neighbouring countries, for which no visas are needed, clarified the communique issued recently.

Indian citizens going to Nepal and Bhutan don't need a visa if they have a valid passport, a photo identity card issued by the Government of India or an election ID card issued by the Election Commission, it added.

Earlier, persons over 65 and under 15 could show their PAN card, driving licence, Central Government Health Service (CGHS) card or ration card, but not the Aadhaar, to prove their identity and visit the two countries.

The Aadhaar card has now been added to the list, explained a senior Home Ministry official.

"Now, persons in the age group of over 65 years and below 15 years have been allowed to use Aadhaar as a valid travel document," the official told PTI.

Aadhaar is a 12-digit unique identification number issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). It is being made mandatory for using a host of Government services. Giving details, the official



said a certificate of registration issued by the Embassy of India, Kathmandu, to Indian nationals is not an acceptable travel document for travelling between India and Nepal.

"However, the emergency certificate and identity certificate issued by the Indian Embassy in Nepal will be valid for single journey for travelling back to India," he said, citing the communique.

Teens between 15 to 18 years will be allowed to travel between India and Nepal on the basis of an identity certificate issued by the principal of their school in a prescribed form, the officer said.

In case of a family (like husband, wife, minor children and parents) travelling together, all persons will not be required to carry relevant documents (such as a passport or an election ID) if one of the adult members has valid travel papers, he said.

However, the other family members must have some proof of their identity with a photograph and their relationship as a family, such as a CGHS card, ration card, a driving licence or an ID card issued by school/college, the

official explained. Indian nationals travelling to Bhutan need to have either an Indian passport with minimum validity of six months or a voter identity card issued by the Election Commission of India.

Bhutan, which shares borders with the Indian states of Sikkim, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and West Bengal, has about 60,000 Indian nationals, employed mostly in the hydro-electric power and construction industry.

In addition, between 8,000 and 10,000 daily workers enter and exit Bhutan everyday in border towns.

About six lakh Indians live in Nepal, according to data by the Ministry of External Affairs.

These include businesspersons and traders who have been living in Nepal for a long time, professionals (doctors, engineers, IT personnel) and labourers (including seasonal/migratory) in the construction sector, it said.

Nepal shares a border of over 1,850 km with five Indian States — Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Cries of help are of people seeking freedom from tyranny, Rahul on Modi's 'bachao' jibe

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Congress president Rahul Gandhi hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday over his "bachao, bachao" swipe at the Opposition, saying the cries of help were of people "begging" to be freed from "your tyranny and incompetence".

Gandhi's attack came a day after Modi, taking a dig at the Opposition rally organised by Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee in Kolkata, said the BJP had only one MLA in West Bengal, "but still they are so afraid of us, because we follow the path of truth, that they have gathered parties from across the country and are crying 'bachao, bachao, bachao' (save us)".

"Your Highness, The cries for help are the cries of millions of unemployed youth; of farmers in distress; of oppressed Dalits & Adivasis; of persecuted minorities; of small businessmen in ruin; begging to be freed from your tyranny & incompetence. In 100 days they will be free," Gandhi said

Rahul's attack came a day after Modi, taking a dig at the Opposition rally organised by Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee in Kolkata, said the BJP had only one MLA in West Bengal

in a tweet.

On a day when several Opposition parties came together on a common platform in Kolkata, Modi had hit out at their proposed "mahagathbandhan" (grand alliance), saying it was a combine of those who were angry at his stringent action against corruption as they had been stopped from looting public money.

Research on Ayurveda drugs through nanotech

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Gwalior situated University and Delhi-based AIMIL Pharmaceutical firm, engaged in manufacturing herbal drugs recently inked a pact to develop new drugs as well as scientifically validate the existing drugs in the ayurveda sector using nanotechnology

Efforts of Union Ayush Ministry have started yielding results with various research institutions initiating experiments using latest scientific technology in the ancient Indian medicine. After Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), now Madhya Pradesh-based Jiwaji University has come forward in this direction.

The Gwalior situated University and Delhi-based AIMIL Pharmaceutical firm, engaged in manufacturing herbal drugs recently inked a pact to develop new drugs as well as scientifically validate the existing drugs in the ayurveda sector using nanotechnology.

Several researches have shown that drug delivery through nanoparticles is efficient and is important in allopathy, as well as in Ayurveda. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Jiwaji University Vice-Chancellor, Dr Sangeeta Shukla and AIMIL

Pharmaceutical Executive Director Sanchit Sharma in the presence of Union Health Ministry's Department of Health Research (DHR) ex-Secretary VM Katoch.

On the occasion, Katoch said that Ayurveda has answers to many chronic diseases and if intensive research on modern scientific basis is undertaken in the sector, world class medicines can be developed for the humankind.

Katoch gave instance of how in the past, the DRDO had

developed Leukoskin to treat white patches while country's premier research agency, CSIR has developed anti-diabetes herbal drug BGR 34. It has properties to contribute to the maintenance of normal blood glucose metabolism, restore quality of life and reduce the chances of long-term complications. Incidentally, AIMIL Pharmaceutical has role in developing and marketing both the herbal medicines.

Amil Pharmaceutical Vice President Anil Sharma explained that as per the MoU, emphasis will be on testing old formulations as well as developing new medicines. "Nano technology will be used for research purpose. With the help of this technology, huge difference can be brought in the quality of molecules."

It means, he explained, it will be possible to prepare more effective medicines. As per the MoU, a battery of scientists and experiment related facilities will be provided by the Jiwaji University while AIMIL Pharmaceuticals will help in chipping requisite equipments and infrastructure for the initiative.

BUDGET 2019

Govt likely to hike agri credit target to ₹12L cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to focus on farmers' debt, the farm credit target is likely to be raised by about 10 per cent to a record ₹12 lakh crore in the 2019-20 Budget to be presented on February 1.

For the current fiscal, the Government has set a credit target of ₹11 lakh crore. The agricultural credit flow has increased consistently over the years, exceeding the target set for each fiscal.

For instance, credit worth ₹11.68 lakh crore was given to farmers in 2017-18, much higher than the ₹10 lakh crore target set for that year.

Top sources said that the Finance Ministry has been increasing the credit target for the farm sector every year. "This time too, the target is likely to be increased by around 10 per cent or ₹1 lakh crore to ₹12 lakh crore for the 2019-20 fiscal," the sources said.

Similarly, crop loans worth ₹10.66 lakh crore were disbursed in the 2016-17 fiscal, higher than the credit target of ₹9 lakh crore.

Credit is a critical input in

achieving higher farm output. Institutional credit will also help delink farmers from non-institutional sources where they are compelled to borrow at usurious rates of interest, the sources added.

Normally, farm loans attract an interest rate of 9 per cent.

However, the Government has been providing interest subvention to make available short-term farm credit at an affordable rate and help boost farm output.

The Government is providing 2 per cent interest subsidy to ensure farmers get short-term farm loan of up to ₹3 lakh at an effective rate of 7 per cent per annum.

An additional incentive of 3 per cent is being given to farmers for prompt repayment of loans within due date, making the effective interest rate 4 per cent.

The interest subvention is given to public sector banks (PSBs), private lenders, cooperative banks and regional rural banks (RRBs) on use of own funds and to Nabard for refinancing RRBs and cooperative banks.

Search panel did not shortlist 2 commissioners for CIC post

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The search committee for selection of Chief Information Commissioner did not short-list two senior Information Commissioners who had applied for the position and brought in four others who did not show interest in the post, documents made public by the Government show.

The search committee led by the Cabinet Secretary had finalised five names to be put before the selection panel, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and comprising Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and leader of Congress in Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge.

The six-member search committee was headed by the Cabinet Secretary and included the Secretaries of the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), Expenditure Department, Information and Broadcasting Department, and Additional Secretary to the Prime Minister.

The Director of the Institute of Economic Growth was the independent member.

Dard Aryans Ladakhi tribe struggling to preserve legacy

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Busy in promoting its Look East policy, the Modi Government seems to have forgotten the Dard Aryans — a colorful and vibrant tribe of Jammu & Kashmir's lower Ladakh region which is believed to be the original descendants of "pure Aryan race".

Living in the harsh weather of the cold inaccessible terrain comprising of Hanu, Beema, Darchick, Garkone and Dha villages, their population is dwindling fast — just 4,000 members left — because of the rapid modernisation, negligence, migration and religious conversion.

Now in Delhi to participate in the six days festival 'Celebrating Dard Aryans of Ladakh' that kicked off on January 16 at Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), they shared their concerns about threats to their existence. In fact they have already submitted a charter of demands to Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Sudarshan Bhagat recently.

The members feel that they



should be recognised as world's endangered community so that their culture and tradition is preserved.

They know better. The members of this minority community have retained their age old cultural practices and beliefs despite facing many odds

Virendra Bangroo, an INGCA scholar and curator of the exhibition showcasing their culture and coordinator of the Arya Utsav said, "this is for the first time that such an event is being held in the national Capital.

Aim is to showcase their rich and colourful culture,

their lifestyle and the harsh life they have been living".

"So far, the Government has not been able to do anything for this community. Its policies and programmes are yet to reach them. Not many people in the country know about this rich cultural legacy, which today stand threatened,"

said Bangroo who has already set up two community museums in the region which have become role models for safeguarding the cultural heritage and sustainable development in the region.

He further said that the villages are together called the Aryan valley. The community

prohibits marriage with outsiders to keep the gene pool intact. However, of late, the Dard men are marrying outside the tribe.

"We are making an effort to help these people preserve their culture and tradition. They are living in the isolation. But we must make them feel

that they too are part of India and we are proud of them. Want to tell them they are our proud," Bangroo said.

However, now their children are migrating to cities as not sufficient basic facilities are available in the region, said Tundu, one of the members of the tribe even as he added that

if timely steps were not taken, they will lose their Dar language which has no scripts presently. "Our children do not speak the mother tongue," he pointed out

The Dard Aryans do not document their history and they have carried forward their cultural legacy orally. Most of them have embraced Islam or Buddhism and modernisation, said 55-year-old Tashi Namgial, another member of the tribe whose kids are studying in Chandigarh.

The government should set up a tribal hostel in the region and declare the Aryan valley a heritage village.

Talking about the need to hold such festival, Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, IGCA said, "Arya Utsav is not merely a spectacle but our endeavour is to have a holistic view of the region encompassing the sustainable development in the region. Cultural interaction of the visiting group of Dard Aryans with the institutions in Delhi is one such initiative." He said that exhibition on Dard Aryans of Ladakh will be open to public till January 26.

'BJP to form stable J&K Govt with some friends'

Will go it alone in upcoming Assembly polls, says Madhav



Jammu: BJP general secretary Ram Madhav on Sunday said while his party will most likely go it alone in upcoming Jammu & Kashmir Assembly elections, it will form a "stable Government with some friends" in the State after polls. He said his party would contest all seats in the State. "There is the least possibility of a pre-poll alliance with any party for the Assembly elections in the State. The BJP will emerge (as) the largest party after the elections and will give a stable Government to the people with some friends," Madhav told reporters here. Due to the special circumstances in the State, "we have no hesitation in joining hands with others" to form the Government, he said. Talking about the BJP's

erstwhile ruling alliance with the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), he said, "After elections we formed an alliance, but today again the BJP is going it alone in the elections." The BJP leader said Prime Minister Narendra Modi will kick start the party's campaign for upcoming parliamentary and assembly polls in the state during his visit on February 3. "While the parliamentary elections are scheduled for April-May, the BJP is ready for the Assembly polls in the state as well. It is up to the Election Commission to decide whether the two polls are held together or separately," Madhav said. The Election Commission

had in November last said fresh elections in Jammu & Kashmir would be held within the next six months. The state is currently under President's rule. Madhav dismissed allegations that the BJP did not favour Assembly polls in the State. "There is no truth in rumours being spread that the BJP is not in favour of early Assembly polls in State," he said. He claimed some other parties wanted the polls to be deferred as they feared losing. Asked about the PDP expelling former Minister Altaf Bukhari, Madhav said, "I don't want to talk about internal matters of another political party, but I must underscore one point here that he is the same leader who was projected as the Chief Minister of the combined Opposition when they (PDP, Congress and National Conference) were trying to form the Government in the State just a couple of months ago." **PTI**

Sabarimala: Age in Kerala Govt's list submitted to SC incorrect, says TN woman

Chennai: A Tamil Nadu woman, whose name figured in Kerala Government's list of 51 women of menstrual age who visited the Sabarimala shrine, on Sunday said she was 62 and not 48, as mentioned in the affidavit submitted before the Supreme Court. Chandira Sundaram, a resident of Tiruvannamalai — about 190 kilometres from here, said her name was wrongly included in the list of women below 50 years of age who visited the hill shrine after the Supreme Court removed the bar on their entry. She said her year of birth was mentioned as 1970 in her Aadhaar card by mistake, apparently indicating that it may be the reason for inclusion of her name in the list. In an interview to a Tamil news channel, Sundaram said she has been undertaking the pilgrimage to Sabarimala ever since she turned 54. "Now I am 62 and for the

past eight years I have been visiting the Sabarimala temple," she said. She added that police helped her climb the sacred 18 steps of the shrine. The Kerala government submitted the affidavit with the names of 51 women to the apex court on Friday saying they had entered the Sabarimala temple through an online process during the annual pilgrimage season. The affidavit triggered a controversy with many alleging discrepancies with regard to age of those named in the list. The son of a woman from Goa claimed that his mother's age was 52 and not 43, as mentioned in the list. A Tamil Nadu man said his name was also included in the list. The BJP, the Sabarimala Karma Samiti and the Pandalam royal family, associated with the Lord Ayyappa temple, also hit out at the Kerala Government. **PTI**

Mahagathbandhan an alliance of corruption, negativity: PM

Margao (Goa): Unfazed by the Opposition's show of unity at a rally in Kolkata, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday dismissed it as an alliance of corruption, negativity and instability, saying while those parties have "money power", the BJP has "people's power". He also said seats in educational institutes will be increased to implement 10 per cent general category quota. Modi was addressing BJP's booth-level workers from Lok Sabha constituencies of Kolhapur, Hatkanangle, Madha and Satara in Maharashtra and South Goa through video-conference. Leaders from over a dozen Opposition parties gathered in Kolkata on Saturday and vowed to put up a united fight in the coming Lok Sabha elections and oust Modi from power. Several Opposition leaders at the rally demanded the use of ballot papers instead of the electronic voting machines (EVMs) which, they said, were the source of "all sorts of malpractices". Modi said the Opposition was staring at a



defeat in forthcoming elections and looking for excuses ahead of their impending loss and thus, were vilifying EVMs. "You must have seen that one of the leaders who was sharing the dais recalled the Bofors scam. Truth cannot be kept hidden. The Opposition's mahagathbandhan is an alliance of capitalists, corruption, scams, negativity and instability," he said. "The Opposition has 'dhanshakti' (money power), we have 'janshakti' (people's power)," he added. Replying on the query from a booth worker in Kolhapur, Modi said while the Opposition alliance is with political parties, "our alliance is with the dreams of 125 crore Indians and their

hopes and aspirations." "Those who were on dais in Kolkata were either son or daughter of big person or who wanted to make his son or daughter big in politics," he alleged. "Those who never believed in democracy within their parties were now talking about democracy from public platform, he said. He said such people do not have faith in any institution and are busy defaming constitutional authorities. "We get worried when some groups take people for granted. They think people are fools. That is why they don't leave any stone unturned to change their colour... I would like to repeat, this is a dangerous game for the country and a thing to worry about," Modi commented. "While on one hand they are busy saving or nurturing their own families, we are busy developing a nation. Our country is our family... Those who start violence against the person contesting against them even at panchayat level, are now singing songs of protecting democracy," he said. **PTI**



Students pour water on each other as they take a holy bath during a ceremony organised in the auspicious Hindu month of Magh in Ahmedabad **PTI**

2 killed during mock drill on Jammu ropeway project

PNS ■ JAMMU Ahead of the formal inauguration project by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 3, two members of the rescue team, conducting a mock drill here on Sunday, were killed while four others received serious head injuries. According to preliminary reports the accident took place around 5.30 pm apparently due to mechanical failure. Eyewitness reports claimed the rescue trolley crash landed on the ground on Mahamaya-Peerkho section during the mock drill. Six people were present in the trolley at the time of the accident. The State Government has set up high-level enquiry to ascertain the cause of accident leading to death of two persons. Adviser to the Governor, Iqbal Ahmad Ganai visited the Government Medical College, Hospital in Jammu to enquire



An injured person being rushed to hospital after cable car collapsed at ropeway project at Mahamaya temple in Jammu on Sunday **PTI**

about the well being of injured. He told reporters in the hospital, during a mock drill a rescue trolley of ropeway construction company Damodar Ropeways and Infra Limited (DRIL) crash landed on the ground in which one person died on the spot while another injured succumbed to his injuries. Ganai said, a safety team of Chief Engineers has been constituted to thoroughly investigate the mishap. The 1.66-km-long cable car project has two phases, first from Bahu Fort to Mahamaya Park and second from Mahamaya to Peer Kho over the Tawi river, with a total length of 1,118 metres.

Navy abandons efforts to pull out decomposed body of trapped miner

Shillong: The Indian Navy abandoned all efforts on Sunday to pull out the decomposed body of a miner that it spotted four days ago inside a coal mine in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills District, officials said. The Navy divers had spotted the decomposed body of a trapped miner on Wednesday, using an unmanned, remotely-operated vehicle (ROV) at a depth of around 160 feet inside the mine's main shaft. At least 15 miners are trapped inside the mine since December 13 last year after one of them accidentally punctured the wall of the mine, leading to its flooding. "The Navy today suspended the pulling of the remains, which they had been trying since yesterday evening, as too much disintegration (of the body) took place with every pull by the ROV jaw," operation spokesperson R Susngi said. The families of four of the 15 miners had on Saturday urged the rescuers to retrieve the decomposed body so that they could perform the last rites. A multi-agency operation, which included de-watering of the main shaft where the miners are trapped, and of the nearby mines, has failed to yield any result as the water level has not gone down. The Navy divers were awaiting further instructions from the Government, Susngi said. The family members of

the victims from Garo Hills have also been summoned to the site to help identify the body from the video shot underwater by the ROV earlier this week. An ROV operator from Chennai went on with a search operation in the nearby mines and the Coal India continued de-watering in the two nearby abandoned shafts by running their pumps for 23 hours since Saturday evening, Susngi said. In the last 46 hours, the Coal India had pumped out over 52 lakh litres of water from the nearby abandoned mines, but it was not enough to bring down the water level that was causing hindrances in the rescue work, Susngi said. The Kirloskar Brothers Limited, which has also joined the rescue efforts, had managed to pump out over 45 lakh litres of water, he said, adding Odisha Fire Services had pumped out approximately 4.5 lakh litres. Meanwhile, the Meghalaya Government was likely to apprise the Supreme Court of the problems in continuing with the search-and-rescue operations, an official said. The apex court had earlier expressed dissatisfaction with the rescue efforts to trace the miners and rapped the Meghalaya Government for not seeking Army's help. The top court is hearing a public interest litigation, seeking steps to rescue the 15 miners. **PTI**

Irani: India to soon have own standard of apparel size

Gandhinagar: Union Minister Smriti Irani on Sunday said Indian textiles and garments industry would soon get its own country-specific apparel size. Addressing the 'Textile Conclave' at the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit here, Irani said a study will be carried out before introducing the 'Size India' project for apparel measurement. "In the apparel export segment, one of the biggest challenges is that the UK has its size, the US has its size, and Europe has its size of measurement. But, India does not have it (size of apparels, such as 42, 44 and XL)," she said. "I hereby present the Central Government's resolve that 'Size India' project will soon be rolled out for the entire country, the first-of-its-kind project in the Indian history," she said, adding that a study will be undertaken for the project. **PTI**

EWS quota will get NDA 10% more votes, says Paswan

New Delhi: The measure for 10 per cent general category quota will boost BJP-led NDA's vote share by 10 per cent, paving the way for Narendra Modi's re-election as Prime Minister, Union Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said on Sunday, asserting that people will reject the Opposition's proposed grand alliance due to its inherent contradiction and instability. The BJP ally and Lok Janshakti Party president said the Modi Government's priority to long-term development policies over "populist" programmes may have caused at times some resentment in a section of society but people will vote for the Prime Minister's "strong and stable" leadership in Lok Sabha elections. He, however, hinted that the Government will come out with a bevy of schemes in the run up to the election, saying that the ruling alliance has learnt its lessons from its loss



in the recent State elections and that there are many arrows in the quiver of Prime Minister Modi. The BJP lost power to Congress in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan in December. "Some months are still left for the polls. The Government will shoot one arrow after another. What will also weigh the most on people's mind is who will be the Opposition's choice as Prime Minister," he told **PTI** in an interview. **PTI**

Didi's rally aimed at saving democracy: Shatrughan Sinha

Patna: Firing a fresh salvo at the BJP leadership and the Narendra Modi Government at the Centre, disgruntled party leader Shatrughan Sinha on Sunday said the rally at Kolkata where he shared the stage with a host of Opposition leaders was aimed at "saving Indian democracy from being ruined". The actor-turned-politician and Patna Sahib MP, who had raked the party by his presence at the rally and speaking about "tanashahi" (dictatorship) prevailing under the leadership of Modi and Amit Shah as against "lokshahi" (democracy) that characterized the Atal-Advani era, sought to twist the knife with a couple of tweets. "What an amazing gathering and what mammoth audience came together in Bengal in lakhsto listen to and support this spontaneous show of soli-

arity in favour of a change parivartan!" exclaimed Sinha in his first tweet about the public meet which was organised by West Bengal CM and TMC supreme Mamata Banerjee. Leaders of 22 Opposition parties came together at a mega rally on Saturday and declared they will put up a united fight to oust Narendra Modi Government which has "passed its expiry date". "Kudos to our sister, the great lady of Bengal, fiery Mamata di, who needs to be roundly complimented for bringing together one of largest congregations of strongest and most influential political minds and leaders from all corners of the country on the same stage under a common cause of saving the Indian democracy from being ruined," Sinha said in the second tweet. **PTI**

Maha under-trial prisoner dies, family alleges custodial torture

Mumbai: An under-trial prisoner died after being found unconscious in his cell in Maharashtra's Aurangabad district on Saturday, police said. The family of Yogesh Rathod (29), the deceased, alleged that he was tortured by police which led to his death. Rathod, a resident of Bharamba Tanda in Kannad tehsil of the district, had been arrested a few days ago in a case of house trespass, a police official said. He was sent to Harsul prison after a court remanded him in judicial custody. He was found unconscious in his cell on Saturday evening and rushed to a Government-run hospital where he was declared dead, the official said. While his family members alleged that he died due to police torture, the exact cause of death will be known after autopsy, he added. **PTI**



Agartala: Thirty one Rohingya Muslims are literally in no-man's land, holed up behind the barbed wire fencing along the Bangladesh border in Tripura since Friday, while a blame-game is on between the border guards of the two countries over their refuge. The Border Security Force (BSF) officials said six men, nine women and 16 children were detained by the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) and are behind the fencing at Rayermura in West Tripura district, about 15 km from here. While the BGB asserted that the Rohingyas came from India, the BSF denied the claim.

BSF-BGB BLAME-GAME ON

31 Rohingyas stuck on border since Friday

Both the sides have met twice since Saturday but failed to make any headway to resolve the issue. "They are stranded between the international border and the barbed wire fencing for last 48 hours. They tried to enter Indian territory from Bangladesh side and we stopped them," BSF Deputy Inspector General C L Belwa told **PTI** Sunday. The barbed wire fencing has been erected 300 feet into the Indian side from the international border. "We are supplying water and other basic needs from our own resources to the Rohingyas on humanitarian grounds since last night," the DIG said. Despite the BSF stressing that the Rohingyas were from India, the BSF said there was no tell-tale sign of breach of fence on the Indian side. The BSF has also offered the BGB to join a survey on the Indian side to identify any sign of breach in fencing. Around 8.30 pm on Friday, BGB Commanding Officer Lt Col Gomal Kabir had called up BSF Commandant Ratnesh Kumar to inform him that they had detained 31 Rohingyas at the border. "BGB commanding officer insisted that the BSF take those Rohingyas inside the Indo-

Bangladesh border fencing. Commanding Officer BGB also alleged that BSF have been pushing Rohingyas into Bangladesh territory," Belwa told reporters. "We were expecting that BGB will contact us for a flag meeting. But they did not contact us, rather we contacted them and yesterday 12 o'clock, an officer level meeting was conducted at zero line," Belwa said. He said the BSF offered BGB officials to come and survey the Indian side to see if there is any breach of the barbed wire fence. However, the BGB authorities declined the offer and stuck to their demand that the BSF must take the Rohingyas into the Indian territory. A Battalion Commander level meeting was held at the Zero Line at 11 am on Sunday. "The BGB battalion commander was of the same view that Rohingyas came from Indian side. We have denied their allegations and said there is no tell-tale sign of breach of fence on Indian side," BSF DIG Belwa said. He added that the Rohingyas might have come from the other side (Bangladesh). Twelve and 62 Rohingyas were apprehended in Tripura in 2017 and 2018 respectively. In October 2017, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had ordered all State Governments to identify and monitor Rohingya refugees. It said the Centre viewed infiltration of Rohingyas from Rakhine state of Myanmar into Indian territory as a burden on the country's resources and it aggravated security challenges to the country. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas Muslims, described by the UN as the most persecuted minority in the world, fled their homes in 2017 to escape an alleged crackdown by the Myanmarese military. Many of them reached India via Bangladesh. **PTI**

There is no alternative to Modi: Javadekar

PTI ■ PUNE

Union minister Prakash Javadekar on Sunday said there was no alternative to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and that there would be "anarchy" in his absence. Taking a dig at the Opposition rally organised by Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief Mamata Banerjee in Kolkata on Saturday, Javadekar said the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls would be fought on issues like — whether people want a "mazboot" (strong) or a "majboor" (weak) government. "Looking at yesterday's rally in Kolkata, where all the Opposition parties came together, it was evident that all these parties want to drive out Modi, but who is the alternative?"

"They cannot present an alternative, so the condition in the country is like if there is no Modi, there will be anarchy," the Union human resource development minister told reporters here.

Referring to the coalition rules of I K Gujral, Chandrashekhar and HD Deve Gowda in the past, he said people suffered during the days of those "weak governments", while on the other hand, the public had seen the benefits of a "strong and policy-driven"

government led by Modi. "Therefore, people will choose between a mazboot and a majboor government," he added.

Javadekar said the Kolkata rally showed the nervousness of the Opposition parties as they did not form any committee to draft a manifesto or a common minimum programme, but formed a panel on electronic voting machines (EVMs).

"It shows that they are already looking for an excuse for their possible defeat and it shows their nervousness," he said. The Congress and the other opposition parties wanted a "majboor" government so that they could indulge in corruption, Javadekar alleged.

"Whereas people want a mazboot government like the Modi government, which is eliminating corruption in the system and not sparing those involved in corruption," he said. Javadekar expressed confidence that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would get more seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, as compared to 2014, and that its vote share would also increase.

The saffron party had won 282 of the total 543 seats in the last general election.

"When I say the BJP will surpass the 282 number in the upcoming Lok Sabha, the reason for that is the party's tally

in West Bengal, Odisha and the north-eastern states will go up," Javadekar said.

The saffron party had launched several campaigns ahead of the polls to reach out to people, he pointed out. "We are going to run a campaign — 'mera ghar BJP ka ghar' — in the coming days, under which those who support the party and want to vote for it will hoist the party flag atop their houses," the Union minister said.

He added that in the next three months, the BJP would reach out to each and every booth in the country, showcase the work done by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in the last four-and-a-half years and expose the Opposition's "hollow politics".

Asked about the 10 per cent general category quota and its implementation, Javadekar said his department had directed all the educational institutes, including the IITs, IIMs and the central universities, to implement the quota from the coming academic year.

"A similar order has been sent to all the state governments for the implementation of the quota. We have also given a formula on how to implement the 10 per cent reservation without (affecting) the other categories' quota," he added.

Gujjars, Bakerwals being selectively targeted in Jammu, alleges Mehbooba



Former Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti along with senior party leaders addresses a Press conference in Srinagar on Sunday PTI

KHURSHED WANI ■ SRINAGAR

Former Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti on Sunday accused the Government administration of unleashing a reign of terror upon nomadic Muslim minority population in pockets of Jammu region. She alleged that the population is being hounded by "fanatic elements".

"There is selective targeting of Gujjar and Bakerwals. After the end of our Government, dozens of families were selectively served notices to vacate their homes. Today also in the name of anti-encroachment drive many families are being evicted from their homes," Mufti said at a press conference here. She said that she took up

the issue with the state Governor Satya Pal Malik in Jammu recently and he assured to look into it.

"I briefed the Governor about the situation faced by nomadic population in Jammu. He assured me that they would not be touched in winter months," she said adding that despite Governor's assurance, the harassment of nomads is going on unabated.

She asked the Governor's administration to take immediate steps to restore the confidence of this community, in the system. She said that targeting nomadic population in Jammu would impact the social fabric of the region that has safeguarded the secular values in the most trying times.

Rajnath justifies EWS quota, says Ambedkar wanted equality

Nagpur: Accusing the Congress of trying to secure votes of Dalits in the name of BR Ambedkar, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said the new law guaranteeing 10 per cent quota for the poor among the general category was in tune with Modi Government's commitment to ensure development of all sections.

The Constitutional amendment to provide the 10 per cent quota in Government jobs and higher education to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) among the general category received assent of President Ram Nath Kovind January 12.

Some sections of the society have opposed this provision saying it has violated the Constitution which doesn't recognise economic backwardness as the criterion for reservation.

Addressing a public rally here on the concluding day of the national convention of BJP's scheduled Caste (SC) cell, Singh said Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced the new reservation to realise Dalit icon Ambedkar's dream of the egalitarian society.

"Babasaheb Ambedkar had talked about liberty, equality and fraternity. He enshrined reservation in Constitution to ensure equality and the quota facility was provided for people who



Union Minister for Home Affairs and senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh with Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis and other leaders hold a torch during the party's 'Vijay Sankalp Sabha' in Nagpur, Maharashtra on Sunday PTI

were economically and socially backward. Ambedkar's dream was to ensure equality," Singh said.

The Home Minister further said those people who could not get benefits of reservation, and those among them who are economically backward who could contribute in the development of the country, should also get reservation.

"With this objective, the Prime Minister provided 10 per cent reservation to fulfil the goal of 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas'," Singh said.

Attacking Congress, the senior BJP leader said India became the fastest growing economy in the world in just 55 months under PM Modi, which

he said is the "truth" accepted by economists across the world.

"The situation will become totally clear if you compare 55 years of work by the successive Congress Governments to the work done by Modi Government in the last 55 months," he said.

He said in a group of ten nations, the Indian economy has jumped to the sixth slot from previous ninth rank in the last four-and-a-half years.

Singh said India will leave behind Russia, the USA and China to be among the top three nations by 2030, and its credit goes to the Prime Minister.

Singh said many political powers are trying to mislead the dalit community. PTI

Citizenship (Amendment) Bill not applicable to Nagaland, says CM Rao

Kohima: Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on Sunday said that the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2016 is not applicable to Nagaland as the State stands protected under the provisions of Article 371(A) and the Inner Line Permit.

He said the state cabinet which met on January 18 discussed the Bill and re-iterated the earlier decisions adopted by the Cabinet on June 5, 2018 and January 7, 2019.

"The cabinet was of the unequivocal view that the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill is not applicable to Nagaland and we stand protected under the provisions of Article 371 (A) and the Inner Line Permit (ILP) as per Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, (BEFR) of 1873, affirmed under Clause 16 of the 16 Point Agreement," Rio said in a statement.

Moreover, he said the Cabinet decided to adopt a resolution re-affirming all provisions of Article 371(A) and to strengthen the implementation of the ILP as per the Bengal Eastern Frontier

Regulation (BEFR) of 1873 that will also be taken up in the upcoming Nagaland Assembly session.

"The Cabinet also decided to refer the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill to the Standing Committee on Article 371(A) under the Nagaland Assembly to examine the issue in its entirety," Rio said.

The Cabinet decided to further appeal to the Indian government to have wider consultations with all northeastern states to ensure that the rights of the indigenous people were fully protected.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, which has triggered massive protests in the northeastern states, was passed in the Lok Sabha on January 8.

The Bill seeks to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955 to grant Indian citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who entered India before December 31, 2014. PTI

Jallikattu enters world record

Pudukottai (TN): A grand "jallikattu" (bull-taming) event held here on Sunday entered the world record for the maximum number of bulls released into the sporting arena which was over 1,300 and almost double than the previous record.

The bull taming sporting event, coordinated by Tamil Nadu Health Minister C Vijayabaskar at Viralmalai near here saw the participation of 1,354 bulls and 424 tamers.

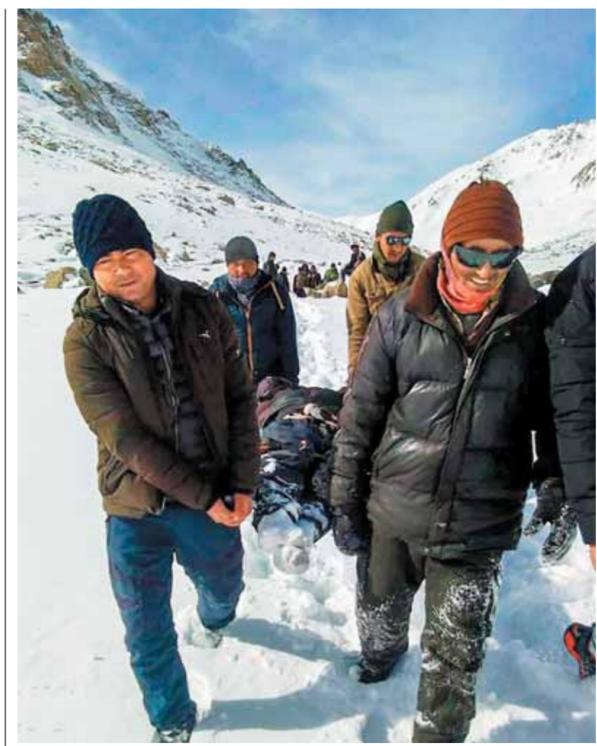
Two of the participants were killed in the event while 31 men, including some spectators, were injured, according to the district police.

"The number of 1,354 bulls that participated was almost double (than the previous record) of 647 two years ago and it is an amazing record for Tamil Nadu," a Worldkings World Records Union representative said. Although about 2,000 bulls were originally scheduled to be released into the sprawling sporting arena, it could not be completed owing to paucity of time, the organisers said.

"It was the highest number of bulls in a single day," Vijayabaskar said and added that he was happy to have coordinated the sport of valour of the Tamil people.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami hailed 'Jallikattu' as a symbol of the valour and courage of the Tamil people. Successful bull tamers and owners of bulls that could not be tamed were showered with gifts.

On January 17, a spectator died of heart attack during the bull taming sport of Jallikattu which was held at Alanganallur in Madurai district. PTI



Jammu & Kashmir Disaster Response Force discovered two more bodies from the site of the avalanche in Ladakh's Khardung La area near Leh on Sunday PTI

Massive fire at 5-storey building in south Kolkata



Firefighters douse the fire which broke out at a garment store at Gariahat Market in Kolkata on Sunday PTI

Kolkata: A major fire broke out early on Sunday at a five-storey building in southern Kolkata, gutting goods worth lakhs and destroying multiple shops next to the building, a senior fire department official said.

At least 19 fire tenders had been pressed into service to douse the fire at Traders Assembly building in Gariahat area after it was noticed around 1am. The building houses a garment store on the ground

and first floor and residential apartments on the floors above, the official told PTI.

All families have been evacuated from the building and no one was injured in the fire, the official said, adding that some people had to be taken to hospital after they complained of breathing problems. "The building does not have an elevator and people had to climb down stairs to escape the fire," the official said. PTI

AYYAPPA DEVOTEES RALLY IN KERALA

Last chance to save Sanatan Dharma, says former DGP

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

TP Senkumar, the then Director General of Police, Kerala, who also headed the Intelligence Wing, cautioned the Ayyappa devotees on Sunday that the agitation for preserving traditions and customs at Lord Ayyappa Temple at Sabarimala was the last opportunity to save the Sanatan Dharma. Addressing a mammoth rally named Ayyappa Bhaktha Samgamam at the historical Putharikandam Maidan in the Capital city, Senkumar warned the devotees that the next target of the Kerala Government would be Sri Pamanabha Swamy Temple which is believed to own treasure worth more than ₹1,50,000 crore.

"The writ petition demanding the entry of women of all ages in the Sabarimala Temple was filed by five individuals who were ignorant of the Agama Sasthras that Govern the customs and traditions of the temple. Three of the petitioners withdrew from the case once they understood the reasons behind the rules governing the worshipping by women. The present Kerala Government led by the CPI-M and the Travancore Devaswam Board did not furnish the relevant details to the Supreme Court

which resulted in the September 28, 2018 verdict by the five-member Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court," said Senkumar.

The former Kerala Police Chief accused the Kerala Government as well as some of the over zealous police officials for violating the atmosphere in Sabarimala by "air-dropping" women devotees camouflaged as men inside the sanctum with an intention to humiliate the devotees. "Would this government dare to meddle with places of worship belonging to the minority religions? The need of the hour is a provision in the Constitution which offers the rights enjoyed by the minority communities to the majority community too," said Senkumar.

The rally and meeting held to mark the protest of the Hindu community towards the Kerala Government for its "high-handed" actions in Sabarimala and elsewhere in the State turned out to be a unique event as Matha Amritanandamayi, known as the Hugging Saint of Vallikkavu making her first ever appearance in a public function. The meeting also saw saints, sants and sanyasins from all the southern States participating in the meeting despite severe criticism from the Kerala Government and the CPI-M.

The Matha and Swami Chidanandapuri, spiritual leader of the Hindus in the State made an important disclosure in their speeches. "The mandatory 41 days penance observed by the Ayyappa devotees as a prelude to their pilgrimage to the shrine is the time of the year when the women in the rural households see peace and happiness. This is because the pilgrims stay away from consumption of alcohol," said Swamy Chidanandapuri. The Matha said that a research held by the medical team of her Ashram has found that the number of patients brought to hospitals in Kollam and neighbouring districts were 40 per cent less during the Sabarimala season because of the disciplined life and abstinence from liquor.

She said she was for gender justice and equality. "But one should not destroy traditions and culture in the name of gender justice. If the temple culture is destroyed, the temple ceases to be a place of worship," warned the soft-spoken Matha. The Samgamam had its own dramatic scenes. Bharat Bhoshan, brother of Kanaka Durga, who entered the sanctum of Sabarimala, declared from the stage that his family or Kanaka Durga's husband's family won't accept her till she apologises to the devotees for violating the tradition.

Vice-President for united efforts to fight terrorism, corruption

Gandhinagar: Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday urged the world community to come together to address the "pressing issues" of terrorism, climate change and corruption.

Speaking at the valedictory ceremony of the ninth edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit here, VP Naidu said these issues need to be addressed for ensuring peace, prosperity and the partnership of individuals in the inclusive growth story.

"The entire world must be peaceful. Peace is the prerequisite for progress. I would like to tell the entire world community from this forum of the Vibrant Gujarat Summit that three important challenges are there before the humanity, before the world...One of them is terror. Terror has no religion. It is the enemy of humanity. It has to be rooted out totally by all countries coming together. That is the need of the hour," he said.

The vice president also urged the world community to work together to ensure that the effect of climate change is minimised.

"We must all come together, work together to take care, to see that the climate change effect is minimised, and we all take proactive steps to face the challenge of climate change," he said and praised the "solar alliance" initiative.

International Solar Alliance is an alliance of more than 121 countries initiated by India, most of them being sunshine countries, which lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.

Speaking on corruption, VP Naidu said that that practice "eats" into the vitals of our system, and is a big challenge world-wide.

He also appealed to the world community to come together "to exchange information about illegal bank accounts of different countries and have treaties on economic fugitives who loot and cheat the countries".

"If the world has to be peaceful, prosperous, and see inclusive growth of everybody becoming the partner in the development stories, they must all come together on these three major issues. And I hope everybody concerned should apply their mind and give a serious thought to these three things," he said. VP Naidu said India's growth in the last 15 years is not limited to industry alone, but was also witnessed in the fields of agriculture, infrastructure, rural development, and IT services.

He said India was trying to go beyond the trade and investment and hoping to develop "long-lasting bonds between nations that will cement the seeds of trust and cooperation".

"This will be paramount to identifying solutions to issues in the economic, social and cultural sphere, especially in today's world which is much heterogeneous," he said, adding that initiatives like the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit are endeavours in the same direction. India's growth is supported by "progressive and long-term reforms, sound financial acumen and the impetus given to building a robust infrastructure", the VP said. PTI

'Congress best equipped to lead alliance against BJP'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress is "best equipped" to lead the opposition's charge against the BJP in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav said Sunday, asserting that the grand old party will have to handle its leadership role with "large-heartedness" and accommodate regional parties.

Yadav also hailed the Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party alliance in Uttar Pradesh and emphasised that his "courtesy call" meetings with Akhilesh Yadav and Mayawati post the tie-up should not be construed as a "pressure tactic" aimed at the Congress. In an exclusive interview to PTI, the Rashtriya Janata Dal leader said since Congress is India's oldest and currently the second-biggest political party having a pan-India presence, it is in a very strong position to win maximum number of seats among the opposition parties. In 2014 Lok Sabha polls, among the prospective opposition grand alliance parties, the Congress had won 44 seats, the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress won 34, the Samajwadi Party won five, while the RJD had bagged four seats. "I don't find anything wrong if the Congress plays a pivotal role in forming the alliance or taking the leadership role of the alliance into the elections. But having said that, they have to accept that each state has different ground realities," Yadav said. The Congress, being the party with national acceptance and maximum footprint in the opposition, is "undoubtedly best equipped" to lead the opposition's charge against the Bharatiya Janata Party or the National Democratic Alliance, the former Bihar deputy chief minister asserted. "However, the Congress will have to handle their leadership role with large-heartedness and play a proactive role by accommo-



dating regional parties with their agenda. "In states where Congress don't have a robust base, it must allow regional outfits to occupy the frontal-attack position against the BJP," Yadav said, emphasising that regional parties have a greater ability to transfer votes. The concentration is on winnability, hence the coalition must be decided state-wise and seat wise, said the 29-year-old son of former Bihar chief minister Lalu Prasad. Every party will have to compromise or lend space to other parties depending on the situation in a particular state for forming a winning alliance, Yadav said while replying to a question on whether the Congress has to be more giving to regional parties to strengthen the opposition coalition. Asked if leaving out the Congress from the SP-BSP tie-up will impact the opposition's national level coalition, he said the people of India feel they have been "duped badly" and have made up their mind to get rid of "propagandists" for their own well-being. The people are wise enough to understand which fighting block can be their best bet to defeat the BJP, he said. On whether the SP and BSP will be a part of the 'mahagathbandhan' in Bihar, the RJD leader said principally all opposition parties are together against the BJP-led alliance.

Didi's headline act

The Mamata-led United India rally infused blood in the Opposition campaign. Will it devise a poll charter now?



If there was some doubt about the visual solidity and chemistry of the Opposition *mahagathbandhan*, then the United India rally organised by the key federal front architect and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee changed that rather dramatically. With 23 leaders arrayed on stage, each articulating talk points that have a huge electoral impact and projecting an issue-based alternative rather than a personality test of Modi vs Rest, there was some seriousness of purpose on display. All of them, perhaps given the tidal surge of a live and expectant audience, agreed that they needed to sacrifice parochial concerns of turf politics and micro territoriality and in a time-bound manner look at the macro template of the Lok Sabha elections. This mutual accommodation of interests for unseating the NDA may have sounded hyperbolic so far but at least today's acknowledgment that it be confined to the concerns of the general election only was a public invocation to practical logic. Of course, there was no discussion on the hows of on-ground equations or even post-poll convergence but there was grandstanding that without keeping it together, it would be difficult to effect a change. Old warhorse and JD(S) leader H D Deve Gowda categorically laid out the specifics, asking all senior leaders to not waste time, get down to the job of formulating an action plan of a new united front and go to people with that vision. He reminded that as Prime Minister himself he had sanctioned the Bogibeel bridge in Assam and seen the Metro rail through but unfortunately others encashed the projects once they got over. So a vision paper was the need of the hour. Of course, there were the usual noises made about vote-catching issues like minority and Dalit rights, state of the economy, Rafale, farmers' issues, the citizenship bill and the most overarching of them all, the arrogance and presumption of majoritarianism.

Then there was the pan-India panorama, beginning with the change-making young Gujarati leaders like Hardik Patel and Jignesh Mewani, an array of Northeastern leaders like Gegong Apang — a clear challenge to the Modi regime's focus on the Northeast — stalwarts like Sharad Pawar, Sharad Yadav, Farooq Abdullah and Yashwant Sinha and, of course, the transformative chief ministers like TDP's Chandrababu Naidu, AAP's Arvind Kejriwal, SP's Akhilesh Yadav and Mayawati's proxy Satish Mishra, Akhilesh and Kejriwal managing to sway the crowd quite a bit. It was this chief ministerial line-up of proven track record that lent robustness to the idea of a federal front rather than a Congress-led alternative. If each Chief Minister was able to consolidate their home states, collectively they could call the shots and force Congress to be their peer instead of the king. While two other Chief Ministers, BJD's Naveen Patnaik and Telangana's Chandrashekhar Rao, stayed away to appear equidistant, the fact that the rest held their own despite the presence of the Congress brass was more purposeful. Of course, it was Mamata who had reached out to Rao first but the latter appeared like a safe player. The Congress — although lending its blessings, with Sonia Gandhi sending a letter of support through Mallikarjun Kharge and Abhishek Manu Singhvi saying no deals with regional allies would split votes — seemed to be in need of being convinced rather than sound convincing. The SP-BSP-TMC combined vote bloc, given their tested arithmetic, have managed to pose a counter though all three have to ensure the Congress does not end up eroding their bases in a multilateral fight. Even for Mamata, the local Congress and the Left stayed away given their antagonism. Nobody talked of a prime ministerial candidate either, letting the seats and electoral performance decide the chair. As for Mamata, she may have strategically taken a step back to let other leaders do the talking but she did manage to get them together, advertise that Bengal farmers were not in distress with assured incomes and exude her kind of magnetism. One that even made stentorian DMK leader MK Stalin speak in Bengali. Hopefully, collective action won't be a thumbnailed.

The new retail king

Mukesh Ambani wants to dethrone Amazon and Walmart from the Indian e-commerce space. It may not be easy



It is quite clear that Mukesh Ambani has been wanting to get into online retail for some time. A lot of the discussions around a new e-commerce policy being put together by this government can clearly be seen to be influenced by his vision. The tycoon's comments at the Vibrant Gujarat summit about 'data colonialisation', which indirectly attacks foreign players in the online space from social media companies to e-commerce players, has been timed to make maximum impact. And Mukesh Ambani could well be very

successful in this space given the tremendous success he has had in telecom. Reliance Jio has pretty much overnight become one of the largest players in India and has done wonders to Ambani's reputation. From a man routinely dissed by some politicians and a person whose reputation was not necessarily the best among the public, he is now widely considered the man who brought down the prices of data. Frankly, there is little arguing with that contention. But transforming telecom and transforming retail, especially online retail, are two different things altogether. However, one stratagem that Ambani used in telecom might come in handy in online retail as well, which is going after the mass market instead of the top-end. While India is a very lopsided consumer economy with the top 25 million households contributing an outsize amount to the economy, Ambani, with Jio, clearly looked at the next hundred million big spenders, who may not be big spenders today but as the Indian economy continues to grow, this aspirational 'middle class' is where the big bucks are.

Or so the idea is. The 'great' Indian middle-class has been a fairly ephemeral beast so far, its potential held back by a lack of jobs or as some have described, enough high-paying jobs, which is evident from income tax data. However, Mukesh Ambani seems confident that this growth will come, a confidence that American investors in the Indian e-commerce space Amazon and Walmart also feel confident about. The changes in policy that appear to be driven by Reliance might, however, have an impact of driving them away. The last thing Indian consumers need is a monopoly but that is the way that Reliance has always operated. While we wish Mukesh Ambani the best in his endeavours, the government through its policies should ensure a competitive sector that is viable and thriving.

Anatomy of a heat shield

The impact of climate change would leave a large part of the population vulnerable in India. It needs to develop its industrial strengths in a technology of the future



RK PACHAURI

In December, 2018 a two-week long event took place in Katowice, Poland, which represented the 24th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. It is relevant to know that COP24 made some headway, despite some serious and disturbing developments on the part of the US, Saudi Arabia and Russia. The Conference in Katowice was preceded by the completion of a special report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which clearly brought out some of the impacts and risks associated with temperatures between 1.5°C to 2°C, and beyond. This report, which highlighted some of the impacts that would be projected for temperatures between 1.5°C to 2°C, clearly emphasised the need to maintain global temperatures below 1.5°C by the end of the century. The earlier target of 2°C laid down in the Paris agreement — with a clear provision for revisiting the target of 1.5°C based on the IPCC's assessment — would certainly result in a number of climate related risks, which the world needs to avoid with mitigation of emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and adaptation measures.

Awareness about climate change has changed substantially over the last 11 years or so, since the Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC came out in 2007. This was further strengthened in 2011 when a special report of the IPCC on extreme events and disasters led to an acceptance of the fact that climate change would be accompanied by an increasing frequency and intensity of extreme events, including heat waves, extreme precipitation events, sea level-related events and large-scale precipitation associated with hurricanes and cyclones in different parts of the world. Indeed, the public at large is now witnessing some of these extreme events, including the terrible wild fires in California, which were clearly the result of extreme heat waves and dry conditions. In some cases across the world these are also followed by mud slides which cause further disaster with rainfall that follows.

India is no exception to some of these impacts. In fact, a report published by the Lancet entitled as '2018 Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change' clearly establishes the linkages between health and climate change and implications for India's policy commitments. For instance, the health effects associated with heat waves in India are increasing, and the Indian Government and related public health agencies need to identify established hotspots in India through rigorous tracking and modelling of meteorological data. Health effects include increased rates of heat stress and heat stroke, exacerbation of heart failure and acute kidney injury from dehydration.

It was in 2003 that Andhra Pradesh suffered the longest ever heat wave, and the



then Chief Minister of the State, Chandrababu Naidu, set up a committee under this writer to not only look at immediate impacts of what had happened but also make projections for the future. It is unfortunate that for a major calamity such as this there was hardly any coverage by the media or through other channels by which those who were affected by heat stress could find relief and survival. Typically, a number of those human beings who succumbed to these conditions often went inside their homes, which were typically far hotter than the ambient temperatures outside. They had no awareness of and did not resort to oral rehydration therapy; many deaths occurred as a result.

Many lives would have been saved, if this very simple measure could have been conveyed by the media and other channels to the areas which were the real hotspots at that stage. The Lancet report also talks about the large-scale loss of economic opportunities on account of heat waves, which in particular have clear economic implications for the rural poor spread across various parts of the country.

It is sad that despite the large population of rural households, we have not really come up with alternative



IT IS SAD THAT DESPITE THE LARGE POPULATION OF RURAL HOUSEHOLDS, WE HAVE NOT REALLY COME UP WITH ALTERNATIVE MEANS BY WHICH SUITABLE DESIGNS OF HOMES, INCLUDING PASSIVE DESIGNS, ON WHICH CONSIDERABLE KNOWLEDGE EXISTS, COULD BE EXECUTED FOR THE POOR



means by which suitable designs of homes, including passive designs, on which considerable knowledge exists today, could be constructed for the poor. Indeed, those who are part of the middle class or above can often resort to air conditioning — and even heating in the winter — but it is the poor who are exposed to the elements, and the progressive impacts of climate change.

In the follow-up of this article, some global implications of climate change and the need for maintaining the 1.5°C target by the end of the century would be explored. However, it is important to remember that for India as a society, the impacts of climate change would leave a large part of the population vulnerable. If global action is neglected, in which India has high stakes, then we cannot blame others as a nation, which many developed countries have been responsible for as a measure of neglect for much too long.

In particular, quite apart from the economic merits of large-scale renewable energy production, which the Government of India has now committed itself to, what is perhaps of even greater priority is to electrify those villages which are as yet un-electrified, and which may have major constraints in supply of grid based power. The Energy and

Resources Institute (TERI) launched a major programme in 2008 called "Lighting a Billion Lives", which focussed on the provision of lighting in the homes of these villages, using renewable energy, mainly through supply of PV based power. India had a great opportunity to not only complete this task within its own borders, but perhaps make the experience available to homes in Africa and other parts of the developing world. There is, of course, a significant benefit in exploiting economies of scale both through an approach such as the programme on "Lighting a Billion Lives" as well as large-scale supply of grid-based power using renewables.

India can become a leader in mitigation of emissions of GHGs and set a path for growth with significantly low carbon emissions. India may thus develop its industrial strengths in a technology of the future, with significant commercial benefits and reach across other regions of the world. This, of course, would also have major implications for action at the global level for meeting the provisions of the Paris agreement and maintaining the limit of 1.5°C, which the next article would focus on.

(The writer is former chairman, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2002-15)

SOUNDBITE

Strong India-Africa relations will redefine the contours of the international order on egalitarian lines. We view our engagement with Africa through the prism of our own experience.

External Affairs Minister
—Sushma Swaraj



The importance of both India and Pakistan is such in international affairs, I hope that the two countries will be able to engage in a meaningful dialogue.

UN chief
—Antonio Guterres



The majority of society has not grown up intellectually to embrace the truth. That is why we are still living in the same society and stuck in time.

Actor
—Nawazuddin Siddiqui



The Indian Prime Minister makes fun of the opposition alliance, but his party made the most unethical alliance in Kashmir. What would he say about it?

Congress leader
—Abhishek Manu Singhvi



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Epic win

Sir — This refers to the report, "India finish off in style" (January 19). My hearty congratulations to Team India for an exceptional victory in the Third One Day International (ODI) match, played against the Aussies at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. With the victory, the Indian Team clinched the series of three ODI matches with a 2-1 lead. The win is laudable as it is for the first time that the Indian team has defeated Team Australia in their home ground in an ODI series and a Test Series as well. Their splendid performance have heartened all the Indian fans.

The Indian cricket team's wicketkeeper-batsman and former skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni has made a massive comeback in the ODIs. He consecutively scored three 50s in the three ODIs and also remained unbeatable (Not Out) in the last two ODIs played at the Adelaide Oval and Melbourne Cricket Ground respectively. Considering the bowling side, the Indian leg spinner Yuzvendra Chahal highly impressed the fans after he took six wickets at the Melbourne

Only Modi can change BJP's fortunes

The BJP is looking at novel ways to boost its sagging fortunes for the 2019 elections. In 2014, it had catchy slogans — banking on an extremely strong anti-incumbency — to oust the UPA Government. Five years around, the NDA is grappling with anti-incumbency. The biggest gamble or mistake — demonetisation — has had an impact on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's image. When the 'note ban' came into being, people generally welcomed it though they had to wait for hours for their own hard-earned money. They put up with the tribulation by pinning their faith on their leader and reconciling themselves to the general feeling that he was in charge and control.

The Vijay Mallyas, the Nirav Modis and Mehul Chokhis actually provided a splendid opportunity for the Opposition to tell the people why Modi had "snatched their money away." The BJP's National Council Meeting at New Delhi has given people an inkling on the party's plans for the election. Honesty, stability, courage, secu-



Ganapathi Bhat
Akola

ground without any difficulty. Tushar Anand Bihar

Records broken

Sir — This refers to the report, "India finish off in style" (January 19). Indian Cricket Team has won its first-ever bilateral ODI series against Australia on their home

ground. The former Indian captain MS Dhoni's unbeaten 87 runs propelled India to a comfortable run chase after Australia were bundled out for a modest score of 230. On top of that, Yuzvendra Chahal recorded his best ever match figures in an ODI; he picked up 6 for 42. Indian players went the extra mile to exhibit good performance and vital processes on the ground. It was

a collective effort from the entire team to pull back two back-to-back wins to seal the ODI series. From Dhoni to Kohli, Chahal to Bhuvneshwar Kumar, almost every player played a crucial role and will remember this tour for a very long time.

Tarik Hasan
Lucknow

Not acceptable

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "A morality play" (January 19). Keeping the interest of the family above, the Supreme Court would have done well if it had ordered for closure of dance bars. Dance bars are a gateway for violence and troubles at home. It is foolish to think that dance bars only provide employment. While a large section of people is unable to make ends meet, others having excessive wealth over their needs are indulging in merry-making without giving thought to the ill-effects of their actions on society and nation as a whole.

KV Seetharamaiah
Hassan

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Systematic destruction

Tilting at each other using extreme expletives seems to be the rule of the day. When accusations fly sharp, logic is the first casualty



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

The current social environment in India has some distinguishing characteristics. It is a high decibel environment. Whether it is the television chat show or the public opinion leaders in action, the pitch is high, the language is sharp and moderation is conspicuous by its absence. Tilting at each other using extreme expletives and incoherent logic seems to be the rule of the day. This cannot be a sensible way of either individual or social discourse. When accusations fly sharp, logic is the first casualty. So the subject or the topic becomes irrelevant and aggression becomes paramount. It is becoming commonplace with some to say that our institutions are under attack. The question automatically arises: From which quarter?

Consider the case of the Supreme Court, which is the ultimate custodian of collective morality. Not so long ago the Chief Justice of India (CJI) was being threatened with impeachment. This is a grave matter on more than one score. Since 1947, there has never been a case where there was a threat held out of impeaching any constitutional authority. Then came the judgement over the number of days that would be granted for voting in the Karnataka Assembly to prove one's majority. The Supreme Court judge, under the chairmanship of the then CJI, decided to close the matter by reducing the number of days given by the Governor of Karnataka to prove majority to 48 hours. The rest is history.

The purpose of these remarks is not to comment on the judgement of the Governor or the wisdom of the Supreme Court bench. The focus of this narrative is merely to highlight the strangely quiet way in which, after this judgement, the proponents of the impeachment of the Supreme Court Chief Justice in the Rajya Sabha allowed the matter to lapse. To the layman, there are only two options in drawing a conclusion. One is that the proponents of the impeachment had a sudden change of heart and the overlap of the timing with the vote of confidence in the Karnataka Vidhan Sabha was a coincidence. The second option is that the movement for impeachment was essentially a political act aimed at warning the Chief Justice to 'behave himself' as seen by some. Once the key player read the message that was delivered, the select Opposition did not find it necessary to push through their demands. It stretches the imagination to talk of the first option at face value. The protagonists of the impeachment move are sharp people with good legal mind and great ability at marshalling a given argument. They acted deliberately and buried the hatchet, when the Chief Justice was interpreted as serving their purpose. If the latter was the case, as seems likely, the damage done to the institution of justice is something to ponder about. If this was an isolated case, not too much need be made of it beyond a point.

However, the story goes on. The statutes have it that the Director of CBI will be appointed on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, Chief Justice of India and the leader of the biggest Opposition party in the Lok Sabha. Nearly two years ago, Alok Verma was appointed as the Director. The leader of the biggest Opposition party at that point of time put in a note of dissent. Around 23 months later when circumstances led to the consideration of removing him, the matter came up for discussion to the same committee. The committee deemed it desirable that the serving director should quit. The same person in the committee, who had given a note of dissent at the time of the appointment, said Verma should not be sent away. In this case, too, two possibilities are there. First, the similarity in two notes of dissent is coincidental. Second, the notes of dissents were dissent for the sake of dissent. It is for anyone to judge what this kind of behaviour indicates.

Several other examples can be cited but this collective indication of damage to institutions can't do anyone any good. Never the less juggernaut rolls on. The Prime Minister of the country has been called a 'chor' more than once by the president of a major national party. It has been repeated over and over again. If indeed the Prime Minister is a chor, then he should have been proceeded against in Parliament. Name-calling may be yet another novel way of strengthening the institution devised by this particular person but that is not how public institutions are normally built. In this case, the options of interpretation-coincidence or otherwise, raised in other two instances above, are not available. Alas, the apparent observation seems to be: There is more to map on how institutions get destroyed.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

SHATRUGHAN SINHA HAS BEEN SPEAKING AGAINST THE PARTY AT VARIOUS PLATFORMS. AND THE PARTY WILL TAKE COGNISANCE OF IT.
 —BJP'S NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON
 RAJIV PRATAP RUDY



I'M NOT AFRAID OF BEING REMOVED FROM THE RULING PARTY. I'LL CONTINUE TO SHOW MIRROR TO THE PARTY AND CALL A SPADE A SPADE.
 —BJP LEADER
 SHATRUGHAN SINHA

Demystifying Rafale riddle

The UPA created the policy of allowing foreign defence manufacturers to decide their partners for fulfilling offset obligations. Why is it having a problem with Dassault's selection then?



PATHIKRIT PAYNE

The debate surrounding the purchase of 36 Rafale jets by the Modi Government from Dassault Aviation has one critical element that needs to be mentioned. It was an emergency purchase necessitated by the dwindling fleet of the IAF, massive fleet augmentation by both Pakistan and China in the last decade and negotiations between Dassault and HAL over production of Rafale in India reaching a dead end. The 36 fighters or two squadrons, one each for the western and eastern fronts, are expected to contain the downside of the IAF fleet even as negotiations continue for bigger deals.

Why 36 and not 126: An emergency purchase cannot be of the entire quantity but of the bare minimum requirement and thus the order was for 36 and not 126. Also, as mentioned by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, there is enough precedence of India opting for two squadrons initially while acquiring new platforms as was the case with acquisition of MiG-29, MiG-23 and Mirage-2000s in the 1980s and then going forward for follow-on acquisition of more platforms once IAF was reasonably acclimatised itself with the platform.

Government in process of acquiring 229 combat craft in total: Further, the decision of the Modi Government to purchase 36 Rafale jets was complemented with RFP sent by IAF to HAL for an additional 83 LCA in Mark 1A configuration. Likewise, an RFI has also been issued for acquisition of 110 combat craft to be made in India by a shortlisted global aerospace manufacturer under the strategic partnership model. Therefore, India is in the process of acquisition of 229 combat craft for IAF in total. This mixes the false argument that Government is only buying 36 craft.

Why Rafale: Dassault Rafale was shortlisted for IAF during the UPA era. Spread over several months, IAF had already conducted extensive technical and flight evaluations, based on more than 600 parameters. Thus, purchasing Rafale by the Modi Government made sense. Just because of stalled negotiations between HAL and Dassault, it would have made no sense if the NDA Government had chosen some other jet or started the process all over again.

What went wrong with HAL: In fact, negotiations between HAL and Dassault reaching a dead-end had little to do with the quality of Rafale and more to do with the refusal of Dassault to agree to the humongous man-hour quoted by HAL (2.7 times more than what Dassault needs to make a Rafale) for the deal, and also, the refusal of Dassault to guarantee the quality of production if the jets were to be built by HAL in India. Under the MMRCA project, HAL was supposed to manufacture 108 planes in India while 18 were to be procured in fly-away condition from Dassault's factory. This was eventually scrapped.

Incidentally, Dassault's complaints about HAL's production quality has precedence too. In 2015, Boeing had walked out of a contract with HAL for construction of weapons bay doors for P81 Poseidon aircraft due to alleged 'poor quality' of production by HAL. Before that, WikiLeaks released a confidential cable sent by former US Ambassador to India Timothy Roemer in which he wrote, "The potential for HAL to successfully partner with US firms on a truly advanced aircraft remains untested and suspect."



On the issue of why 36 Rafales ordered by the Modi Government are not being manufactured in India, the UPA should first answer why its purchase of aircraft like C-17, C-130J and P-8I Poseidon happened as off-the-shelf purchases from abroad instead of them being manufactured in India by HAL. If the rationale then was justified that the quantum was too small for licence production in India, the same logic applies now too for 36 Rafale.

Myth surrounding CCS approval: A dubious allegation that has often been made by Opposition parties is that the Modi Government went ahead and announced the deal without necessary approval of the Cabinet Committee of Security or CCS. For the uninitiated, as per Defence Procurement Procedure, CCS approval is needed just before signing of the final contract with equipment manufacturer for a deal, and not before that. Incidentally, when Prime Minister Modi announced in France in April 2015 that India would acquire 36 Dassault Rafale in fly-away condition from France, it was a mere 'Statement of Intent' which does not need CCS approval. This was followed by intense negotiation on pricing over several months by the Contract Negotiation Committee. As per reports, the CCS approval was given in August 2016 followed by signing of the final contract in September 2016, which is absolutely in tune with laid down rules.

Myth of ₹520 crore price: During his speech in Lok Sabha in July 2018, Congress chief Rahul Gandhi had stated that UPA had negotiated a price of ₹520 crore for each Rafale combat jet. One should ask Congress if this includes the cost of missiles, avionics, spares and training. If yes, then where is the documentary evidence? If not, then what was UPA negotiating for ₹520 crore? Why could it not conclude the deal with Dassault even then?

In reality, for ₹520 crore in the present day, one would not even get the chassis of a Rafale jet, leave alone a battle-proven, combat capable aircraft armed with missiles and avionics. In the battlefield, a fighter jet without requisite weapon systems, cutting edge avionics and spares is comparable to a bullock cart which may be good enough for air show acrobatics but not good enough for fighting wars and winning them.

As per reports, the Rafales ordered by Modi Government would be armed with Scalp cruise missiles with a 500 km range, air-to-air missiles like Meteor with around 100 km range, Thales made Spectra Electronic Warfare Suite, RBE2 AESA radar and Thales' Airborne Reconnaissance Observation System, namely AREOS. There are also reports of specific enhancements (possibly to carry Brahmos) to be made on Rafales for India. All these cost money. Therefore, in addition to the price of the basic craft negotiated by Modi Government for ₹670 crore a piece (compared to ₹737 Crore of UPA for the basic craft) the rest of the cost can be justifiably attributed to weapon systems and avionics.

Additionally, the current deal for 36 Rafales also has an unprecedented 50 per cent offset and local sourcing clause, which means that Dassault and its tier-1 vendors would have to invest back around ₹30,000 crore in developing aerospace capabilities in India through joint ventures with Indian companies, source components from them and thus eventually help Indian companies become part of the global aerospace supply chain.

The irrationality of ₹520 crore claim: The irrationality of the ₹520 crore price quoted by Rahul Gandhi can be proved by the fact that for a basic platform of LCA MK 1A, HAL is quoting a price of ₹463 crore a piece, which does not even include cost of logistics or weapon systems. Does it then make sense if it is claimed that a weapon and avionics-laced fifth generation Rafale (which is a generation ahead of the LCA MK1A), would be made available to India for a mere ₹520 crore? If in 2011, UPA could spend \$3.9 billion for upgradation of 25-year-old Mirage 2000s of IAF wherein it agreed to pay \$2.4 billion to Dassault for upgradation, an additional \$1 billion for complementary weapons and another \$500 million more for developing a facility for HAL to get them modernised here with Dassault's support, then one wonders on what ground Rahul Gandhi expects an armed Rafale to cost a mere ₹520 crore a piece in 2016.

Truth about offset: Perhaps the biggest misinformation that has been spread systematically is that the Anil Ambani Group has replaced HAL in

the Rafale deal and that Ambani's company would be getting ₹30,000 crore of contracts. First, Reliance Defence has not replaced HAL. Rafales being procured by the Modi Government would be built in France and not in India. Therefore, there is no question of them being made by Reliance. Second, of the ₹30,000 crore worth of offset and local component sourcing obligation of Dassault and its tier-1 vendors, namely Safran and Thales, the biggest beneficiary is DRDO.

Recently, a television channel graphically explained how DRDO would get ₹9000 crore worth of offset benefits through collaboration with Safran, which would help it in reviving the stalled Kaveri engine programme. The remaining ₹21,000 crore worth of offset obligations are to be split among around 90 odd companies which are proposed offset partners of Dassault, Thales and Safran. Out of those 90 companies, Reliance has one joint venture each with Thales and Dassault. The list also includes other companies like the state-owned BEL, Samtel, HCL, Mahindra Aerostructures, L&T, IBM India, TCS, Tata Advanced Systems, Godrej & Boyce and Wipro Infrastructure Engineering to name a few. As per media reports, the total offset contracts accruing to Reliance Defence may be just over three per cent of the ₹30,000-crore offsets in the offering.

Incidentally, it was during the UPA era that a policy decision was institutionalised which stated, "The OEM/vendor/Tier-1 sub-vendor will be free to select the Indian offset partner for implementing the offset obligation, provided the IOP has not been barred from doing business by the Ministry of Defence." This is as per Section 4.3 of the 'Defence Procurement Procedure-Revision of Defence Offset Guidelines', approved by the Ministry of Defence on July 23, 2012. In other words, it was the UPA which created the policy of allowing the foreign defence manufacturers to decide their Indian partners for offset obligation fulfilment. If Rahul Gandhi had no problem with this policy during the UPA era, one wonders why he has a problem with Dassault's selection of offset partners now? (The writer is a New Delhi-based strategic affairs analyst)

Syria's carnival of treachery

It would be wrong to blame it all on Trump. Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is much better informed than the US President and probably a lot smarter too, but he is just as impulsive, just as ruthless, just as much a bringer of chaos



GWYNNE DYER

"Where America retreats, chaos follows," said US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Cairo last week. It's not the sort of remark you'd expect from an American diplomat only three weeks after President Donald Trump declared that US troops were pulling out of Syria. Is it possible that behind Pompeo's severe and even pompous exterior there lurks a secret ironist?

Probably not. Pompeo truly believes (like many American evangelical Christians) that the United States is engaged in a struggle of good against evil in the Middle East. "It is a never-ending struggle ... until the Rapture," he said three years ago.

He may just be angry at Trump,

in a passive-aggressive way, for abandoning Syria to the (evil) Iranian and Russian forces that back Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian dictator.

At any rate, Pompeo is right about the chaos that will follow, but it would be wrong to blame it all on Trump. Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is much better informed than the American President and probably a lot smarter too, but he is just as impulsive, just as ruthless, just as much a bringer of chaos.

It was Erdogan, in a telephone conversation in mid-December, who persuaded Trump that pulling all the US troops out of Syria would be a good idea. Turkey would be happy to take the strain instead.

Trump has always opposed America's endless Middle Eastern wars, so he swallowed Erdogan's suggestion hook, line and sinker — and tweeted his decision to pull the US troops out without discussing it with anybody. Only later did the

remaining grown-ups in the White House explain to him that Erdogan planned to subjugate or kill America's main allies in Syria, the Kurds.

To his credit, Trump hated the idea of betraying the Syrian Kurds, whose militia, the People's Protection Units (YPG), suffered thousands of deaths while helping US forces to defeat the fanatical jihadis of Islamic State.

Trump still wanted to bring the US troops home, but now he had one condition. The Kurds must promise not to invade north-eastern Syria and crush the YPG as soon as the US troops leave.

Erdogan replied that nothing Trump said or did could stop him from destroying these Kurdish 'terrorists' (who have never attacked Turkey). At which point, on Monday past, Donald Trump tweeted that the United States "will devastate Turkey economically if they hit Kurds."

All clear so far? Good. You'd never guess, from the

story thus far, that the United States and Turkey have been close allies for the past half-century but the alliance is fading fast. Erdogan has been playing his own hand in the Middle East and playing it quite badly.

The 'Sultan', as his admirers call him, wants to secure his own one-man rule and re-Islamise Turkey, which had evolved into a secular and democratic republic over the past 80 years. He also wants to promote Sunni Islam throughout the region. The two goals are not fully compatible, so he shifts position a lot.

When the revolt in Syria broke out in 2011 during the Arab spring, Erdogan supported it because Bashar al-Assad's regime is dominated by Alawites, a Shia Muslim sect. He kept the border open and let supplies and recruits flow into the rebels, including even the Islamic State extremists.

When Russia intervened militarily to save Assad in 2015, Erdogan was so angry that he even

had the Turkish air force ambush and shoot down a Russian bomber. But he was almost equally angry with the United States, which had made an alliance with the Kurds of northern Syria to fight against Islamic State.

The Kurds gradually choked off the aid coming in to Islamic State from Turkey, and IS has now lost almost all its territory. So Erdogan told Trump he could bring the US troops home now, and Trump believed him.

But what Erdogan actually wants to do is crush the Syrian Kurds, which he can do once the US troops leave.

Erdogan thinks the Syrian Kurds are allied with the Turkish Kurds, who make up one-fifth of Turkey's population, live just across the border from Syria and are currently at war with Erdogan's regime. (That's why he calls them 'terrorists'.)

The weird thing is that four years ago Erdogan was on the brink of making peace with the

Kurds. There was a ceasefire, the Turkish Kurds were no longer demanding independence and he was negotiating a compromise settlement that enhanced Kurdish rights within Turkey.

But then he lost a parliamentary election in 2015, mainly because the Kurds stopped voting for him. So he re-opened the war against the Kurds, wrapped himself in the Turkish flag, and won the next election on an ultra-nationalist platform.

All Kurds are now the enemy, they are all terrorists, and they must be crushed.

Given Erdogan's ruthlessness and Trump's volatility, I have no idea how all this works out. Badly, I suspect.

But I actually admire Trump's refusal to betray his allies, once he realised what Erdogan was up to. You don't see that much in the Middle East.

Of course, it probably won't last. (The writer is an independent journalist)



THE NEXT TWO YEARS OF TRUMP

Trump came into office ill-prepared to lead the country, a blustery character too arrogant to recognise the weaknesses amid his strengths. He stumbled into the biggest scandal of his presidency — the Russia investigation. For the next two years, Americans will stand on either side of the wall and yell at each other. The country is strong enough to handle this political trauma. But it won't be better. (Chicago Tribune editorial)

Soon, no e-way bill if GST returns not filed for 6 months



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Non-filers of GST returns for 6 consecutive months will soon be barred from generating e-way bills for movement of goods.

The Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) is developing such IT system that businesses who have not filed returns for two straight return filing cycle, which is 6 months, would be barred from generating e-way bills, an official said.

"As soon as the new IT system which will ensure barring of e-way Bill generation if returns are not filed for 6 months is put in place, the new rules will be notified," an official said.

The move, officials believe,

would help check Goods and Services Tax (GST) evasion.

Central tax officers have detected 3,626 cases of GST evasion/violations cases, involving ₹15,278.18 crore in April-December period.

Touted as an anti-evasion measure, e-way bill system was rolled out on April 1, 2018, for moving goods worth over ₹50,000 from one state to another. The same for intra or within the state movement was rolled out in a phased manner from April 15.

Transporters of goods worth over ₹50,000 would be required to present e-way bill during transit to a GST inspector, if asked.

Officials feel that to shore up revenue and increase compliance, stringent anti-evasion

measures have to be put in place.

To this effect the revenue department is working towards integrating that e-way bill system with NHAI's FASTag mechanism beginning April to help track movement of goods.

It has come to the investigative officers' notice that some transporters are doing multiple trips by generating a single e-way bill. Integration of e-way bill with FASTag would help find the location of the vehicle, and when and how many times it has crossed the NHAI's toll plazas.

As against the budgeted monthly revenue target of over ₹1 lakh crore, GST collections have so far this fiscal averaged ₹96,800 crore per month.

Financial stress may impact flight safety, warns AI pilots' union

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Raising concerns over delayed salary payments, a group of Air India pilots has said that financial stress could impact flight safety.

The Indian Pilots' Guild, which represents pilots of wide-body planes of Air India, has also told aviation regulator DGCA that the management has continuously used the guise of financial losses to illegally change their service conditions and withhold payment of arrears as well as overtime.

"We are already engaged in multiple litigations for our basic rights and service conditions.

"If even our salaries are now withheld and reduced at the whims and fancies of airline management, it is not humanly possible to keep all this stress away from the cockpit," the guild has said.

The guild has around 700 members.

In a letter to DGCA chief B S Bhullar, the group's general secretary Captain K Jayakumar said that such a prolonged atmosphere of financial uncertainty is not conducive to flight safety.

"For more than six months, our wages are not being paid on time.

"Our January wages have still not been paid even after half the month is gone and even now nobody can give us a straight answer as to when we can expect payment," the letter dated January 17 said.

Vibrant Gujarat: Over 28k MoUs signed this year, says Guj CM

PTI ■ GANDHINAGAR

Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani on Sunday said 28,360 Memorandums of Understanding were signed during the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2019 and it was expected to generate over 21 lakh jobs.

Rupani, however, did not specify the amount of investment that would come into the state by way of these MoUs.

Speaking at the concluding session of the ninth edition of the three-day Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2019, Rupani said the event had seen the realisation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision as "several big ticket investments (were) placed and committed, which will bring in jobs."

"Gujarat has become the gateway to the world and it has become an ideal platform for everyone. The summit has also become a platform for social upliftment rather than only for business and trade," he said.

"A total of 28,360 MoUs were signed which will bring in over 21 lakh employment to the state," Rupani said.

He said Gujarat has become a preferred investment destination after 2003 when Narendra Modi as the state CM decided to organise the Vibrant Gujarat Summit every two year.

"Not many business houses participated in the first summit in 2003. The PM's vision has been fully realised in this 9th summit. This event has also

become an ideal platform for knowledge sharing and networking," Rupani said in his address.

He claimed the summit gave MSMEs a platform to be globally competitive.

Gujarat Deputy CM Nitin Patel, addressing the media later, said out of total 28,360 MoUs signed, maximum number of 21,889 were connected to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector.

He informed that 408 MoUs were signed in agro and food processing, 548 in power and gas, 1,516 in urban development, 977 in mineral based projects, 197 in engineering and auto and the remaining in other sectors.

Patel also said these MoUs would generate 21 lakh jobs in Gujarat but refused to reveal the quantum of investment they would attract.

"The figures of investment are not that important. We are still calculating it. But the important thing is these MoUs would lead to employment generation and boost economic activity," Patel told reporters.

At the event's inauguration function, held in the presence of PM Modi, several captains of industry had made announcements regarding projects they intended to start in Gujarat.

Terminating the summit a success, Patel said over 42,000 national and international delegates participated in the three day event.

Business Corner



CS Ranjeet Pandey, a Fellow Member of the Institute has been elected as President of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India for the year 2019. He is also an Insolvency Professional, registered with IIBI.



CS Ashish Garg, a Fellow Member of the Institute has been elected as the Vice-President of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India for the year 2019. He is a Fellow Member of the Institute of Companies Secretaries of India. He is a Post Graduate in Economics (M.A.) and Commerce (M.Com.) and Graduate in Law (L.L.B.) from Vikram University, Ujjain



Raksha Rajya Mantri Dr. Subhash Bhamre, (Union Minister of State for Defence) visited NCC Republic Day Camp-2019 being conducted at the Cariappa Parade Ground. On arrival, the Minister was received by Lieutenant General PP Malhotra, VSM, Director General National Cadet Corps

FIEO seeks Govt, RBI intervention in resolving exporters' banking issues

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Exporters body FIEO has sought immediate intervention of the Government and RBI to resolve issues related to payment mechanism for Iran and flow of credit to push shipments.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President Ganesh Kumar Gupta said that a clarity is required on product coverage under rupee payment mechanism to Iran.

"Exporters have pointed out that UCO bank branches are not clear about products, which can be exported under such mechanism. The main problem is related to Engineering and Chemical products," Gupta said.

He said that the understanding of trade is that if the end use of product is not under the sanctioned list, or exports is not to the Iranian Government, it should be allowed for exports under the Rupee Trade Mechanism.

"A clarification will help exporters to take such orders and push for quantum jump in

our exports to Iran," he said.

He also said that banks have expressed their inability to handle documents of exporters for shipments to Central Asian countries, if there is a reference to Bandar Abbas as a transit port in Iran.

"This has affected the movement of cargo through INSTC which Government of India is promoting as an alternative route being time and cost effective," he said.

It is requested that directives to banks be issued for handling of documents properly for transit goods through Iran, where the combined transport bill of landing shows the destination to be Afghanistan/Russia/ Central Asia or any other non-restricted countries," he said.

It is expected that a meeting of bankers and exporters is soon being convened by the Finance Ministry to address some of the concerns.

Talking about flow of credit to export sector, he said that the recent data of the RBI for August, 2018 shows a decline of over 50 per cent in export credit as compared to the corresponding month in 2017.

Some better performing banks likely to be out of PCA: Kumar

Recently, the Government announced infusion of ₹28,615 crore into seven PSBs through recapitalisation bonds

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Some of the public sector banks are likely to come out of the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework in next few months on the back of improvement in various parameters, a top Finance Ministry official said.

Eleven out of the total 21 public sector banks are under the central bank's PCA framework, which imposes lending restrictions and prevents them from expanding, among other curbs.

"Some of the banks out of 11 have shown better perfor-

mance...If some banks are performing well and they are adequately capitalised as per the Basel norms. Hence, capitalisation will facilitate them coming out of the PCA. RBI is seized of the matter," Financial Services Secretary Rajiv Kumar told PTI.

There is a strong case on the basis of performance of some banks to be removed from the PCA list if not all, he said.

Recently, the Government announced infusion of ₹28,615 crore into seven public sector banks (PSBs) through recapitalisation bonds. Out of the seven state-owned banks, Bank of India got the highest amount of ₹10,086 crore, followed by Oriental Bank of Commerce, which received 5,500 crore.

Other banks that got capital included Bank of Maharashtra (₹4,498 crore), UCO Bank (₹3,056 crore) and United Bank of India (₹2,159 crore).

Kumar expressed hope that those who are not performing well, they should improve their results.

"They need to improve all

parameters of NPAs, capital savings, non-core assets monetisation etc. All that agenda have been given to them," he said.

The recapitalisation will enhance the lending capacity of public sector banks and help them come out of the RBI's watch list. These include Allahabad Bank, United Bank of India, Corporation Bank, IDBI Bank, UCO Bank, Bank of India, Central Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Dena Bank and Bank of Maharashtra.

The PCA framework kicks in when banks breach any of the three key regulatory trigger points — namely capital to risk weighted assets ratio, net non-performing assets (NPA) and return on assets (RoA).

Globally, PCA kicks in only when banks slip on a single parameter of capital adequacy ratio, and the Government and some of the independent directors of the RBI board, like S Gurumurthy, are in favour of this practice being adopted for the domestic banking sector as well.

CAIT to launch campaign to strengthen importance of traders in LS polls

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Traders' body CAIT on Sunday said it has decided to launch a nation-wide campaign in order to establish the importance of trading community in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) is launching a national campaign 'One Nation-One Trader-Ten Votes' beginning February 1 to establish the importance of trading community in polls, the association secretary general Praveen Khandelwal said in a statement.

As part of the campaign, it said, special teams of local trade associations in each city affiliated with the association will contact traders in their respective area and will make them aware of the importance of traders in national economy and urge them to cast their vote on the whip by CAIT.

"The Lok Sabha poll is an opportunity to underline our importance in Indian economy and we are gearing ourselves for the cause," he said.

France pushes Japan to accept Renault-Nissan merger: Reports

AFP ■ PARIS

Japanese media reported on Sunday that France wants a merger between Renault and Nissan following the arrest of former Nissan chairman Carlos Ghosn, but according to France's economy minister changing the current set-up is "not on the table".

Ghosn headed a powerful alliance between Nissan, Mitsubishi and Renault before his arrest in November on charges of financial misconduct.

A delegation including Martin Vial — a Renault director designated by the French Government — made the merger request at talks with Japanese officials in Tokyo, Kyodo News reported, citing sources close to the matter.

The French Government is the biggest shareholder in Renault with a stake of more than 15 per cent, while Renault owns 43.4 per cent of the Japanese carmaker Nissan with voting rights.

A merger between the two is favoured by French President Emmanuel Macron, Kyodo said.

Japanese business daily Nikkei also reported the merger request by the French delegation, saying Nissan had been



opposed to giving Paris greater sway over the Japanese carmaker.

According to Nikkei, the delegation also said Renault wants to name Nissan's next chairman — a post that has remained vacant since Ghosn was ousted on his arrest in November.

But the reports appear to contradict comments French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire made to *Le Journal du Dimanche* (JDD) newspaper, published Sunday.

"A shareholder rebalancing, a change in cross-shareholdings between Renault and Nissan is not on the table," he

told the French weekly. Contacted by AFP, a French economy ministry spokesman had no comment to make on the Japanese media reports.

Macron last month held talks with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Argentina, at which they only agreed to ensure a stable relationship within the three-way alliance, which also includes Japan's Mitsubishi Motors.

Abe reportedly stressed the importance of all three companies "maintaining their stable relationship" at the summit talk.



But the Japanese premier reportedly also said the fate of the group should be decided by "private businesses" and "Governments should not commit to how the alliance should operate going forward," according to a senior Government official quoted by Kyodo.

Last week, Renault said it had launched the search for a successor to Ghosn, after a Tokyo court quashed his appeal for bail as he faces three charges of financial misconduct.

But Le Maire also said in his interview with the JDD newspaper: "The principle of

the presumption of innocence must apply" to Ghosn.

But over and above Ghosn's case, "there are also the interests of Renault and of the alliance," he added.

"A business of this scale needs solid and stable Governance."

The French Government has called for a board meeting to pick Ghosn's successor.

Nissan, which holds a 15-per cent stake in Renault, is widely seen as hoping to reduce the influence of the French partner on its management and review the alliance to make it more equitable.

US hiring to be sustained effort, onboarded over 7,600 people: Infosys

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Infosys has hired over 7,600 staff in the US — more than three-fourth of its target of recruiting 10,000 American workers — and said it is making recruitment from local schools a "sustained effort" in its largest market.

"...We have pretty much done 7,600-plus. We have opened five hubs now, we have announced five of them and we have opened five of them and we have hired 2,000 plus school grads — campus hires," Infosys President and Deputy Chief Operating Officer Ravi Kumar said in a recent investor call.

He added that the company is "on track on localisation". North America is the largest market for Infosys accounting for 60.4 per cent of the topline, followed by Europe (24.2 per cent), rest of the world (12.8 per cent) and India (2.6 per cent) at the end of December 2018 quarter.

The Bengaluru-based company reported 20.3 per cent increase in revenue from operations at ₹21,400 crore in the said quarter.

In May 2017, Infosys had



announced that it will set up four technology and innovation hubs and hire about 10,000 locals in the US over a two-year period.

Infosys CEO Salil Parekh, who took over the top job last year, has outlined 'localisation', along with strategic investments and enhancing company's digital capabilities as key areas of this three-year strategic plan. The strategy outlined focussed on stabilising the company's business in 2018-19, building momentum the next year, followed by acceleration in 2020-21.

Kumar explained that Infosys has recruited from campuses, trained them, and then moved them into live projects.

"This is a sustained effort, and as a part of our operating model, we would like to con-

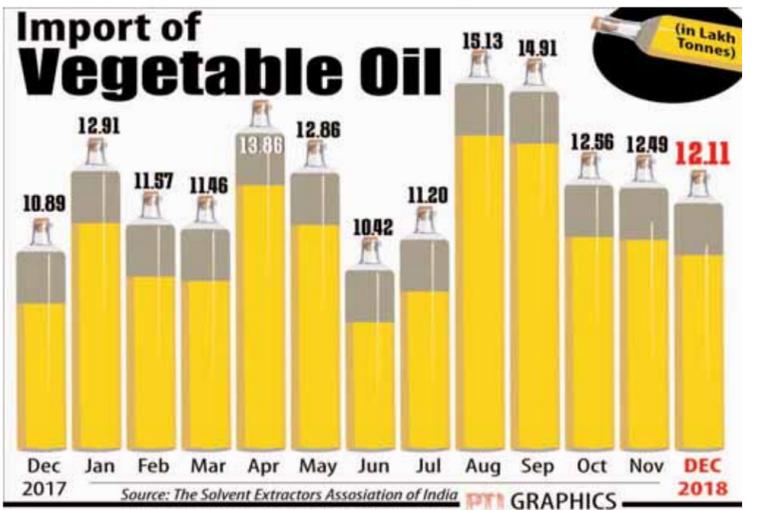
tinue hiring in the US from schools, building a training infrastructure around it and then actually building a natural pyramid onsite as well. So, this is a sustained effort. It is going to continue as we go forward," he said.

Infosys had announced setting up of technology and innovation hubs in Indianapolis (Indiana), Raleigh (North Carolina), Hartford (Connecticut), and Phoenix (Arizona). It is also establishing a design and innovation hub in Providence, Rhode Island.

Infosys, like many of its peers, has been ramping local hiring in key markets like the US, the UK and Australia to tackle increasing scrutiny around work visas by various governments.

In November last year, Infosys said it will set up three innovation hubs in Australia and create 1,200 jobs in the country by 2020 — a move that will enable Infosys to co-create and co-innovate alongside clients, academia and government to accelerate innovation as well as upskill talent in emerging technologies and solutions.

Scheme	NAV	1Yr %	Fund(G)	Fund-Reg(G)	Fund(G)	L&T Emerging Businesses
Tata Digital India Fund-Reg(G)	14.48	21.49	Kotak Standard Multicap	33.10 -2.39	SBI BlueChip Fund-Reg(G)	24.31 -15.96
ICICI Pru Technology Fund(G)	59.09	18.61	Fund(G)		SBI Magnum Multicap	48.05 -16.01
SBI Technology Opp Fund-Reg(G)	62.18	16.29	ICICI Pru Value Fund-5(G)	15.04 -2.53	Fund-Reg(G)	
Aditya Birla SL Digital India Fund(G)	51.15	11.39	Mirae Asset India Equity Fund-Reg(G)	47.96 -2.62	Kotak Equity Opp Fund(G)	112.67 -6.02
Franklin India Technology Fund(G)	154.45	10.83	ICICI Pru Bluechip Fund(G)	40.28 -2.71	SBI Large & Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	212.86 -6.02
Franklin India Feeder-Franklin U.S. Opportunities Fund(G)	28.43	10.80	Reliance Large Cap Fund(G)	33.09 -2.82	Franklin India Equity Advantage Fund(G)	77.22 -6.08
DHFL Pramerica Global Equity Opp Fund(G)	17.25	9.38	Tata India Pharma & Healthcare Fund-Reg(G)	8.70 -2.87	Principal Dividend Yield Fund(G)	51.49 -6.18
Aditya Birla SL Global Real Estate Fund(G)	18.81	8.94			Sundaram Fin Serv Opp Fund(G)	38.47 -6.21
Reliance US Equity Opp Fund(G)	14.09	8.66			DHFL Pramerica LT Equity Fund-Reg(G)	13.58 -6.28
ICICI Pru US Bluechip Equity Fund(G)	26.07	7.94			IDBI Diversified Equity Fund(G)	20.41 -6.33
ICICI Pru FMCG Fund(G)	238.17	6.31			Franklin India Equity Fund(G)	569.56 -6.37
Axis Multicap Fund-Reg(G)	10.76	6.22			JM Core 11 Fund(G)	8.31 -6.37
Aditya Birla SL Intl. Equity Fund-A(G)	20.22	5.79			Tata Large & Mid Cap Fund(G)	192.09 -6.41
Axis Bluechip Fund(G)	26.83	5.34			UTI LT Equity Fund (Tax Saving)-Reg(G)	83.43 -6.57
Reliance Pharma Fund(G)	149.80	4.51			DSP World Energy Fund-Reg(G)	12.77 -6.58
SBI Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	16.39	4.05			IDBI India Top 100 Equity Fund(G)	22.84 -6.78
Tata Index Fund-Sensex Plan(G)	89.32	4.01			DHFL Pramerica Tax Plan(G)	29.43 -6.81
HDFC Index Fund-Sensex(G)	321.38	4.01			Sundaram Global Advt(G)	16.19 -6.85
Sundaram World Brand Fund-Sr II-Reg(G)	13.82	3.50			ICICI Pru Value Discovery Fund(G)	139.46 -6.88
Reliance Index Fund - Sensex Plan(G)	17.89	3.47			ICICI Pru Value Fund-15(G)	10.23 -6.92
Sundaram World Brand Fund-Sr III-Reg(G)	13.98	3.46			JM Multicap Fund(G)	29.38 -6.97
Kotak US Equity Fund(G)	15.82	3.15			Reliance Close Ended Equity Fund-II-A(G)	17.25 -7.19
Canara Rob Equity Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)	61.90	2.26			HDFC Capital Builder Value Fund(G)	284.01 -7.29
ICICI Pru Growth Fund-2(DP)	11.44	2.20			Motilal Oswal Focused 25 Fund-Reg(G)	20.41 -7.31
IDFC Nifty Fund-Reg(G)	22.45	2.13			Invesco India Midcap Fund(G)	47.37 -7.34
HDFC Index Fund-NIFTY 50 Plan(G)	98.78	1.99			ICICI Pru Value Fund-3(D)	10.14 -7.51
UTI Nifty Index Fund-Reg(G)	70.82	1.92			Tata Ethical Fund(G)	153.35 -7.74
Canara Rob Bluechip Equity Fund-Reg(G)	23.45	1.91			UTI Healthcare Fund-Reg(G)	83.36 -7.85
DSP US Flexible Equity Fund-Reg(G)	23.58	1.90			Franklin India Focused Equity Fund(G)	38.55 -8.02
Tata Index Fund-Nifty Plan(G)	65.64	1.80			Principal Nifty 100 Equal Weight Fund(G)	68.79 -8.10
ICICI Pru Global Stable Equity Fund(G)	14.69	1.74			DSP Focus Fund-Reg(G)	21.46 -8.16
ICICI Pru Business Cycle Fund-2(G)	14.21	1.57			SBI Healthcare Opp Fund-Reg(G)	120.70 -8.19
SBI Nifty Index Fund-Reg(G)	93.37	1.48			Tata India Tax Savings Fund-Reg(G)	16.94 -8.21
SBI Magnum Equity ESG Fund-Reg(G)	98.87	1.44			UTI Banking and Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	93.17 -8.25
UTI Equity Fund-Reg(G)	135.02	1.21			ICICI Pru Large & Mid Cap Fund(G)	309.75 -8.41
Reliance Index Fund - Nifty Plan(G)	18.21	1.15			DSP Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)	44.71 -8.45
DSP Global Allocation Fund-Reg(G)	11.91	1.10			IDFC Core Equity Fund-Reg(G)	43.23 -8.47
Kotak India EQ Contra Fund(G)	49.59	1.10			Sundaram Rural and Consumption Fund(G)	40.59 -8.50
ICICI Pru Nifty Index Fund(G)	104.97	1.10			ICICI Pru Value Fund-9(G)	11.75 -8.56
Aditya Birla SL Index Fund(G)	106.74	0.91			Canara Rob Emerg Equities Fund-Reg(G)	88.85 -8.68
Franklin India Index Fund-NSE Nifty(G)	86.22	0.86			Tata Equity P/E Fund(G)	128.88 -8.75
Axis Midcap Fund(G)	34.52	0.73			SBI Magnum Tax Gain'93-Reg(G)	138.72 -8.76
IDBI Nifty Index Fund(G)	20.07	0.60			L&T Long Term Advantage Fund-I(G)	49.33 -8.78
Sundaram Select Focus(G)	169.76	0.44			Invesco India Feeder - Invesco Pan European Equity Fund-Reg(G)	10.45 -8.83
Canara Rob Consumer Trends Fund-Reg(G)	37.56	0.43			BNP Paribas Long Term Equity Fund(G)	36.04 -8.88
Canara Rob Equity Diver Fund-Reg(G)	126.58	0.37			DHFL Pramerica Diversified Equity Fund-Reg(G)	12.47 -9.57
Tata Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	17.30	0.00			Franklin India Prima Fund(G)	922.36 -9.59
Mirae Asset Great Consumer Fund-Reg(G)	33.93	-0.28			ICICI Pru Exports & Services Fund(G)	54.33 -9.71
Baroda Banking & Fin Serv Fund(G)	21.34	-0.47			Aditya Birla SL Global Commodities Fund(G)	12.37 -9.72
Edelweiss Large Cap Fund(G)	33.57	-0.74			DHFL Pramerica Euro Equity Fund(G)	12.79 -9.74
DHFL Pramerica Large Cap Fund-2-Reg(G)	11.99	-0.87			SBI Magnum Global Fund-Reg(G)	167.51 -9.79
JM Large Cap Fund(G)	64.85	-1.44			Edelweiss Long Term Equity Fund (Tax Savings)-Reg(G)	44.44 -9.80
ICICI Pru India Recovery Fund-4(G)	16.83	-1.46			DSP Equity Opportunities Fund-Reg(G)	207.46 -9.91
UTI MNC Fund-Reg(G)	196.91	-1.65			Reliance Value Fund(G)	70.12 -9.98
ICICI Pru LT Equity Fund (Tax Saving)(G)	358.49	-1.65			DSP World Gold Fund-Reg(G)	11.00 -10.07
Invesco India Largecap Fund(G)	27.29	-1.76			Motilal Oswal Multicap 35 Fund-Reg(G)	24.75 -10.08
Parag Parikh Long Term Equity Fund-Reg(G)	23.53	-1.79			ICICI Pru Value Fund-11(G)	11.60 -10.15
DSP World Agriculture Fund-Reg(G)	15.96	-1.82			Franklin Build India Fund(G)	39.32 -10.62
HDFC Top 100 Fund(G)	466.62	-1.87			Franklin India Opportunities Fund(G)	70.06 -10.76
Aditya Birla SL CEF-Global Agri-Reg(G)	23.31	-2.07			Reliance Consumption	62.97 -10.76
Sundaram Large and Mid Cap Fund(G)	32.87	-2.08				
UTI Mastershare-Reg(G)	116.09	-2.12				
ICICI Pru Multicap Fund(G)	279.56	-2.24				
ICICI Pru Banking & Fin Serv Fund(G)	61.34	-2.28				
UTI Dividend Yield Fund-Reg(G)	63.09	-2.29				
Principal Focused Multicap Fund(G)	61.55	-2.33				
Aditya Birla SL India GenNext Fund(G)	79.81	-2.37				
Invesco India Growth Opp	32.39	-2.38				



Trump launches plan to end Govt shutdown



Offers protection to undocumented immigrants in exchange for border wall funding

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump has launched a new plan to end a Government shutdown, which has been ongoing for nearly a month, by offering protection from deportations for some undocumented immigrants in exchange for \$5.7 billion for constructing a wall on the US-Mexico border.

The Democrats, however, rejected the deal as a "non-starter" and called on Trump to open the government before

negotiations on immigration could start.

Trump, who made his offer during a televised speech from the White House, offered that he would give protection from deportation for young people brought to the country illegally as children -- also known as 'Dreamers' -- and also extend it to those with temporary protected status after fleeing countries affected by natural disasters or violence.

The president also called for USD 800 million in "urgent

humanitarian assistance" and USD 805 million for drug detection technology to help secure US ports of entry.

Trump also proposed a slew of measures to increase border security, including an increase in law enforcement, saying he was offering a "commonsense compromise both parties (Republicans and Democrats) should embrace."

The president said these concessions would "build the trust and goodwill necessary to begin real immigration reform."

The divide between the Trump-led Republican Party and the Democratic Party led by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi over the border wall led to the partial shutdown, which has rendered 800,000 federal government workers without work and crippled key departments.

The shutdown -- the longest in the US history -- entered its 29th day, as Trump Saturday made the announcement.

"Both sides in Washington must simply come together," Trump said in a White House speech, adding he is trying to "break the logjam."

Toll in Mexico fuel pipeline blaze reaches 79

AFP ■ TLAHUELILPAN (MEXICO)

They were warned to stay away from the geyser of gasoline gushing from the illegally tapped pipeline in central Mexico, but Gerardo Perez says he and his son joined others in bypassing the soldiers.

As they neared the spurting fuel he was overcome with foreboding. Perez recalls telling his son: "Let's go ... this thing is going to explode."

And it did, with a fireball that engulfed locals scooping up the spilling gasoline and underscored the dangers of an epidemic of fuel theft from pipelines that Mexico's new president has vowed to fight.

By Sunday morning the death toll from Friday's blaze had risen to 79, with another 81 hospitalized in serious condition, according to federal Health Minister Jorge Alcocer. Dozens more were missing.

Perez and his son escaped the flames. On Saturday, he returned to the scorched field in the town of Tlahuelilpan in Hidalgo state to look for missing friends. It was a fruitless task. Only a handful of the remains still had skin. Dozens were burned to the bone or to ash when the gusher of gasoline exploded.

Just a few feet from where the pipeline passed through an alfalfa field, the dead seem to



Forensic experts working in the area an oil pipeline explosion in Tlahuelilpan, Hidalgo State, Mexico on Saturday

GLOBE TROTTER

TOP FINANCIER OF DHAKA CAFE ATTACK HELD

Dhaka: A top Islamist extremist, who allegedly supplied arms, explosives and money to the militants who carried out 2016 terror attack on a cafe in Bangladesh, has been arrested, police said on Sunday.

2 DEAD, 14 HURT IN FRENCH SKI RESORT FIRE

Lyon: Two people died Sunday and 14 more were injured, four seriously, in a major fire at the ski resort of Courchevel in the French Alps, officials said.

2 KILLED IN LARGE FIRE AT FRENCH SKI RESORT

Paris: Two people have been killed and 25 others injured in a large blaze that broke out on Sunday in the French ski resort of Courchevel, local authorities said.

INDIAN AMONG 8 HELD IN NEPAL FOR DRUG PEDDLING

Kathmandu: An Indian man is among eight persons arrested from different parts of Nepal on Sunday for possessing contraband drugs, police said here. The man identified as Rajesh Mahato, a resident of Sonbarsa area in Bihar, was arrested from Malangawa town in Nepal's Sarlahi district during a security check.

Attack on UN base in Mali kills 8 peacekeepers: UN source

AFP ■ BAMAKO

Gunmen killed at least eight Chadian UN peacekeepers in an attack Sunday on one of their bases in northern Mali, a source close to the MINUSMA force said.

"According to a new toll, still provisional, at least eight peacekeepers have been killed," the source said.

The attack happened early Sunday at the Aguelhok base 200 kilometres (125 miles) north of Kidal and towards the border with Algeria, the source added.

A Malian security source spoke of at least six killed and 19 wounded, while a diplomat in northern Mali told AFP that several of the attackers were also killed.

An attack at the same base last April killed two peacekeepers and left several others wounded.

More than 13,000 peacekeepers are deployed in Mali as part of a UN mission that was established after Islamist militias seized northern Mali in 2012.

They were pushed back by French troops in 2013.

A peace agreement signed in 2015 by the Bamako Government and armed groups was aimed at restoring stability to Mali following a brief Islamist takeover in the north.

But the accord has failed to stop violence by Islamist militants, who have also staged attacks in Burkina Faso and Niger.

Trump celebrates new citizens in Oval Office ceremony

AP ■ WASHINGTON

On a day focused on his demand for a border wall, President Donald Trump used music and pageantry to welcome "the five newest members of our great American family" during a naturalisation ceremony in the Oval Office.

In a ceremony Saturday that began to the strains of a violin and ended with a booming national anthem, Trump celebrated the five new Americans from Iraq, Britain, South Korea, Jamaica and Bolivia.

"Each of you worked hard for this moment. You followed the rules, upheld our laws," the president said, stress-

ing that they had arrived in the country legally.

A couple of hours later, Trump would unveil his offer to extend temporary protection to young immigrants brought to the US illegally as children if Democrats would agree to fund the southern border wall he promised as a candidate. Democrats quickly dismissed the plan as a "non-starter."

Trump introduced each of the new US citizens, noting that some had come to the country with American spouses and some had children who were born here.

To a woman from South Korea who came to the US to pursue graduate studies

and is now a university professor, he said: "I want to congratulate you, and you're going to have a great time."

The new citizens had the oath of allegiance administered by Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen and received their naturalization certificates from Vice President Mike Pence, followed by a handshake from Trump.

"By taking this oath, you have forged a sacred bond with this nation, its traditions, its culture and its values."

This heritage is now yours to protect, promote and pass down to the next generation and to the next wave of newcomers to our shores," the president said.

Strong 6.7 strength quake jolts north-central Chile: USGS

AFP ■ SANTIAGO

A strong 6.7-magnitude earthquake hit north-central Chile on Saturday, the US Geological Survey said.

The quake struck at a depth of 53 kilometres (33 miles) with an epicenter some 15 km southwest of Coquimbo, according to the USGS. The earthquake, which hit at 0132 GMT (Sunday), was felt in Valparaiso, O'Higgins and the region of the capital Santiago, as well as in Atacama and Coquimbo up north.

Thousands of homes lost power, which showed how intense the quake was, according to Ricardo Toro of the National Emergency Office.

'Bomb blast' rocks Syrian capital Damascus, 1 held

AFP ■ DAMASCUS

A bomb blast hit the capital of war-torn Syria on Sunday and a "terrorist" was arrested, state media said, in a rare attack in the city that has been largely insulated from violence.

A Britain-based war monitor said a "huge explosion" near a military intelligence office in southern Damascus had left a number of people dead and wounded.

State news agency SANA said that a "bomb blast" had caused an explosion "without leaving any victims".

"There is confirmation of reports that a terrorist has been arrested," it said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor told AFP that "the explosion took place near a security branch in the south of the city".

"There are some people killed and injured but we could not verify the toll immediately," it said.

It was unclear if the blast was caused by a bomb that was planted or a suicide attack, according to the monitor, which relies on a network of sources inside the country.

UK faces 'political tsunami' if Brexit halted: Minister

AP ■ LONDON

A senior British opposition politician said Sunday that it's unlikely the UK will leave the European Union as scheduled on March 29, while a Government Minister warned that failure to deliver on Brexit would betray voters and unleash a "political tsunami."

The Brexit process has been deadlocked since Prime Minister Theresa May's divorce deal with the EU was rejected by Parliament last week. Some lawmakers are pushing for the UK to delay its departure until politicians can agree on a way forward. Labour Party Brexit spokesman Keir Starmer said "it's inevitable" Britain will

"The 29th of March is 68 days away," Starmer told the BBC. "We are absolutely not prepared for it. It would be catastrophic."

have to ask the EU to extend the two-year Brexit countdown that ends on March 29.

"The 29th of March is 68 days away," Starmer told the BBC. "We are absolutely not

prepared for it. It would be catastrophic."

Britain's political impasse over Brexit is fueling concerns that the country may crash out of the EU on March 29 with no agreement in place to cushion the shock. That could see tariffs imposed on goods moving between Britain and the EU, sparking gridlock at ports and shortages of essential supplies. Many economists expect Britain to plunge into recession if there is a "no-deal" Brexit.

May's government is split between ministers who think a "no-deal" Brexit must be avoided at all costs, and Brexit-backers who believe it would be preferable to delaying or reversing Brexit.

World's oldest man, 113, dies at his home in northern Japan

AP ■ TOKYO

The world's oldest man has died at his home -- a hot springs inn -- in northern Japan at the age of 113.

Masazo Nonaka died in the early hours of Sunday while sleeping at home in Ashoro on Japan's northern main island of Hokkaido, his family said.

He died peacefully from natural causes, according to his granddaughter Yuko Nonaka.

The supercentenarian, whose family has run a hot springs inn for four generations, was certified by Guinness World Records in April 2018 as the world's oldest living man at 112 years and 259 days. Born on July 25, 1905, Nonaka grew up in a large family and succeeded his parents running the inn. The 106-year-old inn is now run by

his granddaughter Yuko.

She said her grandfather appeared to be as usual until her elder sister noticed he was not breathing. He was pronounced dead by his family doctor.

"He didn't have any health problem. ... He went peacefully and that's at least our consolation," she said. Nonaka, who enjoyed eating sweets, used to regularly soak in the springs, and would move about in the inn in a wheelchair, wearing his trademark knit cap.

He outlived all seven of his siblings, as well as his wife and three of their five children.

The fastest-aging country in the world, Japan as of September 2018 had a centenarian population of 69,785, nearly 90 percent of them women, according to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

Outcry in Pak as couple, teenage daughter killed in police 'encounter'

PTI ■ LAHORE

The killing of four people, including a man, his wife and their teenage daughter, in what Pakistan's Punjab police called a shootout with "terrorists" has triggered a public outcry and the victims' family held a protest against the "staged" encounter.

The family was travelling in a car when the alleged encounter -- which the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) officials later termed an 'intelligence-based operation' -- took place on a highway in Sahiwal, about 200 kms from Lahore, on Saturday.

Those killed in the

encounter included grocery store owner Mohammad Khalil, 42, his wife Nabila, 38, their 13-year-old daughter Areeba and their friend, Zeeshan Javed, who was driving the car and police said he was on the country's wanted terrorist list. The couple's minor son also sustained a bullet injury while two other daughters remained safe.

According to CTD, the operation was conducted after an intelligence was received that terrorists were travelling towards Sahiwal with arms and explosives.

The CTD claimed in a statement that the law enforcers signalled a Suzuki Alto car and a motorcycle to stop near a toll

plaza, but they did not pull over and instead opened fire.

Eyewitnesses and the victims' family members, however, strongly refuted the CTD's version, and told Pakistani daily Dawn that the four were shot dead in "cold blood by the police" in the "staged" encounter.

They claimed that no weapon was recovered from the vehicle after the alleged shootout, the daily reported.

The family members of the victims and area residents held a protesting and blocked a road in Lahore. Prime Minister Imran Khan has sought a report from Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar over the incident.



A woman holds a placard reading 'Living is right, not a choice' during a demonstration on Sunday

Pope heads to Panama for giant youth meeting

AFP ■ VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis will make his first trip to Panama on Wednesday for a gathering of more than 150,000 young Catholics from across the globe at the World Youth Day festival.

The 82-year-old pope will use the major event on the Catholic calendar to address the problems of poverty, corruption and migration in his native Latin America, church officials said.

"Our youth, particularly in Central America, need opportunities," said Panama Archbishop Jose Domingo Ulloa.

Often, their "hard reality" was a choice between emigration or "falling into the clutches of drug traffickers," said Ulloa, in Rome for a preparatory visit.

It will be Francis' third

World Youth Day event, having presided over the gathering in Rio de Janeiro shortly after his election as pope in 2013 and again in Krakow, Poland in 2016.

In Poland, he challenged conservative Governments in Central and Eastern Europe to soften their resistance to migrants seeking refuge from conflict in the Middle East.

In a similar way, he is expected in Panama to stand up for migrants from El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras who make up the majority of those traveling in caravans to the US border, despite the opposition of President Donald Trump and the American right.

"Many of the young people who are participating in the WYD are immigrants themselves," Vatican spokesman Alessandro Gisotti said.

Hundreds of thousands of Central Americans cross the border into Mexico every year, heading north in search of a better life.

Millions more have fled economic collapse and political repression in Venezuela, straining social services in neighboring countries.

"The recent image of migrant caravans from Central America, with all their suffering, will be very much in mind," said Ulloa.

In an advance message to the event, Francis said many young people, both believers and non-believers, had "a strength that can change the world." On Friday, he said in a separate video message to the World Indigenous Youth gathering in Soloy, Panama, to hold on to their cultures and roots by fighting marginalization, exclusion, waste and impoverishment.

Netanyahu visits Chad, expected to renew ties

AFP ■ N'DJAMENA (CHAD)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Chad on Sunday for what he called a "historic" trip, during which diplomatic ties with the African state were expected to be renewed.

"I am now leaving on another historic and important breakthrough, to Chad, a huge Muslim country bordering Libya and Sudan," he told reporters before boarding the plane at the Ben Gurion airport near Tel Aviv.

"There will be big news," Netanyahu said, hinting at the formal resumption of diplomatic relations between the countries that Chad had cut in 1972.

His office later confirmed he had landed and was meeting with Chadian President Idriss Deby Itno in N'Djamena.

Netanyahu has sought to improve ties with countries in the Arab and Muslim world and

said he expected more such diplomatic breakthroughs soon.

"There will be more countries," said Netanyahu, who is seeking re-election in April 9 polls while also facing the possibility of being indicted in corruption investigations in the coming weeks.

The one-day visit follows Deby's November trip to Israel.

The two leaders at the time declined to comment on whether their talks have included arms deals.

Chadian security sources say the country has acquired Israeli equipment to help battle rebels in the country's north.

Chad is also one of several African states engaged in Western-backed operations against Boko Haram and Islamic State group jihadists.

Pressure from Muslim African nations, accentuated by the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973, led a number of African states to sever relations with the Jewish State.

ELIMINATE FEAR FACTOR

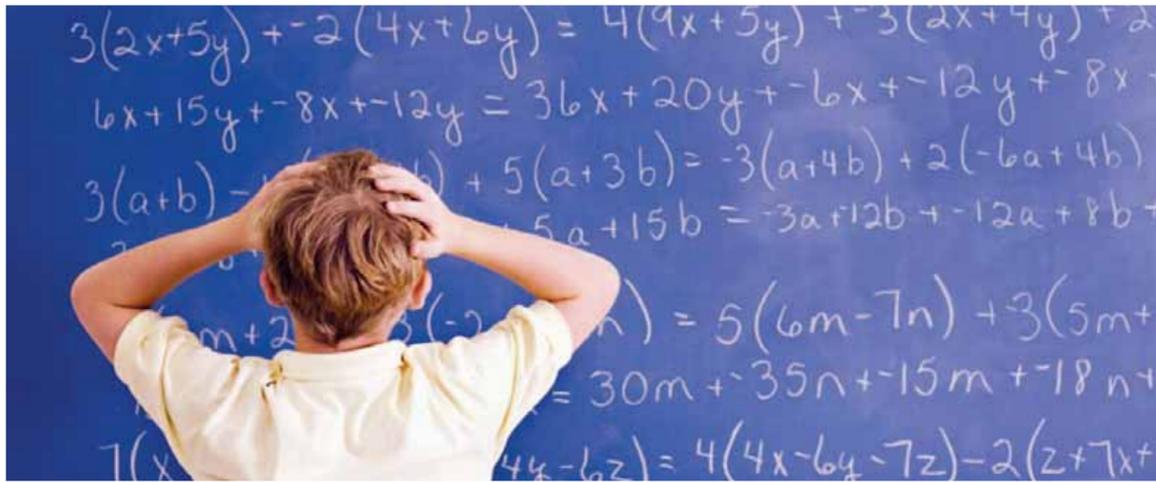
Regular maths practice can go a long way in reducing stress during board exams, says educationist DIVYA JAIN

For most students, maths is the bug bear that makes many break out into a cold sweat. Fearing it seems to be an endemic malady afflicting the student community. The dread of the subject aggravates especially during examinations as students feel flustered trying to cram and memorise the various formulae and theorems at the last minute. Often parents pass on their fear of the subject to the children. Added to this is the widely-held perception that maths requires an extraordinary level of intelligence. However, it should be understood that a little creativity and regular practice can go a long way in alleviating maths phobia and in reducing the stress during board exams.

TIPS TO UNDERSTAND THE PHOBIA

To understand maths phobia, we need to accept the fact that it's not an easy subject to grasp. This can be categorised as a feeling of anxiety that students feel when they attempt to solve problems. It is marked by stress, which ranges from mild to high, inducing a sense of helplessness and psychological disorganisation. This can have a prolonged impact on the mind and in some cases, negative influence on health as well. Some students even experience serious issues like depression, panic attacks, shivering, headache and nausea. So, it is imperative to eliminate this phobia at the very beginning to prevent it from developing into a more serious problem. This is possible only when the reasons behind maths phobia are understood.

The reasons can be different for each child. Teachers on their part need to be patient and adjust their pace keeping in mind the aptitude and comprehension capabilities of different students. They can break down mathematical concepts into small understandable units to enable students to understand them easily. Teachers should also be accessible and



approachable so that students do not hesitate to talk to them when they face a challenge. This support can go a long way in eradicating a negative attitude and making them proficient in the subject.

TIPS TO ELIMINATE THE PHOBIA

Acknowledge the phobia
The first step in getting rid of maths phobia is to acknowledge that you have it. Once there is realisation, it is easier to take steps that will help alleviate any stress or panic caused by the subject.

Try breathing exercises

Since it can induce stress and panic, breathing exercises come in handy and help to calm the mind. This is very crucial for tasks that require critical thinking and problem-solving.

Practice daily

The proverb, practice makes perfect, is

A STUDENT SHOULD NEVER BE AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS IN A MATH CLASS. RAISING QUERIES WILL HELP RESOLVE DOUBTS THAT A STUDENT MIGHT HAVE. POSTPONING THIS CAN ADVERSELY AFFECT THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE SUBJECT

particularly true for maths. It demands constant practice to gain expertise and also helps in understanding the complexities of the subject.

Apply maths in real life

Math skills are very important in everyday life for dealing with tasks that range from simple to complex. Incorporating it into everyday activities will make it a part of your life. Fear of the subject will disappear once you understand that it is everywhere.

Ask questions

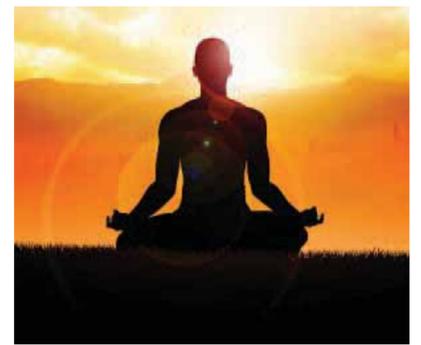
A student should never be afraid to ask questions in the math class. Asking questions will help to resolve any doubts a student might have while postponing this process can adversely affect the understanding of the subject.

Take help from classmates

Working together as a group can help students immensely as learning

in a cooperative environment works wonders for a subject like maths. This also adds an element of fun and excitement.

Practicing these tips makes easier to develop math skills as well as boost confidence levels. Maths as a subject is not an insurmountable challenge; regular practice, reading up on tips and tricks, finding creative ways to solve problems etc., can make it easier to grasp in no time. It is important that students are not frustrated and remain calm and concentrate when faced with a challenging math problem. Apart from teachers, parents should also help their children understand tough concepts in a communicative environment, encourage them with positive feedback and make sure their feedback is taken constructively. This will remove the psychological blocks that young students develop due to past negative experiences of trying to learn the subject.



A MORAL AWAKENING

It is a cause for concern as to why plans that are ambitiously conceived by influential people and funded liberally by national and international bodies collapse so miserably, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Looking at the global scenario, we can notice that many countries including some developed nations are under heavy external debts. Others have borrowed unscrupulously from financial institutions as well as common citizens and are surviving on deficit budgets or on printing a huge amount of paper currency that is no longer tied to any national gold reserves. Still few other nations, who have high standards of living, have their own burden of problems that arise from workaholicism among the people which is the outcome of exorbitant costs of living and deep mental discontent. Perhaps, the worst-off are some third world countries which are hit hard by poverty that causes acute suffering and humiliation to millions of people who live in pathetic sub-human conditions. And yet this gloomy situation is in spite of the fact that versatile and high-calibre economists and their political comrades in-arms in these countries put their brains together to determine the developmental thrusts, goals and strategies. It is a cause for concern as to why plans that are ambitiously conceived by knowledgeable people and funded so liberally by national and international bodies, eventually collapse so miserably.

Impartial surveys into these grave realities and their causes reveal that, in some countries, the developmental efforts are nullified by high population increase. In others, there is a lot of corruption in high places, or the 'insensitive' government incurs unaffordably high expenditure, or the greedy rich illegally deposit huge sums of money in banks abroad.

Other nations cannot make any worthwhile progress because of political instability, a disturbed law and order situation or because they have to spend enormous amounts on military and para-military build-up in order to counteract violence that is widespread. In many other cases, the main cause of wide-spread economic misery is the apathy of the people in high places towards the common populace. In one short sentence, it can be said that all the prevailing economic misery is due to the loss of values like sympathy, self-control, non-violence, spirit of service, feeling of concern for the well-being of others and more.

Our knowledge of science, technology, communication and managerial skills has not been able to bring inner happiness because our level of honesty, sincerity, cordiality, fair dealing duty, discipline and mutual trust are eroding rapidly. In other words, there has been a rapid decline in social, moral and family values. It is not that science and technology or management skills have caused our present sufferings. On the other hand, it is a fall in the standards of morality that has prevented even science and technology as well as management or administrative ability from enabling a nation realise its full potential. Moreover, it is not as if people do not know that moral values are necessary to build a happy and peaceful society. They wish to have morality in their lives but do not have the spiritual knowledge that would enable them to follow these values successfully in their life nor do they know meditation which would make the values stay in them and should give them a deeper sense of peace and happiness. Thus, the need of the hour is that we create mass awareness among people for values like tolerance, humility, mutual respect in order to realise our dream world which has peace, happiness and harmony.



A changing landscape of opportunities, for individuals and organisations, makes for a dynamic environment of skill development and learning, says POOJA BAJAJ

Buckle up



In order to succeed, a business must possess three basic essentials — a robust strategy, extraordinary leadership and engaged employees. The workplace needle has shifted from being economy-driven to service-driven, where the employee's interest is extremely vital for the company's growth. A changing landscape of opportunities, for individuals and organisations, creates a dynamic environment of skill development and automation. As per the 2018 Workplace Learning Report by LinkedIn Learning, businesses are fighting to stay ahead of the curve, holding onto their best talent to fill key positions.

The need for employee engagement

According to Gallup's State of the Global Workplace Report, a mere 15 per cent of employees are engaged in their jobs, which in turn shows low productivity and their demands couldn't be met by the organisations.

Imagine, if every employee has the zeal and passion to see the company succeed with satisfied and loyal customers, wouldn't that be the ideal workplace? You can only ensure the retention of your customers by taking care of your employees and keeping them motivated and happy. An engaged and enthused environment

in an organisation leads to higher productivity levels, gives it a creative boost, retains the best talent while ensuring wellness, good health and much more. The mindset of transformation is powerfully assisted by the right employee engagement tools and knowledge.

Effective employee engagement is the glue that holds together the employee's goals and the strategic objectives of the business. This means the organisation's goals are well-aligned with the employee's goals and there should be a constant flow of information on how this alignment helps the company grow while at the same time motivating and integrating them.

Digital revolution of employee engagement

There is a distinct transformation visible in the talent development and management today, according to the 2018 Workplace Learning Report. A majority of organisations depend on digital and online learning solutions to meet the demands and needs of their employees. The workplace consists of an increasingly diverse, multi-generational and digitally inclined workforce. A recent ATD report found that almost 90 per cent of companies offer digital learning today.

Almost 58 per cent of employees prefer opportunities to learn at their own pace, 49 per

cent prefer to learn at the point of need this shows the pressing need to cater to varied learning needs with personalised digital solutions. These solutions not only deliver content, but also measure learning success and employees are more engaged, as per the report, when they are accountable and can measure their success.

Keeping employees engaged at the workplace
A few ways to ensure a motivated and performance-driven workforce are:

Personal growth

It is vital for an employee to experience self-development and grow personally, as well as professionally.

Recognition

Appreciation, recognition and incentivising tasks are essential tools to improve the performance of your workforce.

Well-defined roles

Ensure proper division of work and roles among employees, while connecting the organisation's overall objectives to their individual goals. This makes them realise the integral role played by them in the company's success.

Foster friendships

It is very important for employees to stay well-connected and acquainted for personal and professional requirements in office.

Manager relations

To develop loyal and accountable teams with amazing manager relations, giving each employee an opportunity to grow with learning and development programmes. According to the Workplace Learning Report, managers account for at least 70 per cent of employee engagement scores.

Health and wellness

Organisations must take initiatives to help employees maintain a work-life balance, to look after their mental and physical health.

Purpose and communication

When the goal or purpose of a job is well-defined, an employee feels motivated to do it accordingly and achieve success. This is possible through effective and authentic communication at the workplace.

Career development

The organisation must help employees 'make time for learning' as 94 per cent of employees say that they would stay at a company longer if it invested in their career development, based on the Workplace Learning Report.

Reaching employee engagement nirvana in 2019

With high paying jobs hard to come by, it is essential for employers and leaders to engage their employees and make them feel as if they are an integral part of the business. Employers can follow a three-part module:

Inspire-Motivate-Partners

When employees, especially millennials, are inspired by opportunities and co-workers, they feel empowered to make a difference in their organisations and the world. Their motivation is driven by learning, promotions and relationships with their managers. These relations guide employees on which qualities need to be cultivated pass the next level and grow in their careers. Lastly, finding out their expectations and feedback pushes organisations to get them involved in making change within the company.

(The author is the ceo of an employee engagement firm.)

Peace begins with a smile. —Mother Teresa

DRUGS MAY PUT YOU AT HEART ATTACK RISK

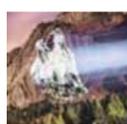
If you have been hit by the winter cold and are thinking about taking medicines that relieve your aches, pains and congestion, be careful. Those may also put your heart at risk, the American Heart Association has warned.



A study has showed that both decongestants and non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs), found in many cold medicines, were listed as medications that could increase blood pressure. People who used NSAIDs while sick were more than three times as likely to have a heart attack within a week compared with the same time period about a year earlier when participants were neither sick nor taking an NSAID. "People with uncontrolled high blood pressure or heart disease should avoid taking oral decongestants. And for the general population or someone with low cardiovascular risk, they should use them with the guidance of a health care provider," said Sondra DePalma, from the University of Pittsburgh in the US.

MORE ANIMAL SPECIES LIKELY TO GET EXTINCT

Researchers have found that more than a hundred species currently identified as non-threatened on the Red List of Threatened Species, are actually likely to be at risk of extinction.



The study emphasises on the urgent need for re-assessment of animal species on the Red List. The findings, led by a team from Radboud University in the Netherlands, showed that 20 per cent of the 600 species, such as the brown-banded rail and Williamson's mouse-deer, which were impossible to assess by the Red List experts are likely under threat of extinction. In addition, 600 species that were assessed previously as being non-threatened, are actually likely to be threatened, such as the red-breasted pygmy parrot and the Ethiopian striped mouse.

Once every few years, specialised researchers voluntarily assess the conservation status of animal species in the world, which is then recorded in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species.

STILLBIRTHS DUE TO OVERSLEEPING

Sleeping more than nine hours per night during pregnancy may be associated with late stillbirth, suggests a new study.



This is because blood pressure reaches its lowest point during sleep which has been linked with foetal growth problems, preterm birth, and stillbirth.

The study, led by a team from the University of Michigan, explored how maternal sleep habits, including lengthy periods of sleep without waking more than once in the night, may be associated with foetal health independent of other risk factors. Moreover, pregnant women often report waking up and getting up in the middle of the night.

Very disruptive sleep has also been associated with poor pregnancy outcomes, including growth restriction and preterm growth. "Our findings add to research indicating that maternal sleep plays a role in foetal well being. Studies aiming to reduce stillbirths should consider maternal sleep as this is a potentially modifiable risk factor," said lead author Louise O'Brien, researcher at the variety.

GUT BACTERIA MAY COMBAT FOOD ALLERGY

Healthy infants have intestinal bacteria that can prevent the development of food allergies, research has found.



Researchers from the University of Chicago, Argonne National Laboratory and the University of Naples Federico II in Italy transplanted gut microbes from each of eight infant donors: four healthy and four with cow's milk allergy, into groups of mice via fecal samples, Xinhua news agency reported.

The mice had been raised in a completely sterile, germ-free environment, and were fed the same formula as the infants to help the bacteria colonise properly by providing the same sources of nutrients.

The results show that mice receiving bacteria from allergic infants suffered from anaphylaxis — a life-threatening allergic reaction, when exposed to cow's milk for the first time.

DISTRESS INCREASES RISK FOR DEMENTIA

Men and women who are distressed in midlife could be at higher risk of developing dementia in their old age, suggests a new study.



The study showed that vital exhaustion, which can be perceived as an indicator of psychological distress, is a risk factor for future risk of dementia.

Psychological distress is potentially linked to the risk of dementia through neurological and cardiovascular mechanisms.

The findings, led by researchers from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, revealed that for each additional symptom of vital exhaustion, the risk of dementia rose by two per cent.

While participants reporting five to nine symptoms had a 25 per cent higher risk of dementia than those with no symptoms, those reporting 10 to 17 symptoms had a 40 per cent higher risk of dementia compared with not having symptoms.

Trend Slazer

'Mira tells me to calm down'

Actor **SHAHID KAPOOR** says he and his wife Mira have a different approach when it comes to parenting. He says she tells him to calm down a bit when it comes to their two children, while he feels she is "too casual." Shahid said, "My wife tells me that I am a little obsessive and protective and that I need to calm down a little bit. I tell her that she is too casual. Having said that, we try and find the middle ground which I think is good for the kids because you need to have both types of parents. If both are too obsessive or both are too careless I don't think that works, so you need to find that balance." Shahid and Mira have a daughter named Misha and son named Zain.



'Few stories are so compelling that when a filmmaker is ready to tell the unadulterated version of it on the big screen, as an actor you feel excited to do such a film. Of course, *Manto* was one such project and I will be doing such films in coming days.'

—Nawazuddin Siddiqui

Actress **SOHA ALI KHAN**, also a mother, says people should not force their children to have anything. "I would say don't force your child to have anything. Be persuasive and charming, but don't force them and respect their decisions. Try again another time if they refuse," Soha said. "Inaaya (her daughter) likes her milk fortunately for now, but we all know how tempestuous toddlers can be. Be creative with the milk also — use fun containers, straws, make milkshakes and mix it in a healthy mix," she added.

'Don't let fashion hurt your feelings'

Singer **JOHN MAYER** feels people should not let fashion hurt their feelings. He said, "You shouldn't let fashion hurt your feelings. If it does, that's a good indicator that you are taking it way too seriously. Anybody, at any time, should be allowed to wear whatever they like. Whether it works or not will be for their future self to make peace with." According to Mayer, one should not pay much thought while dressing up. "God knows I have a very well-documented history of attempts. Take a hat, for example. Do you know how many hats you have to wear before you find the one that actually works? Wearing bad hats is the only path to a good hat," the singer added.



Travel, the very word conjures up images of golden sand beaches, towering mountains and exotic locales. But then it is no longer about tick marking the must-visits at a destination. The concept is changing and evolving. People want to experience adventure activities that a place can offer specific to the place. There is also 'bleisure' (leisure on business trips), which is an ideal way for workaholics to balance work with some leisure or bachelorettes at fancy locales where the brides/grooms can spend some quality time with their friends.

ACTIVITY-BASED
Experts say that the rise of recreation activities during holidays is the most noticeable trend. Through these people make the most of their vacations even if they travel for short breaks. Not surprisingly, the travel companies are viewing it as new opportunities. Sunil Gupta, CEO of Avis India, says that there has been a growth in travellers who are inclined towards new experiences and adventures rather than simply strolling through the markets during their vacation. This in turn translated into an increase in the average spending. He says, "Keeping this factor in mind, travel portals are making sure to act as catalyst in encouraging the adventure options for their travellers." Keeping this in mind, Avis India has come up with self-drive options even in foreign countries to ease the journey. Cleartrip, on the other hand, has partnered with the Hong Kong-based adventure park Klook and is offering packages for activities. Travel company, Tirun is associating with many Indian chefs to offer more elaborated Indian cuisines even outside the country. "We have noticed that Australia and New Zealand have a beautiful coastline that can only be accessed through the medium of a cruise. Keeping this in mind, a cruise will be launched to cater to this market and its rising demand," says Naresh Rawal, vice president, sales & marketing, Asia Pacific, Genting Cruise Lines.

TRAVELLER 2.0

Exploring new destinations and old linkages, experiencing luxury and adventure, Indians are redefining wanderlust and how. By TEAM VIVA



INTERNATIONAL IN FOCUS

Experts have also observed a rise in international travels among Indian travellers during the past one year, and believe that they're bound to rise even more. According to a report by the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), India will account for 50 million outbound tourists by 2020, which is twice the current figures. The average expenditure by Indian outbound travellers on short-haul trips will be about \$857 or ₹61,065 per trip per person, and long-haul trips will be about \$1,687 or ₹1,20,207. **ROAD LESS-TRAVELLED**
Karan Anand, head, relationships, Cox & Kings, says that among international destinations, Northern Europe is becoming the prime travel region for Indian travellers with many less-travelled spots like Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland and Morocco securing a place in their travel maps. Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam, Laos and South Korea are also luring Indian travellers. In terms of romantic destinations or spots for the newly-weds, the Reunion Island in France is emerging as the ideal vacation spot. In Asia where people were typically travelling to Hong Kong and Malaysia, now they have extended their horizons to Vietnam and Cambodia. Tanzania and Zanzibar in Africa are also the new hotspots. Vishal Kejriwal, ceo and co-founder of Taxidio also echoes similar observations. "People are shifting from West Europe to East and Central parts of the continent. Malta, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro are trending the most," says Kejriwal. Overall among international travel spots, Rawal says, "McLeod islands in Thailand and Southern islands of Japan — Miyakojima and Naha — are now being picked up as hot new destinations specifically in Asia."

There has been yet another pattern observed for the travellers who don't step out very frequently or are first-time travellers. Anand says, "First-time travellers usually pick conventional destinations or the ones that are not very new to people's knowledge. It is specifically the segment of experienced travellers who look for newer destinations, be it personal vacation with family and friends or for business travel."

EXPLORING OLD ROADS

While going to unknown destinations is a must-do, exploring back in time is also the way to go. The old Silk Route is an experience that the traveller wants to undertake. Central Asian countries are like Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and more are reviving the old linkages and the industries associated to it. Florian Sengtschmid, CEO of Azerbaijan Tourism Board, says, "Travelling from Baku, the capital, you can go to the other end of the country along this ancient road. There are many houses that still use the old methods for printing on silk or even the way they use metals. An intrepid and curious traveller with the help of a local guide can have an enriching experience."

BLEISURE

If looking at it categorically, Middle-East countries like Qatar and Oman have become top picks for MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) due to a rise in work or business trips, says Anand. It is also corroborated by a report by Forbes which says that 87 per cent of business travellers are likely to mix business and leisure on the same trip.

However, the irony is that 92 per cent of respondents still admitted to doing some work on dedicated leisure vacations, while 56 per cent of travellers with children included family on business trips.

LUXURY ON CALL

Domestically, the demand for luxury and boutique resorts at serene locations is on rise. Travellers are taking more interest in desert camps, participation in local activities/ festivals, culinary trails and private small group journeys. This is why our packages for TUTC camps in Sangam Niwas (Prayagraj-Kumbh Mela), Jaagir Lodge (Dudhwa), Kohima camp (Nagaland-Hornbill festival) and Ladakh, city walks of Trip 360 and culinary quest through Tour to Feasts journeys are getting extremely popular among the travellers.

BONDING OVER BACHELORETTE

According to Kejriwal, there has been a growing trend in bachelors and bachelorette parties internationally. Spots like Spain, London, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Prague and Budapest are the ones that these groups head to. And for destination weddings, places like Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia are more convenient for people keeping the budget in consideration as it offers great facilities in minimum expenditure. Anand has also observed a similar pattern in terms of destination weddings, "Tropical spots such as Bali, Phuket, Krabi and Koh Samui, Langkawi and Pangkor island and islands in the Maldives fit the wedding budget perfectly. Boracay, Da Nang and Nha Trang are also emerging as wedding destinations gradually. Those having higher budgets also go for exotic locations in US, Europe and Australia." A growing trend that has been observed over the past one year — is the rise of the solo traveller. "People who travel alone have a tight budget so they prefer hostels or zostels. However, they explore the city in a very native way," says Kejriwal.



TECH TALK

Media must rebuild trust

A new study says that this will be a critical year for both publishers and platforms in re-establishing credibility

Media houses taking up arms against fake news, publishers looking towards subscriptions to make up for the losses, which may fuel lay-offs and thus weaken further their ability to hold politicians and tycoons to account, are the key trends in the media sector in 2019, finds a report. Titled *Journalism, Media, and Technology Trends and Predictions 2019* authored by Nic Newman, Senior Research Associate at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, the report said 2019 will be a critical year for both publishers and platforms in terms of rebuilding trust and credibility after years of self-inflicted wounds around quality, privacy, and user experience. "This will be the year when the regulation of platform companies start to bite following growing concern about misinformation, privacy, and market power. Something once considered unthinkable has become 'inevitable...'" reads the report. "Meanwhile the spread of false, misleading and extreme content will continue to undermine democracies around the world with polarising elections in India, Indonesia and Europe likely flashpoints." Newman said technology platforms will remain cautious and defensive in the light of regulatory threats. The report predicted a renewed focus on trust indicators this year for news and better labelling designed to help consumers decide what and who to trust. It said journalism will continue to be hollowed out by structural shifts that have already led to



significant falls in advertising revenue. "Publishers are looking to subscriptions to make up the difference but the limits of this are likely to become apparent in 2019. Taken together these trends are likely to lead to the biggest wave of journalistic lay-offs in years — weakening further the ability of publishers to hold populist politicians and powerful business leaders to account," it says. The report is based on the input of 200 editors, CEOs, and digital leaders from 29 countries, who responded to a survey around the key challenges and opportunities in the year ahead. Subscription and membership is the key priority for the news industry going forward and it would be the main revenue focus in 2019, 52 per cent of the respondents believed, while 27 per cent opted for display advertising,

'THE SPREAD OF FALSE, MISLEADING AND EXTREME CONTENT WILL CONTINUE TO UNDERMINE DEMOCRACIES AROUND THE WORLD WITH POLARISING ELECTIONS IN INDIA, INDONESIA AND EUROPE'
eight per cent for native advertising and seven per cent for donations. The report said the news industry is losing patience with Facebook and publishers are re-focusing attention elsewhere. "Less than half of respondents (43 per cent) say the platform is likely to be important or extremely important this year, a similar number to Apple News and

YouTube — but far less than for Google (87 per cent)," reads the report. Over 78 per cent of the respondents said it was important to invest more in Artificial Intelligence (AI) to help secure the future of journalism as increased personalisation is as critical a pathway to the future. They also believed that audio would become a more important part of the content, and commercial strategies and emerging voice-activated technologies, like Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant would have a significant impact on how audiences access content over the next few years. Media platforms are reconfiguring their algorithms to be more respectful of signals of meaningful content, which would provide a basis by which the problems of misinformation might eventually be solved, said the report. —IANS

WEBBED



MADE IN HEAVEN

Directed by Zoya Akhtar, Reema Kagti, Nitya Mehra, Prashant Nair and Alankrita Shrivastava, the series revolves around Tara and Karan, two wedding planners in Delhi. Their stories unfold over the course of an opulent wedding season. Against the backdrop of a big fat Indian wedding, tradition jostles with modern aspirations unraveling hidden secrets and lies. The ensemble cast of the show includes Jim Sarbh, Arjun Mathur, Sobhita Dhulipala, Kalki Koechlin, Shashank Arora and Shivani Raghuvanshi. The show is expected to hit Amazon Prime Video in March.



UNBREAKABLE KIMMY SCHMIDT SEASON 4, PART 2

From Kimmy being rescued from a doomsday cult after 15 years, she has started her life afresh in New York City. Now that she is trying to work her way through the publishing world, that venture brings her in contact with a number of new faces in the Schmidt-iverse. The season stars Zachary Quinto and Jon Bernthal in debut roles in the final episodes. This season will also star Ronan Farrow and Greg Kinnear, who'll be playing themselves. Starring Ellie Kemper, the final season of the series will imagine an alternate state of Kimmy's timeline, following what might have happened if she'd never been taken prisoner in the first place. The show premieres on January 25 on Netflix.

100 UP MAN CITY

Daniilo, Sterling and Sane score as City reach century of goals in 2018/19 season in 3-0 win over Huddersfield



Leroy Sane celebrates after scoring Manchester City's third goal against Huddersfield Town at John Smith's stadium; (right) Alexandre Lacazette, centre, attempts to get through the Chelsea defence



AFP ■ LONDON

Manchester City reduced Liverpool's lead at the top of the English Premier League table to four points as they eventually found top gear to win 3-0 away to basement club Huddersfield Town on Sunday.

This was by no means City's most outstanding display of the season but, ultimately, goals from Danilo, Raheem Sterling and Leroy Sane ensured they did not trip up in the latest leg of their quest to keep the Premier League title race alive.

Liverpool's captivating 4-3 victory over Crystal Palace on Saturday ensured this was a crunch fixture for Pep Guardiola's side, yet any hopes Huddersfield could pull off a shock win never materialised.

After 12 minutes, Sterling felt he was denied a penalty after Terence

Kongolo's heavy challenge in the box. But City's wait to break the deadlock lasted just six more minutes as Danilo's fierce shot was deflected past Jonas Lossel by Christopher Schindler.

The goal was City's 100th of the season in all competitions, a statistic underlining their potent attack, but they were surprisingly lacklustre in the remainder of the first half.

Yet after the break, City finally upped the tempo and were soon out of sight.

After 52 minutes, De Bruyne's pass found Sane on the left and his pinpoint cross was met by Sterling who finished off a diving header with some aplomb.

City's afternoon soon got even better when Sane then scored a wonderful team goal that demonstrated how City had finally woken up.

Daniilo pumped a ball forward and Agüero steered a fantastic cushioned header into the path of Sane who slipped the ball past Lossel.

Immediately, it felt as if Huddersfield would need to enter damage-limitation mode to stop City from running riot as they did in the 6-1 reverse fixture victory at the Etihad Stadium in August.

But to the credit of Huddersfield caretaker coach Mark Hudson, he implored his team to keep on trying to attack despite being three goals down.

However, Huddersfield never really looked like conjuring up a miracle comeback as Stevie Mounie resorted to attempting to score from 30 yards but with little effect.

A close-range header from Mounie was also well saved by Ederson towards the end.

But that incident was the City

goalkeeper's first real piece of action, which said everything about the lopsided nature of this contest.

GUNNERS HAMMER BLUES

Arsenal blew the race for a top-four Premier League finish wide open as first-half goals from Alexandre Lacazette and Laurent Koscielny saw the Gunners beat Chelsea 2-0 at the Emirates Stadium.

Chelsea remain in pole position for a return to Champions League football next season in fourth, but are now just three points ahead of Arsenal and a surging Manchester United, who beat Brighton earlier on Saturday to stretch caretaker manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's winning streak to seven games in all competitions.

Maurizio Sarri's men risk being caught after a fourth defeat in 11 league matches that underlined the need for a striker, as the club close in on sign-

ing Gonzalo Higuain on loan from Juventus.

Aubameyang should have opened the scoring after just five minutes when perfectly picked out by Lacazette's low cross, but he dragged his shot wide.

Kepa Arrizabalaga then produced a brilliant save to deny Koscielny from point-blank range, but it counted for little as from the resulting 14th-minute corner Arsenal took a deserved lead.

Lacazette did well to stay on his feet as he skipped past Marcos Alonso and Pedro Rodriguez before smashing the ball past Kepa at his near post.

Aubameyang should have doubled Arsenal's lead moments later but fired too close to Kepa when clean through.

Chelsea's start was horribly reminiscent of the 3-1 defeat at Tottenham in November that began their dip in form after a fine start to Sarri's reign at Stamford Bridge.

However, Arsenal's defence remained vulnerable when put under pressure and Pedro could have levelled when his lob over Bernd Leno shaved the outside of the post.

Aubameyang came close again, this time in spectacular fashion with an overhead kick that flew inches wide with Kepa beaten.

Chelsea were repeatedly caught out by Arsenal's well-worked set-pieces and paid for it again, albeit in fortunate fashion for the Gunners, six minutes before the break.

Sead Kolasinac headed down Lucas Torreira's free-kick into the path of Sokratis Papastathopoulos and his cross picked out the unmarked Koscielny.

The Arsenal captain mistimed his header, but the ball bounced in off his shoulder for his first goal since he ruptured his Achilles in April.

Chelsea could have got a foothold in the game before half-time as David Luiz's header came back off the post.

But in keeping with so many of their performances of late, Chelsea created little thereafter despite dominating possession.



Axel Witsel celebrates after scoring against RB Leipzig in Bundesliga clash

Witsel restores six-point cushion

AFP ■ BERLIN

Borussia Dortmund restored their six-point lead over Bayern Munich at the top of the Bundesliga as Axel Witsel netted in their 1-0 away win at fourth-placed RB Leipzig.

Leipzig suffered their first home league defeat this season and Dortmund's victory was all the more impressive without captain and playmaker Marco Reus, who twisted an ankle in training on Friday.

On the first weekend of the Bundesliga after the winter break, Dortmund claimed the winner on 19 minutes when the ball fell to Witsel from a corner and the Belgian midfielder reacted fastest, firing home off the underside of the crossbar.

"I am happy to score, like I did in the first game," said Witsel, who scored his first Bundesliga goal against Leipzig in last August's 4-1 win in Dortmund.

"But I am more happy with the three points, because it was really important to get a win at the start of the second half of the season."

Dortmund created chances

after the break as England winger Jadon Sancho and Maximilian Philipp, Reus' replacement, both got in behind the Leipzig defence, but failed to convert.

At the other end, Dortmund goalkeeper Roman Buerki twice denied Leipzig forwards Timo Werner and Marcel Sabitzer as hosts pushed for an equaliser.

Paco Alcacer, Dortmund's top scorer with 12 league goals, had an effort ruled out for offside and smacked the crossbar with another shot when he came on for the final, nervy 10 minutes.

Earlier Saturday, Borussia Moenchengladbach kept pace with Dortmund and Bayern in the title race as Alassane Plea scored in their 1-0 win at Bayer Leverkusen.

The away win leaves Gladbach three points behind Bayern and nine adrift of Dortmund.

Elsewhere, Eintracht Frankfurt climbed to fifth, a point from the CL berths, with a 3-1 win at home to Freiburg as striker Luka Jovic claimed his 13th goal this season to become the league's top-scorer.



SINGLES

CHINA ROAR BACK FROM BEHIND

AL-AIN: China flirted with disaster before mounting a second-half revival as they fought back from behind to beat Thailand 2-1 and reach the Asian Cup quarter-finals on Sunday. The giant nation were all at sea as they fell behind to Supachai Jaidee's opener but they hit back after the break through substitute Xiao Zhi and Gao Lin's well-taken penalty. It meant China live to fight another day under Marcello Lippi, who is expected to step down after the Asian Cup, while Thailand exit with their heads held high.

In an open start, Theerathon Bunmathan saw a free kick tipped over and Wu Lei had an attempt smothered by Thai goalkeeper Siwarak Tedsungnoen before Thailand went ahead on 31 minutes. But China finally scored midway through the second half when substitute forward Xiao, three minutes after coming on, headed straight at Siwarak before prodding home the rebound. The onslaught didn't stop and after Gao was brought down by Chalermpong Kerdkaeu, he nervously swept the spot-kick high into the net for a 2-1 lead.

VIETNAM SHOOT-OUT JORDAN IN LAST 16

ABU DHABI: Vietnam emerged victorious from a penalty shoot-out with Jordan to become the first team to reach the Asian Cup quarter-finals on Sunday — after being the last side to scrape into the round of 16. After extra-time finished at 1-1, BT Dung rolled in the decisive spot-kick for a 4-2 penalties win and saluted the crowd after Baha Faisal and Ahmed Samir had missed for Jordan. The dramatic win upset the odds after Jordan were the first to qualify for the knockouts, and Vietnam only went through because of their disciplinary record after they finished with an identical points and goals record to Lebanon. However, the Southeast Asian champions came back from a goal down to force extra time, and they were on balance the stronger and more positive team over the 120 minutes. Vital Borkelemans' Jordan came into the game as the form side and they spurned a number of chances before opening the scoring six minutes after half-time. But levelled six minutes after the break, when Cong Phuong showed great technique to steer home a volley from close range.

BAJRANG GUIDES PUNJAB TO FIRST WIN

LUDHIANA: Living up to his reputation, Asian Games Gold medalist pulled off the deciding bout against Delhi Sultans' Andrey Kviatkovski to guide defending champions Punjab Royals to their first win of the ongoing Pro Wrestling League season on Sunday. In a battle between the two world championships participants Bajrang outclassed Andrey Kviatkovski in the 65kg encounter. In the sixth bout, Rio Olympics Bronze medalist Delhi's Sakshi Malik didn't break much sweat while defeating Punjab's Anita 11-0 and push the tie to the decider. This was a much improved performance by Sakshi than the one she had against Navjot Kaur of UP Dangal in the last match. Earlier, the 2017-18 World Military Championships Gold medalist Khetik Tsabalov of Delhi Sultans won the first bout of the evening against the Asian Championships Bronze medalist Vinod Kumar 14-0.

VERRATTI DOUBTFUL FOR MAN UTD CLASH

PARIS: Paris Saint Germain Italian midfielder Marco Verratti was diagnosed with a sprained ankle, which makes him doubtful for their upcoming first leg of the UEFA Champions League last-16 clash against Manchester United, the Ligue 1 club announced on Sunday. On Saturday, Verratti was forced out of the field 20 minutes into their 9-0 rout of Guingamp and coach Thomas Tuchel said the injury was feared to be serious. "Marco Verratti's MRI scan conducted after the match against Guingamp confirmed a twisted left ankle without any further damage," the undisputed Ligue 1 leader said in a statement. "The evolution of the injury over the coming days with treatment and further examinations will allow the club to establish how long the player will need to fully recover," the French club added.

Agencies

ATM keep pressure on Barca

AGENCIES ■ SEVILLE

Atletico Madrid moved to within two points of LaLiga leaders Barcelona after a comfortable 3-0 win over bottom club Huesca on Saturday.

Full-backs Lucas Hernandez and Santiago Arias put Atletico in control before Koke ensured Atletico extended their unbeaten run in the league to 17 games.

Lucas' first goal of the season put Atleti ahead and Arias doubled their lead before Koke sealed the points on a foggy night in northern Spain, keeping Diego Simeone's men firmly in title contention.

Lucas made no mistake just after the half hour, though, as he tapped home at the back post after Lemar and Koke had unlocked the Huesca defence.

While the visibility deteriorated in the heavy fog, Atletico were not affected and almost doubled their advantage when Correa burst through, but Santamaria reacted superbly to deny the forward from point-blank range.

A second goal did arrive after 52 minutes as Antoine Griezmann was given time to pick out Arias at the far post, the full-back volleying past Santamaria in style.

Huesca continued to pose a threat, but their challenge was ended when Koke lashed home in the 71st minute, the midfielder finishing in style after Griezmann's header had come back off the crossbar.

Meanwhile on Sunday, Real Betis prevailed over Girona 3-2 thanks to a last gasp penalty successfully converted by midfielder Sergio



Canales, to earn their first La Liga win in four matches.

Having ousted Atletico Madrid from the Spanish Cup round of 16, Girona hoped their momentum would continue in La Liga, where they have been unable to post a win in the last six matches.

Girona's hopes received a setback in the 11th minute, when forward Cristian Tello got Real Betis on the scoreboard with a set piece.

But Girona was not ready to quit without a fight; they struck twice over an eight-minute stretch.

After the intermission, Betis aggressively sought out the equalizer and efforts paid off eventually eight minutes into the second half as striker Loren Moron fired home, off a pass by Canales to make the score 2-2.

It was in the fourth minute of the second half stoppage time when Canales delivered from the 12-yard spot.

After the win, Betis have 29 points in the seventh spot in the La Liga table, while Girona fell into the tenth spot with 24 points.



Inter launch anti-racism campaign with goalless draw

AFP ■ MILAN

Inter Milan launched their anti-racism campaign in reaction to last month's abuse of Senegalese defender Kalidou Koulibaly as 11,000 local schoolchildren watched a goalless draw with Sassuolo at the San Siro on Saturday.

Inter Milan were ordered to play two matches behind closed doors as punishment for racist chants and monkey noises directed at Napoli's Koulibaly on December 26.

Luciano Spalletti's side responded, with permission from Serie A, by inviting children from local schools to the stadium as they launched their 'BUU' initiative, aimed at turning the chant into an acronym for 'Brothers Universally United'.

"With the BUU — Brothers Universally United campaign, Inter wanted to send out a strong message," said club chief executive Giuseppe Marotta.

"It's an initiative that demonstrates how much the club cares about certain values."

But on the pitch it was a drab affair as Inter were pegged back by their midtable rivals as they missed



the chance to close in on second-placed Napoli, only escaping with a point thanks to superb saves by goalkeeper Samir Handanovic.

"You could hear these children shouting, the sound of kids enjoying any situation that was happening," said Spalletti.

"They weren't all Inter supporters, there were kids who like other teams too, but they were all enjoying the occasion."

Inter, coming off three consecutive wins, struggled to create any

chances with captain Mauro Icardi and Ivan Perisic both wasteful in front of goal.

Handanovic came to the rescue twice — saving a Kevin-Prince Boateng header after the break, and again in injury time, denying Jeremie Boga.

Inter Milan are now four points behind Napoli who host Lazio on Monday, without Koulibaly after he lost his appeal against a two-match ban imposed for his sending off during that defeat by Inter.

Lagat, Worknesh win Mumabi marathon

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Cosmas Lagat of Kenya and Worknesh Alemu of Ethiopia surprised pre-race favourites to win the men's and women's crowns respectively in the \$ 405,000 Tata Mumbai Marathon here on Sunday.

Lagat, winner of the Sevilla Marathon in 2016, made the 42.195-km race in this coastal city his own over the last 10 km to storm his way home in 2 hours, 9 minutes and 15 seconds, the second-best in the 16-year history of the race.

The course record of 2:08:35 of his own Kenyan compatriot Gideon Kipketer, done in 2016, just about survived the long-legged Lagat's onslaught after he had left behind all his rivals, including pre-race favourite Abera Kuma of Ethiopia well behind his wake.

In second place was Aychew Bantie of Ethiopia in 2:10:05 while Akalnew Shumet, also from Ethiopia, took the third spot in 2:10:14.

The man with the best time going into the race, Kuma,



finished seventh in 2:13:10 after he was with the lead bunch of ten runners, including some pacers, on the sea link after 19 kms before the bunch split up.

"I did not think of course record and only winning was on my mind," said Kenyan Lagat who was a pacemaker in the 2012 London Olympics and started running when in primary school.

The women's race also became a one-horse course over the last 5 km once Ethiopian Alemu split the field with 12 km left in the race.

Finally, she came home all

alone well in front of the others, including pre-race favourite, compatriot and defending champion Amane Gobena, in 2:25:45 which was outside the course record.

Gobena came in second in 2:26:09 while another Ethiopian woman, Birke Debele, was third in 2:26:39 to mark a clean sweep for the African nation.

Significantly, India's Sudha Singh finished on top among the Indian runners while setting a personal best of 2:34:56, but also dipped well under the qualifying mark of 2:37:00 set by IAAF for the September-

Intanon beats Marin in summit clash



Thailand's Ratchanok Intanon beat Spanish badminton star Carolina Marin 21-9, 22-20 here on Sunday, clinching the Malaysia Masters final in just 42 minutes.

Heading into the final, Marin had won three of her last four matches against Intanon.

The Thai, seeded No 6 in the tournament, dominated the match from the start, jumping to a quick 6-1 lead and never letting Marin back into the set.

Marin played better in the second set, grabbing a 10-7 lead before

Intanon managed to tie it at 12-12.

The players went back and forth, with Marin making a huge push and going up 19-18.

Intanon, however, was not to be denied and she managed to edge Marin and take the title.

Intanon had a spectacular run in Malaysia, upsetting top-ranked Tai Tzu-ying of Taiwan and defeating 18-year-old home crowd favorite Goh Jin Wei of Malaysia 21-16, 21-16 in Saturday's second semi-final.

In the men's decider South Korea's Son Wan Ho defeated China's Olympic champion Chen Long.

Son defeated Chen 21-17, 21-19 after making comeback in both sets as the Chinese shuttler failed to hold on to early lead.

Japanese Yuta Watanabe and Arisa Higashino handily beat their Thai opponents Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai 21-18, 21-18 to win the mixed doubles title.

Japan also came out on top at the women's doubles with world No1 Yuki Fukushima and Sayaka Hirota edged off Indonesia's Greysia Polii and Apriyani Rahayu 18-21, 21-16 and 21-16.



IANS ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Doomsday for Biggies

Defending champion Federer, runner up Cilic sent packing as Sloane, Sharapova and Kerber make exit after shock defeat in last 16 clash



AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Defending champion Roger Federer was stunned by fiery Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas who ended his bid for a record seventh Australian Open on Sunday in a day of upsets that also saw second seed Angelique Kerber crash out.

The Swiss master caved in under the energy and pressure of a man 17 years his junior to tumble out 6-7 (11/13), 7-6 (7/3), 7-5, 7-6 (7/5) in the last 16 on Rod Laver Arena.

World number two, Kerber was also sensationally bundled out by a woman playing the event for the first time, with American Danielle Collins humiliating the Wimbledon champion 6-0, 6-2 in under an hour.

The man Federer beat in last year's final, sixth seed Marin Cilic was also sent packing by Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut, who now plays Tsitsipas in the quarter-finals.

Five-time Grand Slam winner Maria Sharapova was another to fall, but there was no such drama for a rampant Rafael Nadal who powered into the last eight with a straight sets win over Tomas Berdych.

Federer was gunning for a 21st Grand Slam title but had a battle on his hands from off against the 20-year-old, touted among the new generation of young stars as a future champion.

"I'm the happiest man on Earth right now, I cannot describe it," said the 14th seed, who is the first Greek in history to reach the quarter-finals of a Slam.

"I've been idolising him (Federer) since the age of six. It was a dream comes true for me just being on Rod Laver facing him. Winning at the end, I can't describe it."

The Swiss great was gracious in defeat, saying "I lost to a better player who was playing very well, who hung in there and stayed calm."

Wimbledon winner and 2016 champion Kerber, the bookies' favourite along with Serena Williams after defending champion Caroline



Aus Open (4th Round)
Live from 5:30am IST
SONY TEN 2 NETWORK



Wozniacki was ousted early, was no match for Collins, ranked 35 in the world.



finals after the young American celebrated his 21st birthday by grinding his way past Grigor Dimitrov 7-5, 7-6 (8/6), 6-7 (1/7), 7-5.

Collins is little known after playing much of her tennis in the US college system and was making her debut in the main draw at Melbourne Park. She had never won a Grand Slam match before this year.

"I may not have won a Grand Slam match before this but I tell you, it's going to keep happening," said the 25-year-old. "I better have many more of these."

CHIPPING AWAY

Men's second seed Nadal, returning from foot surgery, barrelled past former world number four Tomas Berdych 6-0, 6-1, 7-6 (7/4) as he stays on track for an 18th Grand Slam title.

"I always say the same when I am back for injury," said the Spaniard. "I don't expect negative or positive things. I just try to do my work every day and just be with (the) right attitude every single day."

He will play world number 39 Frances Tiafoe for a place in the semi-

Hometown hero Ashleigh Barty also made the last eight after muscling past Sharapova and will next meet Petra Kvitova.

Sharapova claimed her biggest scalp since completing a drugs ban in 2017 when she rolled Wozniacki in round three and looked on track to carry the momentum forward.

The 30th seed won the first set but then fell to pieces, eventually succumbing 4-6, 6-1, 6-4.

"I knew I had to keep chipping away — in a sense, trust the work we've done. I know that I can match it with the best," said Barty, seeded 15.

Next up for the diminutive 22-year-old is Kvitova, who beat Barty in the final of the warm-up Sydney International this month.

The two-time Wimbledon champion beat 17-year-old Amanda Anisimova 6-2, 6-1 to match her best performance at a major since being slashed in a terrifying attack at her home in late 2016 that left her with lasting nerve damage in her fingers.

Kohli is greatest ODI batsman: Clarke

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

That Virat Kohli is destined to be among the pantheons of all-time greats is an oft-repeated assertion but for former Australia captain Michael Clarke, the India skipper is already the 'greatest ODI batsman to have ever played the game'.

Kohli, the world's No 1 Test and ODI batsman, led India through a historic tour of Australia, during which the team won the Test and ODI rubbers and drew the T20 International series.

Kohli's India was the first team ever not to lose any series Down Under and along the way, he continued to add to his rapidly-rising count of international hundreds.

"To me, Virat Kohli is the greatest batsman to have ever played one-day cricket. I have no doubts after seeing what he has achieved for India," Clarke, himself a former World Cup-winning captain, said.

Kohli has already scored 10,385 runs in 219 ODIs with an astounding average of 59 plus, including 39 hundreds.

An unabashed Kohli fan, Clarke said that the 30-year-old Indian's passion is unmatched.

"You have to respect Virat's passion to win games for his country. Yes, he has aggression but no one can question his commitment, how much he has achieved. He is the greatest in ODIs," Clarke said.

While Kohli's craft continues to evoke awe, his predecessor Mahendra Singh Dhoni's current form has the cricketers world divided.

Dhoni's style of batsmanship in ODIs, no longer as aggressive as it used to be, has been a matter of concern but for Clarke, the 37-year-old former India captain should be left alone to play his game.

"MS knows how to react to any given situation. He has played 300 plus ODIs so he knows how to go about his job," Clarke said.

But would Dhoni have been as effective as he was in the third ODI against Australia if the target would have been 330 instead of 230?

"I think he would have played differently. It was 230 and he had a particular strategy and it would have been different if the target would have been bigger," he said.

"Look at his approach in the second game in Adelaide and the third game in Melbourne. It was different," Clarke said.

Asked what should be Dhoni's batting position in the World Cup, Clarke said, "Any position 4, 5 or 6. He is good enough to bat at any position and I believe Virat will use him accordingly."



Virat Kohli celebrates after scoring century against Australia in the second ODI at Adelaide AP

ODI STATS	
M	219
Runs	10385
HS	183
Avg	59.68
100/50	39/48

Dhoni is still world's best finisher: Chappell

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The jury is still out on whether Mahendra Singh Dhoni's much acclaimed finishing powers are on the wane or not but former Australia captain Ian Chappell still considers the World Cup winning former skipper as the "best finisher" in 50-over format.

Dhoni was recently awarded the *Man of the series* for his match-winning knocks which helped India win their maiden ODI series in Australia.

Chappell saluted the former India skipper's nerve and longevity.

"Nobody has Dhoni's nerve for finishing off victories. Many times I've thought, 'He's left it too late this time', only to be amazed as he produced a couple of powerful shots to bring India a nail-biting victory," Chappell wrote in his column in *ESPNcricinfo*.

"His outward calm is no illusion since his tactical adeptness in these situations is proof his brain continues to work perfectly." Drawing a comparison with Michael Bevan, who is considered to be one of the



MS Dhoni returns to pavilion after getting dismissed AP

greatest finisher of the game, Chappell said Dhoni has surpassed the former Australian number six.

"Where Bevan finished matches with fours, Dhoni does so with sixes. The one area — running between wickets — where you'd expect the fleet-footed Bevan to have an advantage is debatable, because even at age 37, Dhoni is among the quickest in the game," he wrote.

"Even allowing for improved bats and the advantage of playing T20 cricket, statistically Dhoni is superior to Bevan. There can be no argument — Dhoni is the best ODI finisher."

Of late, Dhoni has often been criticised for his slow innings but the former India skipper silenced the doubters when he unleashed a massive six at Adelaide to seal the third ODI and the series 2-1.

"His trademark lofted on-drive comfortably cleared one of the longer Adelaide Oval boundaries to settle the issue in that particular finishing effort," Chappell wrote.

"It was a clear reminder that any thought that his power might be waning was

only wishful thinking on the part of opponents. That he achieved the feat in stifling heat only added to the lustre of his performance."

Regarding the 'best ODI batsman' debate, Chappell feels Virat Kohli will surpass legends like Viv Richards, Sachin Tendulkar and AB de Villiers and end his career as the 'Sir Donald Bradman of ODI batsmen'.

"Kohli reminds me of Richards in his approach to ODI batting; he eschews fancy shots and relies on a wide range of traditional strokes... As the only one of this quartet still playing ODIs, Kohli already heads some important statistical categories," he wrote.

"If he were to continue at his current rate — an unlikely outcome as he ages — he would pass Tendulkar's aggregate with more than one hundred innings to spare and nearly 20 centuries in advance of the Little Master."

"If he even came close to achieving these amazing feats, there could be no argument: Kohli would be the Sir Donald Bradman of ODI batsmen."

Imam, Hafeez steer Pak to victory over SA

AFP ■ PORT ELIZABETH

Imam-ul-Haq and Mohammad Hafeez set up a five-wicket win for Pakistan in the first one-day international against South Africa at St George's Park on Saturday.

The left-handed Imam made a cultured 86 off 101 balls and Hafeez hit an unbeaten 71 off 63 deliveries as Pakistan chased down a target of 267 with five balls to spare.

Hashim Amla's 27th one-day international century was not enough for South Africa, who lost only two wickets in scoring 266 runs after winning the toss.

Pakistan's bowlers deserved credit for their team's win, which came after the tourists were well-beaten in all three Test matches.

Sarfraz Ahmed used his bowlers in short spells and their mixture of seam and spin proved better suited to a slow pitch than South Africa's attack.

South African strike bowlers Kagiso Rabada and Duanne Olivier conceded a combined 124 runs in 19.1 overs.

The Pakistan batsmen also proved better at rotating the strike, particularly during a 94-run second-wicket stand between Imam and Babar Azam (49).



Nitesh hopeful of better performance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After a forgetful home leg where the side failed to secure single win, UP Yoddha changed fortunes in the second half of the recently concluded Pro Kabaddi League season 6 to finish third in the tournament. Playing its second season after formation in 2017, the UP side initially trailed in the recently concluded sixth edition of Kabaddi league but after a string of impressive performance towards the end of the league phase.

The side not only pip three time defending champion Patna Pirates by winning five of the last six games to make into the playoffs but also send U Mumba and Dabang Delhi packing to only fail short by Gujarat Fortunegiants in the second qualifier. The side though failed to bag trophy home but its star defender Nitesh Kumar is hopeful that the side's impressive spell will motivate the players to rise level up in the next outing to fulfill unaccomplished task to taking trophy home.

"This season our performance was a lot better especially after the poor home leg where we weren't able to fetch out single win. But even then we were motivated to do well and because of that only we became successful to pull out good result."

"Though we couldn't get successful this time to win the trophy but this performance will surely motivate us to do well in the next season."

"There are still couple of weak points and we have realised the need to rectify that and hopefully we will come out strong in the next season will lot more improved skill set."

Ravi Shanker lifts 18th Shivani Cup

LUCKNOW: Ravi Shanker defeated Medhansh Saxena in the last round to win the 18th Shivani Cup Sunday Open Chess Tournament at Shivani Public School on Sunday. A Vamsi and Kapil Kumar Khare also scored four points each but settled for second and third spot respectively in a tie-breaker.

Medhansh Saxena and Kuldeep Shankar finished fourth and fifth respectively. Aadyansh Saxena bagged the U-10 trophy while Prithvi Singh won the U-14 category. U-16 trophy went to Adarsh Pal.

Shivani Public School incharge Puneeta Mishra gave away the prizes.

