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DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL
BHUBANESWAR RANCHI RAIPUR
CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN

Late City Vol. 155 Issue 23
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

LUCKNOW, THURSDAY JANUARY 24, 2019; PAGES 16 ₹3



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Cong's brahmastra Priyanka takes plunge

Rahul makes her Gen Secy incharge of East UP for polls

It's admission of Rahul's leadership failure: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ending years of speculation, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, the sister of Congress president Rahul Gandhi, on Wednesday finally plunged into active politics ahead of the Lok Sabha elections to take on the might of the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the crucial Hindi heartland that has 80 Lok Sabha seats.

Dubbed as the "brahmastra" of the Congress, Priyanka will debut as the party's general secretary incharge of the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh having Modi's constituency in Varanasi and also UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath bastion in Gorakhpur.

Congress leaders said Priyanka's entry into active party politics will galvanise the workers, helping them take on the dual challenge posed in the State by the BJP and the Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party alliance.

The Congress hopes that Priyanka will be able to turn the projected direct fight between the BJP and SP-BSP alliance into triangular contest where the Congress could benefit on a number of seats due to division of votes.

Congress leaders also feel that while it is too early to assess the impact of a possible Congress revival under Priyanka stewardship on the prospect of the BJP and the SP-BSP alliance, but care may be taken in the selection of candidates to ensure that the BJP suffers most.

Congress list of candidates, sources said, may be dominated by upper castes, since the BJP hopes to capitalise on 10 per cent reservation to general category candidates in educational institutions and



Supporters of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra celebrate outside the AICC Headquarters after she was appointed AICC general secretary for Uttar Pradesh East in New Delhi on Wednesday

employment to woo the upper caste voters. Priyanka can play vital role there in bringing back the traditional upper caste voters to the Congress fold.

Soon after her appointment as an office-bearer in AICC, speculation is rife that she may be fielded as the party candidate from Rae Bareilly, the constituency currently being represented by her mother and UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, who is not keeping well of late.

Though no reactions came till late evening from Priyanka as she is reportedly in New York and scheduled to return on February 1, Rahul said he is

happy that Priyanka will assist him in the Lok Sabha polls.

"I am very happy that my sister Priyanka will assist me in Uttar Pradesh in the Lok Sabha polls, she is very capable," Rahul said at Amethi after making some of the crucial appointments in the party system. The brother-sister duo will formally announce the beginning of Lok Sabha poll campaign in UP on February 4 at a Press conference.

Senior party leader Jyotiraditya Scindia will be on par with Priyanka as AICC general secretary for Uttar Pradesh West region. Rahul added Scindia is a dynamic

youth leader. Both Priyanka and Scindia replace Ghulam Nabi Azad, who has been appointed AICC general secretary for Haryana, where the party is facing factionism.

"UP is central to building a new hope fulfilled. The new UP AICC team led by Priyanka and Scindia will herald the dawn of a new kind of politics in the State. We will offer the youth in UP a dynamic new platform to transform the State," said Rahul.

Husband Robert Vadra congratulated Priyanka on a Facebook post, "Congratulations P.. always by your side in every phase of your

life." The BJP has been repeatedly targeting Vadra, a businessman being investigated for allegedly corrupt land deals in Haryana and Rajasthan and is facing probes by the Enforcement Directorate.

The party is not immediately clear on the division of the 80 parliamentary seats between the two new incharges but sources said it could be 40 each. Both Amethi and Rae Bareilly, the two Gandhi family bastions, fall in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Priyanka has been extensively campaigning since 2004 in all national and State level elections.

Continued on Page 7

'In Congress, the family is party; in BJP, party is family'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday interpreted the entry of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra into the active politics in the Congress as an admission of his brother Rahul's leadership failure and likened the move to the party opting for a "family alliance" after having been "rejected by various parties in the proposed mahagathbandan".

"Priyanka ji has become the general secretary, my good luck to her. Since the party is a family concern, these kinds of postings are nothing unusual, except to say with a caveat why has she been given the limited role of eastern UP? Perhaps her persona merited a wider role," said Union Law Minister and senior BJP leader Ravishankar Prasad.

Claiming that the appointments made by the Congress reflected the outlook of the party, Prasad said it was a case of a brother (Congress president Rahul Gandhi) appointing his sister to a party position.

Railway Minister Piyush Goel accused the party of carrying out dynasty politics and said, "In the Congress party there is reservation only for one family, nobody gets anything

beyond them."

BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra claimed the new appointment reflected crisis of confidence within the Congress against Rahul. "The Congress has basically publicly announced that Rahul Gandhi has failed and needs crutches from within the family. Because of his rejection by grand alliance parties, he has opted for a family alliance," Patra said.

Patra said it was natural that the Congress had to "coronate" somebody from within the family and added that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has projected the Lok Sabha elections as a battle between "naamdar" (dynasts) and "kaamdar" (those who have

worked).

The new India is asking the question who will be the next leader in the Congress, Patra said referring to its succession line from Jawaharlal Nehru to Indira followed by Rajiv, Sonia and Rahul.

"All appointments are from one family. And this is the fundamental difference between the Congress and the BJP. In the Congress, the family is party. In the BJP, the party is family," Patra said.

In 2014 elections, Congress could win only two seats — Sonia from Rae Bareilly and Rahul from Amethi — from UP which has the largest number of 80 Lok Sabha seats in the country.



Congress chief Rahul Gandhi interacts with locals in Amethi on Wednesday

Strengthen Indian diaspora, President urges Pravasis

RAMESH K SINGH ■ VARANASI

President Ram Nath Kovind on Wednesday said India is a land of a billion ideas and opportunities and called upon the Pravasis to become a part of India's growth story which was being scripted by its billion minds. He was addressing the valedictory session of the three-day Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas (PBD) at the Deendayal Hastkala Sankul in Varanasi on Wednesday evening.

The President also presented the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman. Indian-American IMF chief economist Gita Gopinath, Norwegian MP Himanshu Gulati and South African diplomat Anil Sooklal were among the 30 NRIs, Indian-origin people and their organisations named for the honour.

While presenting the awards, the President said: "Earlier, we were working to check brain drain but today we are seeking 'brain gain' and the



President Ram Nath Kovind presents an award to an NRI as Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj look on, during 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas function in Varanasi on Wednesday

strong Indian diaspora can contribute a lot to it."

In his address, Kovind said that from economic growth to economic reforms, from women emancipation to women empowerment, from health for all to total sanitation, and from space mission to digital revolution, India was leading the way on many fronts.

Highlighting the achieve-

ments the country has made during the last four-and-a-half years, he said the Indian diaspora had strengthened remarkably from 13 million to 30 million and that same could play a key role for betterment of the world. The President said that during ancient times, Indians migrated to different places in South Asia as monks and merchants but in the courses of time

Continued on Page 7

Modi-led committee to pick CBI chief today; UP DGP among 5 probables

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The high-powered selection panel headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Thursday choose a name from a list of five IPS officers of 1983 and 1984 batches for the appointment as CBI Director. The other members of the high-level selection committee are Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge.

The list of officials in the race are Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat Directors General of Police OP Singh and Shivanand Jha respectively, CISF chief Rajesh Ranjan, and BSF Director General Rajnikant Mishra besides Special Secretary (Internal Security) in the Union Home Ministry Rina Mitra, sources said.

While Singh and Jha do not have any experience in the CBI, Ranjan, Mishra and Mitra have served in the premier investigating agency in the past. 1983-batch IPS officer

Gujarat DGP Shivanand Jha, CISF chief Rajesh Ranjan, BSF DG Rajnikant Mishra, and MHA Special Secretary Rina Mitra in the list

Singh is from Uttar Pradesh cadre, Jha is a Gujarat-cadre officer, and Mitra is from Madhya Pradesh cadre. Ranjan is a 1984-batch Bihar cadre officer, and Mishra from the same batch is an officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre.

A senior official in the know of the things with regard to the appointment said there are surprise elements in the appointment process. Given the track record, the Modi Government loves to choose by surprise.

The appointment of the CBI chief comes close on the heels of the selection panel's decision to remove Alok Verma from the post following a bitter feud he had with his deputy Rakesh Asthana. The Government had on the midnight of October 23 sent both Verma and Asthana on forced

leave after divesting them of all powers. Verma then challenged the Government's decision before the Supreme Court, which reinstated Verma as CBI chief on January 8. But the Selection Panel removed Verma as CBI boss and transferred him on January 11 as DG Fire Services, Civil Defence and Home Guards. However, Verma refused to take the role and submitted his resignation the next day.

Meanwhile, the Government is also in the process of appointing two 1990-batch Uttar Pradesh cadre officers — Tanuja Srivastava and Tilotma Verma as Joint Director in the CBI. Madhya Pradesh cadre officer of 1987-batch Sudhir Saxena is likely to be appointed as Additional Director of the agency, a post that fell vacant after transfer of Additional Director AK Sharma who has now been appointed as ADG in the CRPF. Sharma's name had also figured in the controversy between Verma and Asthana.

UP Congress workers elated at prospects

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The entry of Priyanka Gandhi into active politics and her appointment as AICC general secretary incharge of Uttar Pradesh (east) has come as a major boost for the party workers and leaders ahead of the Lok Sabha polls. The morale of the youthful cadre received a further fillip as along with Priyanka Gandhi, Congress president Rahul Gandhi appointed Jyotiraditya Scindia as AICC general secretary incharge of UP (west).

In his first reaction after appointment of his sister Priyanka as the party general secretary, Rahul said the decision was taken to strengthen the party and this two powerful Congress leaders will pave way for the spread of the Congress ideology of the youths, elders, and other section of the society.

"I trust Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Jyotiraditya Scindia. We will not play on the back foot," he told reporters at Fursatganj.

He added the party has appointed both the leaders in a permanent basis in UP and had not sent Priyanka and Jyotiraditya for just two months or till the Lok Sabha polls.

"I have sent them to take Congress' ideology forward in Uttar Pradesh. Our ideology is of standing and fighting for the poor, for the youth, for the farmers. Both Priyanka and Jyotiraditya are very capable and dynamic, and will surely take Congress forward in UP," he added.

The sudden appointment of Priyanka on the day Rahul is visiting UP has changed the political dynamics in the State which will elect 80 Lok Sabha members.

When asked if Priyanka would be contesting the Lok Sabha polls, Rahul said, "It is up to Priyanka to take the decision. I have already said that the Congress will not play on the back foot and will only bat on the front foot in UP and elsewhere."

Continued on Page 7

Piyush Goyal gets Finance Ministry

Railway Min given additional charge of Corporate Affairs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal was given the additional charge of the Finance and Corporate Affairs ministries on Wednesday in view of the indisposition of Arun Jaitley, who is currently undergoing treatment abroad.

According to a Rashtrapati

Bhavan communique, the President, as advised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, directed that during the period of Jaitley's indisposition, the portfolios of the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Corporate Affairs, held by him, be temporarily assigned to Goyal, in addition to his existing portfolios.

Further, Jaitley has been designated as a Minister without portfolio during the period of his indisposition or till such time when he is able to resume his work as the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Corporate Affairs.

First bullet train project gets nod for forest trespass

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Standing Committee of the National Board of Wildlife (NBWL) has given in-principle approval for diverting nearly 215 hectares of forestland for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ₹1.1 lakh crore worth Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project. However, the approval for the high-speed rail project which has drawn flak from the conservationists has come with certain conditions.

The patches of forest land will be carved out from the eco-sensitive zone of Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP), Tungareshwar wildlife sanctuary and Thane creek flamingo sanctuary for the 500 km long

rail corridor.

The NBWL in its meeting on January 10, 2019, allowed diversion of 3,2756 hectares of forestland from Creek Flamingo Wildlife Sanctuary and 97,5189 hectares from deemed ESZ. In-principle approval was also given for diversion of 32.75 hectares of forestland and 77.30 hectares of non-forestland from Sanjay Gandhi National Park and 0.6902 ha of forestland and 4,7567 ha of non-forestland from Tungareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary.

The NBWL, under the Union Environment Ministry, is responsible for framing India's policy and strategy for wildlife conservation and one of its key tasks is to regulate



development projects to safeguard wildlife.

To ensure that the bullet train project does not have adverse impact on the adjoining biodiversity, the NBWL

has enlisted several conditions on the project proponent before initiating the construction, implementation of animal passage plans on the basis of the Dehradun-based Wildlife

Institute of India (WII) guidelines "Eco-friendly Measures to Mitigate Impacts on Linear Infrastructures on Wildlife" being the major one.

The train will run at a speed of 320-350 km per hour and will have 12 stations between Mumbai and Ahmedabad across its 500 km stretch. The project is being implemented by National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited and financed by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) which is lending ₹88,000 crore at the 0.1 per cent interest which is required to be repaid in 50 years.

The NBWL approval lists out a number of measures like underpasses for wildlife, restriction on the movement of

vehicles to existing roads and tracks. It has also suggested that the project agency will provide funds for compensatory plantation of trees.

Sources in the Ministry said that after intense discussions, the Standing Committee decided to recommend the project "subject to the conditions that permission for construction of the project shall be granted by the State Government only when animal passage plan is prepared by the project proponent in consultation with the State Chief Wildlife Warden on the basis of WII guidelines named eco-friendly measures to mitigate impacts on linear infrastructures on wildlife.

Continued on Page 7

Rahul: Cong to fight polls on the front foot

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/AMETHI

Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday claimed that his party would fight on the front foot despite going it alone in the parliamentary elections in Uttar Pradesh and the bringing in of his sister Priyanka Vadra and Jyotiraditya Scindia into the state organisation was the first step in this direction.

He also renewed his attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the Rafale aircraft deal, accusing the "watchman" of "giving" ₹30,000 crore to industrialist Anil Ambani.

The Congress president said that the young leaders would now script a new history of this state (UP), adding that the Bharatiya Janata Party was now living in fear of losing the battle of ballots.

"We are still not averse to talking to the Samajwadi Party or the Bahujan Samaj Party over going together (in Lok Sabha polls) but I want to



make it clear that we will not fight on the back foot but will go on the front foot to show that the Congress is as powerful as it was earlier and it will be a mistake to write it off," Rahul asserted, while claiming that he still gave full respect to both Akhilesh Yadav and Mayawati, even though they ignored the Congress while announcing the alliance.

"We still have our doors open for a larger alliance and anyone who can defeat the BJP is welcome," he said, indicating that the Congress wanted to take one-on-one with the BJP in UP.

"If SP and BSP want to talk

with us for a bigger alliance in UP, they are welcome to join us, there is no problem in it," Rahul said, adding that the Congress knows that Akhilesh Yadav and Mayawati also want to defeat the BJP.

In his first reaction after the appointment of Priyanka Vadra as party general secretary for east UP, Rahul said the decision was taken to strengthen the party and the two powerful Congress leaders, Priyanka Vadra and Jyotiraditya Scindia, would pave the way for the spread of the Congress ideology among the youths, farmers and other sections of society.

"I trust Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Jyotiraditya Scindia. We will not play on the back foot," Rahul Gandhi told reporters at Fursatganj in Amethi. He further said that the Congress had appointed both these leaders on a permanent basis in UP and had not sent Priyanka and Jyotiraditya for just two months or till the Lok Sabha polls were over.

"I have sent them to take Congress' ideology forward in UP. Our ideology is of standing and fighting for the poor, for the youth and for the farmers. Both Priyanka and Jyotiraditya are very capable and dynamic, and will surely take Congress forward in UP," he added.

When asked if Priyanka would be contesting the Lok Sabha polls, the Congress president said, "It is up to Priyanka to take a decision."

"I have already said that now Congress will not play on the back foot in UP and elsewhere," the Congress chief said.

Rahul Gandhi said that by appointing both these leaders, the most powerful in the party, the Congress wanted to change the political atmosphere in UP and to also change the thinking of the people that the grand old party had no plan for the largest state of the country. Meanwhile, UP Congress

MLC and a close confidant of Rahul and Priyanka, Deepak Singh hailed the decision of the party to appoint Priyanka and Jyotiraditya Scindia as the party's new in-charges of UP. "This strategy will work intensively in the Lok Sabha polls and it will not stop till 2022, when the next assembly polls will be held in UP," Singh said.

Earlier, Rahul Gandhi was given a warm welcome at the airport by senior Congress leaders, including UPCC chief Raj Babbar, Sanjay Singh, Pramod Tewari, Deepak Singh, Ajay Kumar 'Lallu', Aradhana Mishra 'Mona', Vinod Mishra and others.

Sources said that during the interaction, Rahul asked the leaders to get ready for the elections. When party's state general secretary and in-charge of Lucknow district, Vinod Kumar Mishra, thanked Rahul Gandhi for announcing to go it alone in the Lok Sabha polls in UP as the party workers were happy with the central leader-

ship's decision, the Congress chief responded with a pat on his back and assured him that the sentiments of the workers would be respected and Congress would contest the polls alone in UP.

Meanwhile, in Amethi, Rahul Gandhi was greeted with posters hailing him as the next prime minister.

Posters stating "Amethi ka MP, 2019 ka PM", "Mission 2019 - Vidhan Sabha Tiloi welcomes soon-to-be Prime Minister Rahul Gandhi", "Abhi to jeete teen pradesh, 2019 mein jeetengey pura desh" dotted the skyline of the constituency.

It was Rahul Gandhi's first visit to his constituency after the party's stupendous victory in the assembly polls in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

The posters hailing the Congress chief as the next PM came up in most parts of the assembly segments like Jais and Gauriganj.

Maya asks BSP cadre to ensure victory of alliance candidates

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

While talks on identifying the seats to be contested by Bahujan Samaj Party and Samajwadi Party are still to take a final shape, BSP supremo reportedly held a meeting with the party cadre and directed them to go to field and ensure victory of the alliance candidates.



Noida, Hazi Fazlurrehman in Saharanpur, Iqbal Ahmed in Bijnoor, Ramji Shukla in Akbarpur, Sonu Singh in Sultanpur, CL Verma in Mohanlalganj, T Ram in Machhlisahar, Afzal Ansari in Ghazipur, Rangnath Mishra in Bhadohi, Vijay Kumar in Mishrikh and Rakesh Kumar in Ambedkarnagar. The names of these in-charges, however, will be made official once the seat sharing between SP and BSP is finalised.

Sources said that Mayawati also appointed in-charges in over two dozen parliamentary constituencies and confirmed that they could also be the party candidates in the coming 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

The sources confirmed that prominent amongst those appointed as in-charges included the names of Manoj Soni in Agra, Seema Upadhyaya in Fatehpur Sikri, Yakub Qureshi in Meerut, Sanjay Bhati in

Gadkari: Mathura residents to get clean Yamuna water in 15 mths

Mathura (PTI): Union minister Nitin Gadkari said on Wednesday that residents of Mathura would get clean Yamuna water within 15 months. After laying the foundation stone for Namami Gange Projects in Mathura, he said, "I take a pledge to ensure drinkable Yamuna water within 15 months to residents of Mathura. The four projects in Mathura would be completed at a cost of ₹511.74 crore, according to an official release issued here. These include integrated sewerage infrastructure for the city on Hybrid Annuity Mode with 'One-City-One-Operator' approach and reuse of treated sewage water in Mathura refinery at a cost of ₹460.45 crore and rehabilitation of sewerage infrastructure and augmentation/upgradation of STP in Vrindavan at a cost of ₹33.82 crore.



NOTICE

Due to astrological reason I have changed my daughter name from Mahi Mishra (D/o gauraangi Mishra) to Krishika Mishra (D/o Sunaina Mishra). For all her further documents educational, official new name should be considered.

NOTICE

I, Sankpal Snehal Sudhir W/o Sankpal Sudhir Mahadev Army No. 15420380 L Rank-LNK/AA, R/o Unit-2 M.T Batalian, Lucknow have changed my name from Sankpal Snehal Sudhir to Sankpal Snehalata Sudhir for all future purposes.

सूचना

संरक्षण को सुनिश्चित किया जाता है कि मैं वाराणसी में अपने नाम बदल कर वाराणसी उच्च न्यायालय में जाऊंगा। अब मुझे इसी नाम से जाना व पहचाना जाये। वाराणसी उच्च न्यायालय पुत्री संरक्षण मोर्चा उच्च न्यायालय, नियासिनी-510/178 सूचना बली मार्ग, निहालमंज, न्यू इंदरबाद, लखनऊ।

NOTICE

My child name Dashmeet Singh S/o Jaspreet Sachdeva R/o B-521 Rajajipuram not Dashmeet Sahni S/o Davinder Singh Kulpreet Kaur B-521 Rajajipuram, Lucknow.

NOTICE

I Pratima Singh Spouse of No 6391797Y Hav/Sht Baban Nath Singh Resident of Vill-Jatwalya, Post-Telhara, Tehsil-Dhaka, Dist-East Champaran (Bihar) have changed my name from Partima Devi to Pratima Singh my correct date of Birth is 3-2-1976

NOTICE

This is to inform that during the period of New Year (31/12/2018-02/01/2019) I have lost my briefcase containing my class 10 marksheet and my original property papers. An N.C.R. has been lodged with the Hazratganj Police Station, Lucknow. General Dairy No. is 45 Dated 09/01/2019. If anybody finds my documents as above kindly return them to the address mentioned below to me or to my wife. A handsome cash reward will be given. Yogeshwar Dayal Mathur Or Madhu Mathur 4, Kabir Marg, Lucknow, 226001, Mob. No. 9839020349

AAP stages dharna in Ayodhya

Lucknow (PNS): Hundreds of Aam Aadmi Party workers and leaders, led by party Member of Parliament and UP head Sanjay Singh, staged a dharna in Ayodhya on Wednesday, demanding withdrawal of cases against party leaders.

Addressing the dharna, Sanjay Singh said the Yogi Aditya-nath government was adopting oppressive measures to gag voices of dissent. "On the direction of the state government, the district administration registered a case against AAP leaders and workers for taking out a march from Ayodhya to Kashi on January 12 even though we had informed the administration about our march," he said and dared the state government to arrest him and AAP workers staging dharna.

Singh said the BJP claimed to be a saviour of Hindus but its government in UP was demolishing temples for the Kashi Vishwanath corridor. "When we opposed this, the government got a case registered against us," he added.

AAP state spokesman Mahendra Singh said the district administration had registered a case against 250 party workers and leaders, including Sanjay Singh, for taking out the 'BJP Bhagao Bhagwan Bachao Yatra' on the plea that prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPc were imposed in Ayodhya.

साफ नीयत-सही विकास

गौरवशाली इतिहास हो रहा अनवरत विकास

उत्तर प्रदेश दिवस

24 जनवरी, 2019

एवं विश्वकर्मा श्रम सम्मान

अध्यक्षता

राम नाईक

राज्यपाल, उत्तर प्रदेश

कार्यक्रम के प्रेरणास्रोत

योगी आदित्यनाथ

मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

गरिमाययी उपस्थिति

केशव प्रसाद मौर्य

उप मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

डॉ. दिनेश शर्मा

उप मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

हृदय नारायण दीक्षित

अध्यक्ष, विधान सभा, उत्तर प्रदेश

सुरेश कुमार खन्ना

मंत्री, संसदीय कार्य, नगर विकास एवं शहरी समग्र विकास, नगरीय योजना एवं ग्रामीण उन्नयन विभाग उत्तर प्रदेश

सत्यदेव पचौरी

मंत्री, खादी एवं ग्रामोद्योग, रेशम उद्योग, वस्त्रोद्योग, सूक्ष्म, लघु एवं मध्यम उद्यम एवं निर्यात प्रोत्साहन विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

लक्ष्मी नारायण चौधरी

मंत्री, दुग्ध विकास, धर्मार्थ कार्य संस्कृति एवं अल्पसंख्यक कल्याण, मुस्लिम वक्फ, हज्र विभाग उत्तर प्रदेश

चेतन चौहान

मंत्री, खेल, युवा कल्याण तथा व्यावसायिक शिक्षा एवं कौशल विकास विभाग उत्तर प्रदेश

डॉ. नीलकंठ तिवारी

राज्य मंत्री, सूचना, विधायी न्याय, खेल एवं युवा कल्याण विभाग उत्तर प्रदेश

डॉ. अनूप चन्द्र पाण्डेय

मुख्य सचिव, उत्तर प्रदेश शासन

दिनांक: 24.01.2019 समय: पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे स्थान: अवध शिल्प ग्राम, लखनऊ

मुख्य कार्यक्रम

- विश्वकर्मा श्रम सम्मान एवं टूल किट वितरण
- खेल पुरस्कार वितरण
- हस्तशिल्प पुरस्कार वितरण
- लघु उद्यम पुरस्कार वितरण
- निर्यात पुरस्कार वितरण
- संत कबीर पुरस्कार वितरण
- स्मार्ट सिटी मिशन के अन्तर्गत लखनऊ तथा अमृत योजना के अन्तर्गत लखनऊ, हरदोई एवं उन्नाव की परियोजनाओं का लोकार्पण/शिलान्यास
- सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम

अपने वाहन में रिफ्लेक्टर अवश्य लगवाएं

सूचना एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

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Reckless driving claims 3 lives

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Reckless driving claimed lives of three persons in different incidents of road mishaps in Sarojini Nagar early Wednesday morning.

Around 1.10 am on Wednesday, a speeding truck rammied into a crane at Amausi airport road crossing in Sarojini Nagar killing two of the occupants while other three suffered serious injuries. Report said crane driver Devendra of Barabanki along with his co-workers Sanjay of Deoria, Raj Kapoor of Bahraich, Deep Kumar and Mukesh, both of Unnao, were coming Lucknow when the mishap took place.

"Devendra and Sanjay died on the spot as they fell down from the crane due to sudden jerk and were later crushed under the truck," the police spokesman said. He said Raj Kapoor, Deepu and Mukesh also suffered injuries and were admitted to Lok Bandhu Hospital. "Police registered a case against the truck driver for causing death due to negligence and reckless driving," he added.

In another freak incident, 25-year-old Sarvesh of Sitapur was crushed to death when some bus hit him at Nadarganj trisection in Sarojini Nagar around 4.30 am on Wednesday. "Sarvesh was crossing the road as he was going to relieve himself in the morning. He was working as a labourer and was living in the locality. His identity was ascertained on the basis of the Aadhaar card recovered from his pocket during search," the police spokesman said. He added that a case was registered in this connection.

Meanwhile, more than two dozen passengers suffered injuries after a bus going to Agra Expressway overturned in front of Para police station early Wednesday morning. Police got some of the critically injured passengers admitted to Trauma Centre while those who suffered minor injuries were admitted to Lok Bandhu Hospital. By Wednesday evening, some of the injured were discharged after treatment while others are recuperating.

As per reports, the bus ferrying passengers from Bihar was going to New Delhi and the bus driver had to take the Agra Expressway. Around 4 am on Wednesday, the bus driver lost control on the wheels. As a result of it, the bus hit a road divider and then overturned.

"There were 60 passengers in the bus and they started crying after the bus overturned. Police team rescued the passengers and rushed them to hospitals," the Para police said.

Those admitted to Trauma Centre were identified as Phooldevi (50), Kaiser, Nareesh and his wife Sunita and their sons Divyansh (12) and Abhi (6), Mohammed Rashid, Moazzman, Sumitra, Mangla Devi, Mawachya Devi and Priyanka while the injured admitted to Lok Bandhu Hospital were identified as Deep Lal, Surya Kumar, Shyam Babu, Brahma Dev, Subodh Kumar, Chandan, Mahadev, Pankaj, Karan, Akash, Dhnanajay, Santosh, Sita and Mitthu, all of Bihar. The bus driver also suffered injuries.

Traffic curbs for R Day parade

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Traffic department announced diversions for the full dress rehearsal of Republic Day parade on Thursday. Vehicles from Basmandi crossing will not be allowed to move towards Rana Pratap crossing and the traffic will be diverted to Nattha crossing.

Traffic will not be allowed to move from the Mohaan Hotel to the KKC tri-crossing and this traffic will be made to take a U turn at Basmandi and Ravindralaya and will be diverted towards Nattha and Mawaiya.

The traffic coming from Kaiserbagh will not be allowed to move towards Babu Bhawan and it will be diverted towards Aminabad and Ganeshganj.

Vehicles coming from Alambagh will not be allowed to move towards Charbagh and will be diverted towards Kaiserbagh or will be made to take a U turn towards Mawaiya and Alambagh.

The traffic will not be allowed to move from the Rana Pratap crossing towards KKC and Charbagh and this traffic will be diverted towards Basmandi crossing.

The traffic coming from the Bandariya Bagh crossing towards Hazratganj will not be allowed to move in this direction and will be diverted towards Golf Club and

Gandhi Setu.

Vidhan Sabha Marg will be completely closed for the traffic from 2 pm on January 25 onwards to make necessary seating arrangements. The traffic will also remain restricted from the Novelty crossing to the Capitol Cinema tri-crossing and only car pass-holders will be allowed to move from Novelty to Janpath to park their cars. The traffic will not be allowed to move from Hazratganj crossing towards the Parivatan crossing and this traffic will be diverted towards Ashok Marg and Sapru Marg. The traffic coming from Mahanagar and Nishatganj will not be allowed to move towards Hazratganj crossing from Sikanderbagh and this traffic will be diverted towards the Dalibagh colony.

Buses coming from Kaiserbagh will not be allowed to move towards Hussainganj and these will be diverted towards Mawaiya and Alambagh.

The parade will start from the Ravindralaya at 9.30 am and then from KKC tri-crossing towards Maharana Pratap crossing, Babu Bhawan, Vidhan Sabha, Hazratganj, Mayfair tri-crossing, DM residence, KD Singh 'Babu' stadium and there after Motimahal tri-crossing, Chiraiya jheel, Sikanderbagh crossing, Hazratganj, Bandariya Bagh and back to Lal Batti crossing.

Commen rob retired teacher

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two miscreants impersonating themselves as policemen conned a retired woman teacher of a prestigious school in Gomti Nagar on Wednesday morning and deprived her of gold ornaments. The incident exposed the lax patrolling in the VVIP area.

As per reports, Chitra Mehrotra of Vipul Khand was going to attend a physiotherapy session at St Joseph Hospital in Gomti Nagar. Around 11 am, when she was near LDA market in Vishal Khand, the miscreants stopped her asking why she was wearing the gold chain and other ornaments even though there was an order not to wear gold ornaments to avoid loot cases.

In their awe, the woman took off the jewellery (gold chain and gold bangles) which the miscreants took, put them inside a piece of paper and returning it to her. However, Chitra found that there was a plastic bangle inside the sachet

when she opened it after the miscreants left the place. Police are investigating the case.

The police drew a severe criticism after the residents and victim's kin came to know about the incident. "If common are targeting innocents in a VVIP area, what will be the condition in other parts of the city," they commented.

THEFT

Unidentified miscreants decamped with cash and ornaments from a house owned by a woman shiksha mitra in Gudamba on Tuesday. Rekha Singh of Kanhaiya Nagar in Gudamba informed the police that unidentified miscreants struck her house when she, along with her family, had gone to Vikas Nagar where her parents live. "I left the house on Tuesday locking all the doors. Around 6.30 am on Wednesday I returned home and found cash and jewellery stolen from the house. The thieves rummaged all the rooms in the house," she told police.

Thieves target BSP leader's house in Vibhuti Khand

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Thieves made off with cash and ornaments from the house owned by a former IAS officer and BSP leader in Eldeco Elegance Apartment in Vibhuti Khand police station area on Tuesday night. The police had detained as many as 15 persons in this connection and are interrogating them. The colony is gated and is manned by security guards.

As per reports, former IAS officer Ram Bahadur, who had contested election from BSP in the past, owns a flat (No. 1304) on 13th floor of Tower B-3 of the apartment.

His son Prabhas, who is an advocate, lives at the flat while his younger son Shishir Bahadur lives in Vikas Nagar. Prabhas is out of Lucknow for some work and the flat was locked. On Wednesday morning, the residents found the flat doors were flung open and they

alarmed the security staff who later called the police.

SHO Rajeev Dwivedi said some footages of CCTV were recovered during investigation. "The miscreants gained entry into the flat at 2.53 am on Wednesday.

They were carrying a rod and some tools in their hands and they were seen turning the direction of one of the CCTV cameras. They later threw a cloth on the camera to hide their act and decamped with cash and ornaments," the SHO said. He said Prabhas's brother also reached the scene on the information. "Several persons had been detained and they were being interrogated," he said.

Earlier, the miscreants had targeted the flat of Principal Secretary, Political Pension, Rajan Shukla at CSI Tower and had decamped with cash and ornaments last year. The police failed to get any trace of the thieves even though it had announced a cash reward of Rs 1

lakh to one who would inform about the miscreants.

DACOITY

In a daring incident, a band of dacoits stormed an under-construction building and looted over Rs 1 lakh and other belongings of as many as 22 labourers in Jankipuram on Tuesday night. The police downplayed the incident saying the thieves made off with cash and other belongings when the victims were fast asleep. As per reports, the labourers were working at the under-construction building near JP Hospital on Canal Road in the locality.

On Tuesday night, 7-8 miscreants stormed the house and held all labourers, which included some women labourers too, hostage. They then asked labourers to part with their cash, wrist watches, clothes and other belongings.

While inspector Rajkumar

Singh said a contractor gave an application on behalf of the labourers and had mentioned a concocted story in the complaint. "The fact is that the labourers were sleeping and the thieves made off with cash and other belongings," he said.

The labourers looted in the incident were identified as Rajeev, Pappu, Rahul, Jai Singh, Anil, Sooraj, Anil Singh, Kunti, Raj Kumar, Hansraj, Durgesh, Awadhesh, Kamlesh, Ramdas, Mithun, Ram Chandra, Sooraj Kumar, Jugnu, Vikky, Madan, Neelam and Sarita. All the victims lost cash, wrist watches, their clothes and other belongings. The miscreants also looted utensils from the place. Senior police officials could not be contacted for their comment. Sources said the police exerted pressure on the victims saying they would have to do rounds of Lucknow if a dacoity case was registered.

VIJAYA BANK

(A Govt. of India Undertaking)

E-AUCTION NOTICE

It is notified for all concerned that the following property is secured in favor of Vijaya Bank Branch Haidergarh, Barabanki (U.P.) and as secured creditor taken Symbolic possession under SARFAESI Act 2002. Bank is not having physical possession of this property but for recovery of Public Money/Bank dues the same will be sold under e-auction on date 15.02.2019 on "as is where is and as is what is basis" for recovery of Bank dues. This is a 15 days notice in accordance to (SARFAESI Amendments Act 2016) to the borrower/s and to the guarantor/s of the below said loan about holding of E-Auction sale on the said date, if their outstanding dues are not repaid in full by the said auction date. *The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Section 13 (8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets."

Borrower/Guaranter Name	Description of the property	Symbolic Possession Notice Date	EMD Remittance Account Details	Reserve price EMD Bid Increase Amount	Date/Time of E-Auction
BRANCH: Haidergarh, Barabanki (U.P.)					
Borrower: M/s. Jitendra Pratap, Mini Rice Mill, (Proprietor - Jitendra Pratap Singh S/o Vikram Bahadur Singh, Village-Barawan, Post-Kamela, Tehsil-Haidergarh, Dist. Barabanki (U.P.))	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of House No.-19/403, Sector-19, Near DPS School, Babu Jagjeevan Ram Ward, Indira Nagar Vajna, Lucknow, Bounded : North: H.No.-19/402, South : H.No.- 19/404, East: Path, West : H.No.- 19/368, Area: 40.74 sq.mtr.	21.10.2016	717600036516001	19,50,000.00	15.02.2019
Guarantor/Owner: Mrs. Vidya Devi w/o Mr. Vikram Bahadur Singh, Village-Barawan, Post-Kamela, Tehsil-Haidergarh, Dist. Barabanki (U.P.)		Rs. 14,25,112.00	IFSC code: VIJ00007176	1,95,000.00	11:00 A.M. To 12:00 P.M.
		+ interest and other expenses		15,000.00	(with sufficient extension of 5 Min each)

Terms & Conditions: The intending bidders are required to obtain User ID/Pass Word from M/s e-Procurement Technologies Ltd. Ahmedabad, **Contact - Ram Sharma 0800023297 Vishal Tiwari 987996111, 079-40230821/823/824/825 Email id: ramprasad@auctiontiger.net & up@auctiontiger.net**. They should submit their tenders online for all the pieces of property lot wise. The auction sale will be online e-auctioning through website <https://vijayabank.auctiontiger.net>. Last date of submission of EMD/KYC Documents along with tender form is **13.02.2019 upto 5.00pm**, to the specified branch. The EMD shall be deposited through RTGS in the account No. 717600036516001 Favoring The Authorized officer-A/C Vijaya Bank, Haidergarh, Dist. Barabanki (U.P.) IFSC/RTGS code is VIJ00007176. Contact person- Authorized Officer Vijaya Bank-Branch Manager Vijaya Bank Haidergarh, Dist. Barabanki (U.P.) Phone No. 0524-4245005, 8008910814, e-mail id of branch- am7176@vijayabank.co.in. The successful bidder should deposit 25% of the bid amount (including EMD amount) within 24 hours and balance within 15 days, else his EMD will be forfeited and the property will be resold. The authorized officer may accept or reject the bid or adjourn/postpone the auction at any time without assigning any reason. For further details, contact Authorized officer, VIJAYA BANK, the borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Section 13 (8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The tender form and other terms & conditions may be collected by accessing our banks website www.vijayabank.co.in & www.tender.gov.in

Place : Barabanki, Date : 24.01.2019 Authorised Officer, Vijaya Bank

Wanted dedicated teachers for City Montessori School (CMS), Lucknow

CMS requires from 1st July 2019 highly fluent and experienced English Medium lady teachers/staff for the following subjects:

Pre-primary & Primary all subjects, Computers, Junior (English, History, Geography, Maths, Science), ICSE (English, History, Maths, Physics, Biology, Geography, Computers, Commerce, Chemistry), ISC (Physics, Swimming Coach (Female only - NIS Trained), PET (Female only), Counselor, Computer Lab Assistant, Art

Application form may be filled online or downloaded from: <http://www.cmseducation.org/careers> or obtained from CMS Head Office at 12 Station Road, Lucknow. Only English Medium Candidates may apply. Last date for submission of the form is 18th February 2019. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Salary slabs for trained new CMS teachers from 1st July, 2019 as per the 7th Pay Commission:									
Sl. No.	Designation	Basic pay as per 7th Pay Commission	CMS will give 12% DA from 1st July 2019	Fixed Govt. House Rent Allowance	City Compensatory Allowance	Total Monthly Govt. pay on 1st July 2019	Total monthly salary of Trained Teachers of unaided City Montessori School, Lucknow from 1st July 2019 will be as follows:	Percentage Increase over last year in CMS New Teacher's Salary	Percentage Increase over last year in CMS Existing Teacher's Salary
(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)	(vi)	(vii)	(viii)	(ix)	(x)
1.	Superior Principal	78,800/-	9,456/-	8,960/-	900/-	98,116/-	Rs. 3,45,071/- pm	9.9 %	12.9 %
2.	Principal ISC College	78,800/-	9,456/-	8,960/-	900/-	98,116/-	Rs. 2,16,500/- to Rs. 2,53,594/- pm	9.9 %	12.9 %
3.	Principal ICSE	56,100/-	6,732/-	6,300/-	900/-	70,032/-	Rs. 1,81,000/- to Rs. 1,83,745/- pm	10.1 %	13.0 %
4.	Principal Junior Section	47,600/-	5,712/-	5,620/-	720/-	59,652/-	Rs. 1,31,000/- to Rs. 1,46,667/- pm	10.3 %	13.2 %
5.	Principal, Pre/Primary	44,900/-	5,388/-	5,520/-	720/-	56,528/-	Rs. 1,06,000/- to Rs. 1,24,000/- pm	10.5 %	13.4 %
6.	ISC Lecturers	47,600/-	5,712/-	5,620/-	720/-	59,652/-	Rs. 64,402/- pm to Rs. 86,686/- pm (incl. Board Classes & Home visit allowances*)	10.3 %	13.2 %
7.	ICSE Teachers	44,900/-	5,388/-	5,520/-	720/-	56,528/-	Rs. 60,278/- pm to Rs. 75,699/- pm (incl. Board Classes & Home visit allowances*)	10.5 %	13.4 %
8.	Teachers of Junior Classes (6th to 8th)	44,900/-	5,388/-	5,520/-	720/-	56,528/-	Rs. 57,278/- pm to Rs. 69,699/- pm (including Home visit allowance*)	10.5 %	13.4 %
9.	Teachers of Pre-Primary & Primary (Full time)	35,400/-	4,248/-	4,040/-	720/-	44,408/-	Rs. 45,158/- pm to Rs. 59,384/- pm (including Home visit allowance*)	10.3 %	13.3 %

without CMS allowances

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS & ALLOWANCES TO CMS STAFF

- (i) Provident Fund and Pension Scheme (ii) Group Insurance Scheme (iii) Gratuity and (iv) ESI Scheme, are applicable as per Government Rules.
- Insurance against accidents at school cost is applicable for Class IV employees.
- Generous fee concessions are given to sons and daughters of CMS Staff.
- Only ₹ 20/- pm tuition fees is charged from wards of CMS confirmed staff and ₹ 10/- pm from wards of CMS IV class confirmed staff. NOTE: 1,375 teacher and menial wards are studying in CMS and enjoying these heavy concessions.
- Part time teachers are given salaries according to hours of teaching as per the details mentioned below:
 - Part time Primary (3:40 hours) teachers will be paid ₹ 25,051/- p.m. plus ₹ 750/- p.m. extra as home visit allowance. (Full time is 6.30 hrs.)
 - Only-Pre-Primary (4 hours) teachers will be paid ₹ 27,328/- p.m. plus ₹ 750/- p.m. extra as home visit allowance.
 - Only-Primary (5:10 hours) teachers will be paid ₹ 35,299/- p.m. plus ₹ 750/- p.m. extra as home visit allowance.

*Only teachers preparing students of Classes 10 and 12 for the Council Examination subjects and with 1 year experience in the same capacity are entitled for Board Classes Allowance (Full time ISC- ₹ 4,000/- p.m. and Full time ICSE ₹ 3,000/- p.m.).

Note:

- After identifying the weak students in various subjects, after-school Remedial Classes will be arranged for them free of charge. Teachers will be paid for the actual extra teaching hours of Remedial classes as per school norms.
- *Home Visit Allowance:** Every teacher as a teacher-guardian must visit at least 5 children's homes every month to understand the children's home circumstances and for the personal counselling of the child and the parents, under the CMS Teacher-Guardian Scheme, and will be paid a Home Visit Allowance @ ₹ 750/- per month including conveyance, for such home visits for each such month in which they are supposed to visit.
- Approx ₹ 1 Crore** worth of prizes (cash and kind) are awarded to deserving teachers on Teachers' Day.

3 CMS students got All India Rank 1 in ISC 2018

All India Topper
1st Rank
RADHIKA CHANDRA
99.50%

All India Topper
1st Rank
SAKSHI PRADYUMN
99.50%

All India Topper
1st Rank
SAMAM WAHEED
99.50%

No. of CMS students who took ICSE/ISC exams in 2018	5801	100.0%
No. who obtained 90% & above agg. mark*	2269	39.11 %
No. who obtained 95% & above agg. mark*	675	11.63 %
No. who obtained 97% & above agg. mark*	185	3.18 %
No. who obtained 98% & above agg. mark*	62	1.06 %

CMS gives Unprecedented and unparalleled global exposure

₹ 3.2 Crore Science Scholarship from Govt. of India to 80 CMS students of Class XII

59 CMS students got admission in universities abroad, 39 with scholarships

8 CMS Students got KVPY Fellowship from Govt. of India

133 CMS students are in top 10 national ranks in ICSE & ISC 2018 exam

2 CMS alumni in IAS & 5 in PCS (J) in 2018

42 CMS students selected in IIT-JEE 2018

9 CMS students cleared the CLAT Exam 2018

51 CMS students qualified NEET -2018

* Marks obtained in English+best 3 subjects for ISC and English+best 4 subjects for ICSE

Other achievements in 2018-19

- A large number of sporting, music and environment awards at state and national level in 2018.
- CMS produced these glittering achievements and successes while being highly socially inclusive, with over 30% of its students being from SC, ST, OBC and Economically Weaker Sections.
- CMS Gomti Nagar Campus I is the only SAT & AP Test Center in Uttar Pradesh.
- Over 4,500 CMS students are learning a foreign Language (i.e. German and French)
- All 1,140 CMS classrooms are empowered with Interactive White Boards with Tata Class Edge content.

Salary Note: Existing teachers' salary increase (approx. 13%) is higher than new teachers' salary increase (approx. 10%) because of the 3% increment for each year of experience, as per govt. norms.

The high salary-increase in 2019-20 is because govt. doubled both House Rent Allowance & City Compensatory Allowance (both increased by 100%). CMS is bound to pay salary equivalent to that in govt. schools, as per state govt.'s NOC conditions and also as per the ICSE Council rules.

CMS pays higher salaries than the government to attract/retain the best teachers, in order to give highest quality education and the best results, to prepare students for decision making global careers and professions, and to make our students leaders of mankind in all fields of human endeavour.

Best ICSE & ISC results in the country, with the largest number of 2269 students getting 90% to 99.5% marks in 2018

Cambridge Assessment International Education

Gomti Nagar (Extension) Campus has also started a new Cambridge Exam Board Section for Classes 6 to 12

for enquiries please contact **0522-2990607 & 2990608**

— Dr Bharti Gandhi, PhD
M.Ed. Guidance Psychologist
Founder-Director, CMS

For further information on CMS please see www.cmseducation.org or email info@cmseducation.org

Summer will be early, harsher: Experts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

In view of the fogless and warm January prevailing currently, climate experts in the city believe that this year the summer will fall earlier and be harsher. While some experts state that this is a part of a climatic chaos which is occurring across the globe, others state that it is because of the excessive pollution which has gone beyond the normal limits.

If one goes through the highest maximum temperatures which have been recorded in the past years in January, it was 27 degrees Celsius in 2018, 27.5 degrees Celsius in 2017, 28.6 in 2016, 23.1 in 2015, 23.1 in 2014, 25.6 in 2013, 24.4 in 2012, 26.5 in 2011, 27.2 in 2010 and 27.8 degree Celsius in 2009. The all time record is of 31.6 degree Celsius on January 1, 1992.

Professor at Indian Institute of Management-Lucknow (IIML) and expert in the study of the implications of climate change Sushil Kumar said that the predictions were

Rainy weather brings chill back

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Rainy weather brought back the chill in the city. The city woke up to a cloudy skies and rain because of western disturbance in Jammu and Kashmir. Because of the weather disturbances, several flights were diverted to the Chowdhary Charan Singh airport.

Met department has made a forecast of rains on Thursday too. The

local forecast for Lucknow is partly cloudy sky with rain and thundershowers in some areas. The maximum and minimum temperature are likely to be 24 degree Celsius and 14 degree Celsius respectively.

Airport officials said that flights, which were diverted due to bad weather at Delhi, included AI 763 KOL-DEL, which landed at 10.56 am, 6E5324 KOL-DEL which landed at 10.40 am.



Aircrafts parket in bay at Chowdhary Charan Singh airport

that the summer would be unusually early and unusually harsher this year.

"With the kind of temperature prevailing currently, it is expected that by March-end the temperature will be as high as in April. The minimum temperature has hovered around 10 degree Celsius and there has been no fog in January," he said.

He stressed that the cause for this climatic change was global warming which in turn was because of excessive pollution. He said that excessive pollution had crossed a high limit. However, he pointed out that a fogless month was not as sudden as it had been perceived.

If one goes through the last 10 to 15 years data, one will find that except for a few exceptions, the days of winter rain and fog have been growing lesser," he said.

Climate expert and Professor in the Geology department, Lucknow University, Vibhuti Rai said that it was a part of climate chaos occurring all over the world.

Bondhu Mahal organises blood donation camp

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The social organisation, Bondhu Mahal, organised a blood donation camp on the occasion of the 122nd birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on Wednesday in which 41 volunteers donated blood. The function was held at the Rajendra Singh Memorial Park, B Block, Indiranagar. The camp was organised in collaboration with the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital.

While inaugurating the camp, BJP general secretary Vijay Bahadur Pathak said that the life of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was an example of how one could excel in life despite the odds. He had only one motto and that was to serve his motherland and he fulfilled it till his last breath, he said. Pathak also donated blood on the occasion. "Donating blood shows your active participation," he said.

Local corporator Dilp



Srivastava was also present on the occasion. Bondhu Mahal president Alok Kumar Nigam said that it organised such functions from the money it saved from Durga Puja. "These functions show our commitment towards the society," he

added. This is the seventh year in a row since Bondhu Mahal has been organising such blood donation camps. This year, 41 volunteers donated blood out of whom 11 were women.

Man attacked, car looted Kinnar Akhara president blesses devotees

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two unidentified miscreants, their faces covered with a muffler, attacked a man and looted his swanky Vitara Brezza car when he was training his woman friend how to drive on Shaheed Path in Gossainganj on Wednesday evening.

As per reports, Virendra Kumar of Khurram Nagar locality in Indira Nagar was with his friend Ritu and was training her how to drive the car. Around 4 pm, he reached Ekana Stadium via Faizabad Road when the miscreant came before him all a sudden and forced him to stop the car.

As Virendra stopped the car, the miscreants asked him to open the doors and later

dragged Ritu out of the car. At this Virendra opposed and they attacked him with a knife injuring him in his stomach. They later sat in the car and sped off.

While ASP, Rural, Vikrant Veer was unavailable for his comment, the police spokesman said a case of loot was registered in that connection. He said Virendra had been admitted to a hospital and his statement was being recorded. "Virendra suffered simple injuries in the attack. The police were yet to decide on adding the section of murder-assault in the case," he said.

To downplay the incident, the Gossainganj police said Virendra had purchased the car on a loan of Rs 7 lakh. "He also did not have cordial relations

with Ritu. Police suspect that the attack was made due to car loan or some personal issue," the police said.

MOLESTATION ATTEMPT

A 15-year-old boy was accused of attempting to molest a eight-year-old daughter of his neighbour in Bakshi-ka-Talab on Tuesday evening. Report said the girl was playing outside her house when the miscreant reached near her and lured her by offering toffee. He later took her to his house where he attempted molestation by disrobing her. The girl got scared and cried for help at which the miscreant fled the scene. Later, her parents reached there and they took her to the police station where they lodged a complaint.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

President of Kinnar Akhara Mahamandaleshwar Swami Laxminarayan Tripathi gave blessings to the devotees during rains on Wednesday. She wished for the progress and prosperity of the people. Acharya Mahamandaleshwar said that we always wished for the happiness and prosperity of the people.

It may be pointed out here that the Kinnar Akhara has come for the first time in the world-famous Kumbh Mela of Tirthraj Prayag. The Kinnar society could never forget the love, affection and respect which the people of Sangam city had shown, Tripathi said. Tripathi further added that



Panchanand Giri, Juna Akhara meeting Laxmi Narayan Tripathi, Mahamandaleshwar, Kinnar Akhara, at the Kumbh Mela in Allahabad.

they would stay in the camp till March 4.

During this period she would meet the devotees from 11 am to 5 pm.

Tripathi further said that the Kinnar Akhara along with the Juna Akhara would have a royal bathing on Mauni Amavasya day on February 4. Thereafter it would also have 'amratva snan' at 5 pm the same day.

On the other hand the other prominent saints and mahatmas, including Jagadguru Panchananda Giri Maharaj, Shatun Singh of Om Namah Shivaya and other saints also visited the camp of Kinnar Akhara's Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Swami Laxminarayan Tripathi.

NIA picks up madarsa teacher for interrogation

Lucknow (PNS): Continuing its operation against alleged conduits of ISIS network in Uttar Pradesh, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) again carried out a raid in Gonda on Wednesday.

The NIA sleuths reportedly picked up a madarsa teacher for interrogation. Earlier, the central agency had carried out searches in western Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, and so far it has picked up 16 persons.

The ISIS module is allegedly planning suicide attacks and serial blasts, targeting politicians and government installations in Delhi and other parts of north India. The NIA has so far arrested Muhammad Absar (24) from Hapur on January 12.

The NIA said that searches were being conducted on the basis of inputs from interrogation of the people arrested for allegedly being part of Harkat-ul-Harb-e-Islam module of global terrorist group ISIS.

The sources said that a joint team of NIA and UP Anti-Terrorist Squad conducted a raid on the house of a suspect in Mewatiyan locality and picked him up for interrogation on Wednesday morning.

The suspect is said to be teacher in Furkania madarsa in Gonda and an expert in Arabic language.

The cops also seized two bags and a laptop for further investigation.

Glowing tributes paid to Bose



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

An event was organised at the Parivartan Chowk by the Manav Adarsh Seva Samiti for paying tributes to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and remember him for the works he had done for the country as well as the Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fauj).

Floral tributes were paid to Netaji on the occasion and he was remembered for the struggle he had made for the freedom of the country from the British yoke. The function was attended by the Mayor of Lucknow, Sanyukta Bhatia, who was the chief guest on the occasion.

Pallav Kumar Ghosh, founder organiser of Manav Adarsh Seva Samiti, a social, cultural and educational organisation, registered under the Societies Act organised the event for celebrat-

ing the 122nd birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on Wednesday at the Subhash Chandra Bose Park near Parivartan Chowk here. Dr Madhuri Yadav, Dr Archana Zutshi, the advocate, Surendra, AK Biswas, Dr Suman Devi Singh and Jaideep Ghosh, and Rakesh Pal, cultural secretary, had organised this event well.

Speakers Madhuri Yadav, Archana Zutshi and Suman Devi Singh laid emphasis on the relevance of Netaji's ideology and practical demand of service of the nation by its youths. The message of Netaji "You give me blood and I will give you freedom," reminded us about him again and again," the speakers said.

At the end of the programme, Pallav Kumar Ghosh proposed a vote of thanks and paid rich tributes to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

LMC to focus on garbage collection after survey

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow Municipal Corporation will be focusing on door-to-door garbage collection after the Swachhata Surveyekshan is completed. Mayor Sanyukta Bhatia said the agency carrying out the work was handling only 60-65 percent of the garbage collection.

"We cannot make any changes as of now because the survey is going on and the agency involved in collection of garbage has upped its collection by 75 per cent," she said. The mayor admitted that the agency was not able to cover all the wards under LMC. "We have decided that after the survey, we will see whether another agency should be roped in or two agencies be given the work," she said.

The mayor admitted to have received complaints from people regarding laxity in door-to-door garbage collection. Bhatia said in order to make the system better, LMC had also identified points where private workers employed by residents could throw garbage.

Meanwhile, corporators elected their executive body in a special session of the LMC House held on Tuesday. Those elected to the executive body were Kaushalendra Dwivedi (BJP), Sudhir Kumar Mishra 'Bablu' (BJP), Nagendra Singh Chauhan (BJP), Kumkum Rajpoot (BJP), Shaileendra Singh 'Ballu' (SP) and Mohd Saleem (SP).

NBRI to become pioneer in doing research on 'bhaang'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) will be the first one in the country to carry out research on bhaang (Cannabis sativa) for the extraction of oil, seeds and fibre in low narcotic varieties of the species. This has so far not been attempted in any part of the country.

The Director, NBRI, SK Barik, said that they had already sought permission from the state government to carry out research on this plant.

Talking to 'The Pioneer', he said that the Institute felt that research on this plant was required for the several properties which it had and which had not been explored. There were also restrictions because of its narcotic properties.

"The plant has seeds which are highly proteinous and it has good quality fibre which can be used to make clothes as well as shoes and bags. This can be extracted from the bark of this plant. Oil can also be extracted from the plant which can be used as cannabis oil which has excellent medicinal properties," he said.

The Director said that because the plant had a high narcotic content for any research which needed to be carried out on it permission was required from the state government. "We have not only got permission

from the Uttar Pradesh government for the research work we have also got it from the Uttarakhand government," he said.

He said that when the narcotic content of the plant was reduced it could be used for cultivation. "After the cannabis content is reduced in the plant it is given for cultivation. Then the plant which is called cannabis sativa is called cannabis hemp," he said.

The Director said that they would be collecting germplasms from the entire country and then carry out genetic improvements on the plant. He said that they had also sought permission from the Uttarakhand government because they wanted to collect the cannabis species from the high altitude areas too. He said that the best part of the plant was that it grew everywhere. "In Uttar Pradesh it grows at the sides of the roads all over," he said. He said that they had begun the research work on the plant which would show results in the next two to three years. "We have also received a project from a pharmaceutical company associated with the plant," he said.

The Director said that the Institute was also the certifying agency for the state of Uttarakhand for determining whether the narcotic content in the cannabis being used for cultivation was less than 2 per cent.

मह्यांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लिमिटेड ई-निविदा सूचना

अधोहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा अनुमती एवं कार्य में दख देकेदारों से ई-निविदा दो भागों में निम्न विवरण अनुसार उ०प्र० सरकार के पोर्टल etender.up.nic.in पर आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा सम्बन्धी विवरण www.mvvn.in पर भी अवलोकित किया जा सकता है।

1. अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं० ६०/निनिम(प०)/2018-19: "शहीद पथ से चौधरी चरण सिंह अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डा तक सरेखण में बाधक विद्युत तंत्रों को विस्थापित करने तथा तत्संबंधी अन्य कार्य।" निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य रु० 1298.00 (1100.00+18% GST) एवं धरोहर धनराशि रु० 8500.00। ई-निविदा अपलोड करने की अन्तिम तिथि 11.02.2019 समय 17:00 बजे तक तथा ई-निविदा का प्रथम भाग खुलने की तिथि 12.02.2019 समय 14:00 बजे।

अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत नगरीय निर्माण मण्डल (पंचम) लेसा भवन, रजौडेन्सी, लखनऊ पत्रांक-109 दिनांक-23.01.2019 "राष्ट्रहित में विजली बचाय"

E-auction for fancy registration numbers commences today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The e-auction for fancy registration numbers for vehicles will begin from Thursday. ARTO (Administration) Raghvendra Singh said that applicants could register themselves from Thursday (January 24). He said that this was the first time that the auctioning of the fancy registration numbers was taking place. Giving the details, he said that the process was likely to take seven days.

He said that the e-auction for all the notified numbers would be opened from 10 am onwards. "The first four days will be for the registration of the bidders and the next three days will be utilised for making the bids for the notified numbers. There have to be a minimum of three bidders for the notified number and if the numbers are less than three then the process of registration will be extend-

ed for another seven days," he said. He said that in the extended period also the first four days would be for the registration of numbers and the next three days for the bidding. "If during the extended period also, three bidders do not take part then in that case the number will be allotted to the highest bidder even if he or she is one," he added.

He added that if a bidder wanted to participate in the e-auction of more than one notified number then he or she would have to submit an application and pay the specified fee of each notified number.

He said that all the processes would take place online which include the payment of the numbers in four series for a sum of ₹15,000, ₹7,000, ₹6,000 and ₹3,000. He said that the auction for 346 numbers would go online and the choice would be totally subjective.

SCHOOLSCAN

CMS MAKES IT TO NATIONAL LIST



City Montessori School, Gomti Nagar campus I and CMS, Alignaj campus I have secured a place in the top schools' list of India. Fortune India has released the list of 'Future 50 Schools Shaping Success' in which the inclusion of these two CMS campuses has elevated the fame of Lucknow and proud principals Abha Anant and Jyoti Kashyap were felicitated with certificates at a grand function organised in Mumbai. Expressing his happiness over this achievement, CMS founder Jagdish Gandhi said that the credit for the success went to hard working, brilliant teachers and principals of these campuses whose dedication and perseverance brought glory to CMS.

Sanatkada festival from Feb 1

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Sanatkada festival will kick off from February 1. Key organiser of the programme Madhavi Kuckerja, while addressing a press conference on Wednesday, said on the completion of 10 years of the festival they were celebrating "Dus Saal Bemisaal" by tracing the journey back to the roots of the festival.

She said that the special feature in the current year would be the karkhana. "The karkhana will host workshops on kite-making and water colour painting. We have put our heart and soul in curating, commissioning and archiving the craft-work of artisans at the exhibition that will be set up in the tahkhana of the Safed Baradari. It is for the first time that the tahkhana will be open to public. We also bring to you the live demos of craft-making," she added.

Talking about the theme, she said: "The theme chosen this year is Husn-e-Karigari-e-Awadh that will celebrate the life, work and dedication of Lakhnavi artisans and workers who continue to keep these arts and craft alive. The festival will showcase the documentation of the rarest crafts of Awadh, from the 1st of February till the 5th of February 2019."

Giving a background, she pointed out: "The reign of the Awadh nawabs was marked as the zenith of artisanal finesse. Characterised by their refined and opulent cultural and artistic identity, court patronage varied from heavily embellished clothing to decorated public spaces. Even today, almost every piece of artisanal craftsmanship in our city of nawabs is inspired from the sublime sense of detail owing its genesis to the nobility. Awadh's rich artistic heritage is a testament to the unique social mobility that cut across caste and religion, thus enabling a far wider range of the public access to the arts. Be it the distinct forms of embroidery like chikan, kaamdani and zardozi or crafts such as intricate bone carving and clay pottery, all the decorative arts reached superior heights in this region."

She said that the ten cultural performances would be a mélange of traditional and contemporary forms of music, literature, political satire and theatre. "We aim to provide a new experience to our visitors by hosting a few of our night performances at old homes of Lucknow, namely, Leuba, Azam Ali ki Kothi and Kala Kothi other than Salempur House and Baradari," she added.

Red Line Metro to reach Ghaziabad new bus adda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Metro network's Rithala-Dilshad Garden Red Line will soon be extended to Ghaziabad's New Bus Adda. The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved the extension of Delhi Metro corridor from Dilshad Garden to New Bus Adda Ghaziabad. This would be the second metro line in Ghaziabad and the first metro link connecting the interiors of the city. It will pass through Sahibabad Industrial Area and is aimed at impacting the nearby residential areas.



The stretch also includes an interchange facility. At the Mohan Nagar station, people can change for Blue Line. Ghaziabad Development Authority (GDA) wrote to the UP government saying that the project was 99% complete and that December 25 could be a good day for commissioning of the line.

The Cabinet has also approved contribution of Rs.324.87 crore as central financial assistance for extension to that December 25 could be a good day for commissioning of the line. The Cabinet has also approved contribution of Rs.1,781.21 crore. The rolling stock is being provided by Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) and land has been provided free of cost by the Ghaziabad Development Authority (GDA), said officials of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. The extended corridor of Rithala-Dilshad Garden Red Line covers eight metro stations in total - Shaheed Nagar, Raj Bagh, Rajendra Nagar, Shyam Park, Mohan Nagar, Arthala, Hindon river and Ghaziabad New Bus Stand metro stations.

Cabinet to strengthen N-E autonomous councils

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Keeping in mind the tribal population in the Northeast ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, the NDA Government on Wednesday took a major decision to grant more power and funds to 10 autonomous councils in the region.

The Union Cabinet approved a "landmark" constitutional amendment to increase the powers of the autonomous councils in the Sixth Schedule areas of the Northeast. The Finance Commission will be mandated to recommend devolution of financial resources to them, an official statement said.

The amendment also provides for transfer of additional 30 subjects including departments of Public Works, Forests, Public Health Engineering, Health and Family Welfare, Urban Development and Food and Civil Supply to Karbi Anglong Autonomous Territorial Council and Dima Hasao Autonomous Territorial Council in Assam.

"The Cabinet approves landmark amendment to Article 280 and Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. The most important part of these amendments is that these will significantly improve the financial resources and powers of the autonomous districts councils in Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura, fulfilling long-

standing aspirations of the tribal population in these Northeastern States," the statement read. A Bill in this regard is expected to be introduced in the upcoming session of Parliament, a Home Ministry official said.

"This will be a game changer, as it will substantially enhance the funds available to these local government institutions for undertaking development works in these tribal areas," the official said.

The proposed amendments provide for elected village municipal councils, ensuring democracy at the grassroots level. The village councils will be empowered to prepare plans for economic development and social justice including those related to agriculture, land improvement, implementation of land reforms, minor irrigation, water management, animal husbandry, rural electrification, small scale industries and social forestry.

At least one-third of the seats will be reserved for women in the village and municipal councils in the Sixth Schedule areas of Assam, Mizoram and Tripura and at least two of the nominated members in all autonomous councils in the North East Sixth Schedule areas resulting in empowerment of women.

There will be State Election Commissions for holding elections to the autonomous councils, village and municipal

councils in the areas of Assam, Mizoram and Tripura. There will be a provision for anti-defection too. Meghalaya has for the time being kept out of the purview of the provision for elected village and municipal councils and one-third reservations for women.

The amendments will fulfil the commitments made under tripartite Memorandum of Settlements signed by Government of India, governments of Assam and Meghalaya, United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS), Dima Haram Daogah (DHD) and Achik National Volunteers Council (ANVC).

The amendments propose to rename the existing autonomous councils as Karbi Anglong Autonomous Territorial Council (KAATC), Dima Hasao Autonomous Territorial Council (DHATC), Garo Hills Autonomous Territorial Council (GHATC), Khasi Hills Autonomous Territorial Council (KHATC), Jaintia Hills Autonomous Territorial Council (JHATC) and Tripura Tribal Area Autonomous Territorial Council (TTAATC) as the present jurisdiction of these councils extend to more than one districts.

There will also be increase in seats in KAATC (from 30 to 50 seats), DHATC (30 to 40 seats), GHATC (30 to 42), KHATC (30 to 40) and JHATC (30 to 34).

India-Kuwait pact on domestic workers approved

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move that will benefit over 3 lakh Indians, including 90,000 women working in Kuwait, the Cabinet on Wednesday approved signing of an agreement between India and the Gulf country for cooperation on recruitment of domestic workers.

The Memorandum of Understanding provides a structured framework for cooperation on domestic workers related matters and provides strengthened safeguards for Indian domestic workers including female

workers in Kuwait, a statement said.

The pact is initially valid for a period of five years and incorporates provision for automatic renewal.

A joint committee will be set up to follow up the implementation of this MoU.

This will also promote bilateral cooperation in domestic workers related matters between the two countries.

"Around 3,00,000 Indian domestic workers are deployed in Kuwait. This includes around 90,000 female domestic workers," the statement added.

Centre clears setting up of national bench of GST appellate tribunal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Cabinet decided that the national bench of the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal to be located in the capital would have one member each from Centre and States and a President. The Tribunal will expedite resolution of disputes under GST laws.

approved currency swap facility to enable India to provide a prompt response to the current request from SAARC member countries for availing the swap amount exceeding the present limit prescribed under the SAARC Swap Framework. The Reserve Bank will negotiate the operational details bilaterally with the central banks of the SAARC countries availing the Standby Swap.

This apart, the Cabinet

CBI books ex-CMD of AI for misusing position

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has booked former Air India Chairman-cum-Managing Director Arvind Jadhav for allegedly constituting an illegal panel for making senior appointments and transfers.



Along with Jadhav, the CBI has also named then Executive Director (Personnel) LP Nakhwa (now retired) and former Additional General Managers (Operations) A Kathpalia, Amitabh Singh and Rohit Bhasin in its FIR registered under IPC section related to criminal conspiracy and provisions of Prevention of Corruption Act pertaining to abuse of official position.

The FIR alleged that Jadhav had constituted a panel in 2010 to promote officers to the rank of General Manager (operations) in violation of laid down procedures.

The three-member panel included then Chief Operating Officer Gustav Baldauf, then Executive Director (operations) A Soman and former Executive Director (Personnel) LP Nakhwa, the FIR said.

Nakhwa, who was General Manager (Medical Service), was given the rank of Executive

Director (Medical Services) after the post was upgraded as a temporary measure till August 31, 2009.

It is alleged that Nakhwa was to be reverted to the post of General Manager (Medical Services) from September 1, 2009, but she continued in her position as Executive Director in clear violation of the Civil Aviation Ministry's directive dated March 6, 2009.

The CBI inquiry also found that Jadhav regularised Nakhwa in the post of Executive Director (Medical Services) with effect from April 1, 2010 without following the due procedure, the FIR said.

The Civil Aviation Ministry had annulled and reversed the irregular appointment of Nakhwa as Executive

Director (Medical services).

A human resources sub-committee of the Board of Air India in an order dated September 8, 2010 reverted Nakhwa to the post of General Manager (Medical services) with immediate effect.

"Therefore, the promotion panel so constituted by Arvind Jadhav...For selecting suitable candidates for promotions to the post of GM (operations) should have been re-constituted in the wake of reversion of Nakhwa from Executive Director (Medical services) to the rank of General Manager," it said. The CBI also alleged that Nakhwa was not eligible for being a member of the said promotion panel but Jadhav nominated her against the prevailing rules and procedure.

ADR: BJP earned ₹553 cr from unknown sources in '17-18

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Political parties received ₹8721.14 crore funding from unknown sources between 2004-05 and 2017-18 with the BJP and the Congress witnessing maximum income from such sources. More than 50 per cent of the funds national parties received during the financial year 2017-18 came from "unknown" sources that included donations through electoral bonds and voluntary contributions.



According to Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), the income of these parties from "unknown" sources was ₹689.44 crore, which is 53 per cent of their total income. The BJP alone declared ₹553.38 crore as its income from unknown sources. This income of BJP forms more than 4 times the aggregate of income from unknown sources declared by the other five national parties.

According to it, the total income of BJP, Congress, CPI, BSP, TMC, and NCP in 2017-18 was ₹1293.05 crore. The income of these parties from "unknown" sources was ₹689.44 crore, which is 53 per cent of their total income.

Out of the ₹689.44 crore, the share from electoral bonds was ₹215 crore or 31 per cent, the report said.

The parties received ₹354.22 crore or more than 51 per cent of the fund from unknown sources through voluntary contributions (below ₹20,000), it said, adding the total income from other miscellaneous unknown sources

was ₹4.5 crore. Thirty-six per cent of their income or ₹467.13 crore from "known" donors, whose details were available from contribution reports submitted to the Election Commission.

They got ₹136.48 crore from other known sources, such as from the sale of assets and publications, membership fees, bank interest, and party levy, the report said.

According to donation reports (containing details of donations above ₹20,000), only ₹16.80 lakh was given in cash to the national parties.

The ADR also recommended that scrutiny of financial documents submitted by the political parties should be conducted annually by a body approved by CAG and ECI so as to enhance transparency and accountability of political parties with respect to their funding.

"The national and regional political parties must provide all information under the Right to Information Act. This will only strengthen political parties, elections and democracy," it said.

Disappointed as decision on elevation of judges not made public, says Lokur

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Supreme Court Judge, Justice Madan B Lokur Wednesday expressed disappointment over not bringing to public domain the December 12 decision of the apex court's Collegium on the elevation of judges, which has been at the centre of controversy.

Justice (Retd) Lokur, who demitted office on December 30, 2018, was part of the 5-member Collegium deliberations which had reportedly agreed to recommend the names of Justices Pradeep Nandrajog and Rajendra Menon to the Supreme Court.

Later, however, Delhi High Court judge Sanjiv Khanna and Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court Justice Dinesh Maheshwari were elevated as apex court judges, triggering a public debate on the issue.

On the controversy around the purported change in the decision, Justice Lokur said he did not know as to what additional documents came after his retirement.

Speaking at an interaction here on 'State of the Indian Judiciary', organised by a law portal, the former judge however rubbished the claim of nepotism in the judiciary.

Justice Lokur said he didn't think that the Collegium

SC grants bail to 4 convicts in Naroda Patiya riot case

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday granted regular bail to four convicts in the Naroda Patiya massacre case in Gujarat in which 97 people were killed by a mob during the 2002 riots in the state.

The Gujarat High Court had on April 20 last year upheld the conviction of 12 out of the 29 accused who were pronounced guilty on various charges by the trial court and had acquitted 17 others, including former BJP minister Maya

Kodmani.

A Bench comprising Justices AM Khanwilkar and Ajay Rastogi Tuesday granted regular bail to four convicts — Umeshbhai Surabhai Bharwad, Rajkumar, Padmendrasinh Jaswantsinh Rajput and Harshad alias Mungda Jila Govind Chhara Parmar.

The top court also granted interim bail for a period of 19 days to convict Prakashbhai Sureshbhai Rathod (Chhara) to take part in his daughter's marriage on February 10.

PM inaugurates museums on Bose, Jallianwala Bagh



Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays floral tribute to Subhash Chandra Bose on his birth anniversary at the Red Fort in Delhi on Wednesday

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On the 122nd birth anniversary of Subash Chandra Bose celebrated on Wednesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a museum at the iconic Red Fort dedicating to the life and his contribution to the India's freedom struggle.

The Prime Minister also inaugurated the Yaad-e-Jallian Museum on the Jallianwala Bagh and World War I, the Museum on 1857- India's first war of Independence and Drishyakala-Museum on Indian Art within the Red Fort complex.

The Museum on Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and Indian National Army provides a detailed account of Subhash Chandra Bose and the history of Indian National Army, said a statement from the Union Culture Ministry. It also showcases various

Modi said museums on Netaji Bose and Azad Hind Fauj are a key part of Kranti Mandir

artefacts related to Subhash Chandra Bose and INA. The artefacts include wooden chair and sword used by Netaji, medals, badges, uniforms and other artefacts related to INA.

In a series of tweets, Prime Minister said, it was extremely humbling for him to inaugurate four museums relating to India's rich history and culture. He said the entire complex of museums will be known as Kranti Mandir as a tribute to the revolutionary zeal and courage of the great freedom fighters.

Modi said museums on Netaji Bose and Azad Hind Fauj are a key part of Kranti Mandir. History echoes from

these walls. In this very building, brave sons of India, Colonel Prem Sahgal, Colonel Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon and Major General Shah Nawaz Khan were put on trial by the colonial rulers.

The Prime Minister has urged art lovers to visit Drishyakala, which will take people through the finest aspects of Indian art and culture. There are four historical exhibitions, spanning three centuries, with over 450 works of art.

Modi also said the works of eminent Indian artists like Raja Ravi Varma, Gurudev Tagore, Amrita Sher-Gil, Abanindranath Tagore, Nandlal Bose, Gaganendranath Tagore, Sailoz Mookherjee and Jamini Roy are on display at the exhibition. Modi tweeted that Gurudev Tagore's works at Drishyakala is a treat for art lovers to see.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits the Yaad-e-Jallian Museum, (museum on the Jallianwala Bagh and World War I) at Red Fort in Delhi on Wednesday

3 terrorists killed in Kashmir's Baramulla

KHURSHED WANI ■ SRINAGAR

For the third straight day, three more terrorists were killed in north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Wednesday taking the toll to nine. The terrorists were killed in a fierce encounter in Binnar village where police and security forces launched an operation on specific information on movement of terrorists.

The three slain terrorists are believed to be cadre of Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) outfit, two of them



suspected to be foreigners.

Security sources said that a joint team of army, Police and CRPF launched a cordon-and-search operation at Binnar village on the outskirts of Baramulla district on the basis of inputs about the presence of terrorists.

As the forces zeroed in on the suspected spot, the hiding terrorists opened fire triggering off a gunfight. "As the searches were going on, the search party was fired upon by the terrorists. The fire was retaliated leading to a gunfight," a police spokesman said.

"In the ensuing encounter, three terrorists were killed and the bodies were retrieved from the site of encounter. Their

identities and affiliations are being ascertained," he said.

"Incriminating material including arms and ammunition was recovered from the site of encounter. Police have registered a case and initiated investigation in the matter," he added.

"Citizens are requested not to venture inside the encounter zone since such an area can prove dangerous due to stray explosive materials. People are requested to cooperate with police till the area is completely sanitised and cleared of all the explosive materials if any," police spokesman said.

This was the third encounter in as many days in the Valley. The three gunfights in south, central and northern parts of Kashmir resulted into the killing of nine terrorists. On Monday, three terrorists were killed in an encounter in Hapatnar village of Char-e-Sharief area in central district Budgam while three more were killed in Shirmal village of south Kashmir's Shopian district on Tuesday. The encounters took place ahead of tight security arrangements in the wake of Republic Day.

LoC tense as Pak violates ceasefire again

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Tensions escalated along the Line of Control in Poonch sector late Wednesday evening following 'unprovoked' ceasefire violation by the Pakistan army.

According to ground reports, the firing which started from Sonagali around 4.00 pm continued till late in the night.

The entire stretch between Balakote and Mankote was activated and witnessed heavy exchange of fire. The Indian army jawans remained in a state of high alert to prevent any strike by Border Action Team of Pakistan army or fresh infiltration bid.

The local villagers in the area also remained closeted inside their houses as several mortar shells landed in the civilian areas close to the line of control. Residents in Poonch claimed the exchange of fire along the LoC was intense and was audible in Poonch town.

Residents in Poonch claimed the exchange of fire along the LoC was intense and was audible in Poonch town

Defence PRO in Jammu, Lt Col Devendra Anand said, "Pakistan army initiated 'unprovoked' ceasefire violation by using small arms fire. Pak army also targeted forward areas in Mendhar sector by shelling with mortars". "The Indian army retaliated strongly and effectively", he added.

In plain areas of Jammu, especially along the International border, the counter infiltration grid has been beefed up to prevent any infiltration bid. Small groups of heavily armed infiltrators were spotted in the areas by the border guards close to the International border.

Maha ATS busts 'ISIS-inspired' group; minor among 9 arrested

Mumbai: The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has busted an "ISIS-inspired" group, which was planning mass casualty attacks using poisonous chemical mixtures at big gatherings, an official said on Wednesday.

The ATS has also arrested eight men and detained a minor boy — all suspected members of the group — following searches in Thane and Aurangabad over the last two days, he added.

The arrests have come just days ahead of the Republic Day on January 26.

The ATS has seized liquids, chemical powders, a chemical bottle with "hydrogen peroxide" written on it, six knives, six pen drives, six laptops, over 24 mobile phones, several gadgets, WiFi routers, DVDs, CDs, hard drives, graphics cards, modems and computer RAMs (random access memory), the ATS official said.

The group, which had engineers in its ranks, had planned to prepare toxic chemical mixtures and blend those with food or water at big events to cause mass casualty, he added.

All the seized materials were sent to the forensic science



laboratory for examination, he said.

"These people had created a terrorist gang inspired by the ISIS called the Ummat E Mohammadiya and had planned terror activities at various places," the official said without elaborating.

"The idea was to make some poisonous mixtures and mix those in water or food at places of big events so that people consume it," he said.

The locations where the group had planned the terror activities were being ascertained, he added.

"We will verify all the aspects, including (a possible) attack at the (ongoing) Kumbh Mela (in Prayagraj, Uttar

Pradesh) and at other big events as well," the official said.

The chemicals seized from the group were of experimental quantities, he said, adding, "We are also investigating whether the group had any associates in the state or other parts of the country."

Among those arrested was Mazhar Abdul Rashid Sheikh, the son of Rashid Malbari — a underworld criminal and dreaded sharp-shooter of the Dawood Ibrahim gang — the ATS official said. Sheikh was arrested from Aurangabad in central Maharashtra, he added.

The minor, who was detained, was aged around 17 and was a student of class 11 (Science), the official said. PTI

कार्यालय मुख्य अभियन्ता (निविदा संख्या) ३३०० पारदर्शिता
कार्यपालन लिमिटेड, विद्युत वितरण निगम लिमिटेड, विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-मोलेपुर, फतेहगढ़ जनपद-फर्रुखाबाद-209601
 ई-निविदा प्रकाशन एतद्वारा अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं 0/2018-19 को पुनः प्रकाशित किया जाता है जिसके अपलोड करने की निर्धारित तिथि 06.02.2019 को 15.00 बजे एवं ई-निविदा को सार्वजनिक रूप से दिनांक 06.02.2019 को समय 16.00 बजे सार्वजनिक रूप से ऑनलाइन खोली जायेगी। अन्य नियम व शर्तें पूर्ववत् रहेंगी। (अनिल कुमार श्रीवास्तव) अधीक्षण अभियन्ता पत्रांक 369/वि0वि0म(फो)/दिनांक 23.01.2019 'राष्ट्रहित में ऊर्जा बचायें'

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लिमिटेड, विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-मोलेपुर, फतेहगढ़ जनपद-फर्रुखाबाद-209601
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दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लिमिटेड, विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-फर्रुखाबाद, ई-निविदा सूचना
 अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु अनुमती एवं ख्याति प्राप्त टेकदारों, (ए क्लास प्रमाण पत्र धारक एवं जी0एस0टी0 में पंजीयन) से मोहरबन्द निविदा दो भागों में दिनांक 13.02.2019 को 15:00 बजे आन लाइन एवं निविदा प्रपत्र जमा किये जायेंगे तथा निविदा दिनांक 13.02.2019 को 16:00 बजे सार्वजनिक रूप से खोली जायेगी। प्रथम भाग में नियम व शर्तें एवं निविदा के सम्मुख अंकित निविदा शुल्क एवं धरोहर राशि अधीक्षण अभियन्ता विद्युत वितरण मण्डल फर्रुखाबाद के खाता संख्या 11120666007, आई0एफ0एस0 सी0 कोड संख्या-SBIN0001033 भारतीय स्टेट बैंक शाखा फतेहगढ़ में आर0टी0जी0एस0/एन0ई0एफ0 टी0 के माध्यम से तथा बैंक जमा का साक्ष्य योज्य यू0टी0आर0 संख्या तथा बैंक इश्यूइंग बैंक के कम्प्लेनशन मेल की प्रति जो स्वहस्ताक्षरित होगी, ई-टेंडर के साथ अपलोड की जायेगी, अन्यथा की स्थिति में निविदादाता निविदा में भाग लेने हेतु अयोग्य हो जायेगा। निविदा के द्वितीय भाग में दरें जमा करना अनिवार्य होगा। निविदा खुलने की तिथि को यदि अवकाश होता है तो निविदा अगले कार्य दिवस में खोली जायेगी। अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता को सम्पूर्ण निविदा को बांटने/आंशिक या उसके किसी अंश को निरस्त करने का सम्पूर्ण अधिकार होगा। निगम की वेबसाइट www.dvvn1.org पर उपलब्ध है। जहाँ से समस्त अभिलेख/प्रपत्र डाउनलोड किये जा सकते हैं। **निविदा संख्या, कार्य का विवरण, धरोहर धनराशि एवं निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क :-** 150/ 2018-19 विद्युत वितरण मण्डल फर्रुखाबाद के अन्तर्गत खराब डी0टी0 मीटरों के जले डी0एल0एम0एस0 वाक्स बदलने, परिवर्तक से बाईपास मीटरों को सही करने, खराब सी0टी0 मॉडम, सिम एवं मीटर बदलने आदि का कार्य। धरोहर धनराशि रु 1000.00 एवं निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रु 105.00 (जी0एस0टी0 सहित) **Superintending Engineer Electricity Distribution Circle Dakshinanchal Viduyt Vitran Nigam Ltd. Farrukhabad, पत्रांक 342/वि0वि0म(फो)/टी-12 दिनांक 23.01.19 एन0ई0डी0 बल्क जलायें, राष्ट्रहित में ऊर्जा बचायें।'**

50% quota for Mantralaya scribes in Maharashtra housing scheme: Govt

Mumbai: The Maharashtra Government has decided to reserve 50 per cent residences for members of the Mantralaya Aani Vidhimandal Vartahar Sangh' in Mumbai under a housing scheme of the MHADA. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced on Wednesday.

Fadnavis made the remarks here at an award function, when he conferred lifetime achievement award to veteran journalist Dinu Randive among others.

The Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) is a State-run agency. Speaking at the event, Fadnavis said the Government has tried to give "stability" to the fourth pillar of democracy, the media, in the past four years and listed decisions his dispensation

has taken in this regard. "The MHADA has prepared a scheme for residences of journalists. It has been decided that members of the Mantralaya Aani Vidhimandal Vartahar Sangh will have 50 per cent reservation in it.

"Location has been finalised and the process concerned will be completed in a month," he added. Fadnavis also hailed 93-year-old Randive, who had started his journalistic career in 1956.

Randive also participated in the freedom struggle, the Samyukta Maharashtra agitation and the Goa liberation movement.

Award winners in other categories included Vishwas Waghmode, Mahesh Tiwari and Prajakta Pol. PTI



Devotees light oil lamps in the evening during Kumbh Mela 2019 in Allahabad on Wednesday

BJP's days are numbered: TMC

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

After Amit Shah charged the Trinamool Congress with unleashing syndicate raj in Bengal and promised to clear the province of illegal cross-border infiltrators once it came to power, the State ruling outfit hit back calling the BJP president an empty vessel whose party had failed to keep its earlier promises like repatriating black money and crediting ₹15 lakh each in the citizens' bank accounts.

While TMC Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien called the BJP a mad outfit, speaking out of nervousness and desperation, senior leader and State Minister Partho Chatterjee called Shah an empty vessel who was only capable of making large noises. Referring to Shah's speech in a Malda rally O'Brien said "it

is obvious that they are very nervous," as "they know their days are numbered. They are politically scared. Their speeches are low on facts and poor in State."

Shah had on Tuesday told a rally in Malda that "Trinamool Congress needs to be uprooted from this State so that its syndicate tax raj can be ended." Blowing the BJP's elections bugle he vowed to throw out all infiltrators from Bengal. "If we come to power we can assure you that the BJP will make Bengal infiltrator-free."

Reacting to Shah's statements O'Brien tweeted, the BJP did not understand the ethos of India and Bengal. "They are heading towards a big zero," he said adding "some are saying they are desperate, some are saying they have gone mad ... or is it a combination of both?"

SPECIAL TREATMENT TO SASIKALA IN PRISON

Not yet briefed on inquiry committee report: MB Patil

Bengaluru: Karnataka Home Minister MB Patil on Friday said he was yet to be briefed on the report of an enquiry committee that went into charges of preferential treatment to ousted AIADMK leader V K Sasikala at the prison here and would take action after discussions with department officials.

Patil, who took over as Home Minister after the Cabinet rejig on December 22, asserted that nobody was above the law and there was no need to protect anybody.

"It has come to my notice through media reports about RTI... Nobody is above the law..." he told reporters here.

"There was inquiry...I'm holding discussions. Officially I'm yet to be briefed on it. I cannot act on media reports.

I have taken cognisance of media reports. I will discuss with department officials and whatever is needed will be done. What is the need to protect anybody," he added.

An RTI query revealed that Sasikala was given special treatment in a prison here, where she is serving imprisonment in a corruption case, according to the report by an inquiry committee that went into the allegations by a senior police official.

The 295-page report by retired IAS officer Vinay

Kumar confirmed that the then DIG (Prisons) D Roopa's claims in July 2017 that Sasikala was given preferential treatment and a separate kitchen functioned for her at the Parappanna Agrahara Central Jail here, RTI activist Narasimha Murthy had recently said.

Kumar had submitted his report to the Government on November 17, 2017, but its contents were not made public.

Asked if action would be taken based on the report, Patil said "definitely...I have not been officially briefed about it... I have to ascertain about it as the Home Minister and will act accordingly." PTI

More than 70K cows died in Hingonia gaushala in last five years: Gehlot

Jaipur: Lashing out at the Opposition BJP on the issue of cows, Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot on Wednesday said 74,016 cows had died in Hingonia gaushala in Jaipur during the previous Government's five year rule.

He accused the BJP of calling the Congress a party of Muslims but stated the Congress had won elections in the 'cow belt' of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

"Politics was done in the name of cows. As many as 74,016 cows died in Hingonia gaushala in five years. Congress was called the party of Muslims but the party won elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and

Chhattisgarh," Gehlot said, in his reply to the debate on the Governor's speech in the Assembly. He said the Hindu community had realised the BJP raises the issue of Ram temple ahead of elections.

The chief minister targeted the former Vasundhara Raj Government "for weakening schemes like free medicines which were initiated by the earlier Congress Government" and said his Government will not discontinue any public welfare scheme. He said the public gave huge mandate to the BJP in 2013 Assembly elections but the Vasundhara Raj Government wasted five years and gave misrule to the public. PTI



All Assam Students' Union (AASU) along with 30 other indigenous organisations of the State take part in a mass agitation programme against Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in Guwahati on Wednesday

TN district thanks Collector for pro-development schemes

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Tiruvannamalai, one of the most backward districts in Tamil Nadu, is undergoing a silent transformation, thanks to innovative and well-conceived programmes and schemes worked out by the District Collector. "The district was known as home to Lord Annamalai Temple and the ashram of Ramana Maharshi. Other than these two unique institutions, Tiruvannamalai was known only for child marriages, foeticide, illegal termination of pregnancy and malnutrition," said Kattumannarkoil Kannan, vice president, Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association, Tamil Nadu.

Being one of the most rain deficit regions in the State, Tiruvannamalai's contribution to the State economy was negligible. There are no industries

worth mentioning and this resulted in many poor men opting to work as illegal wood cutters in the Seshachalam Forests of neighbouring Andhra Pradesh. Most of the wood cutters allegedly killed in "encounters" inside the forest were from Tiruvannamalai. All these could turn out to be old stories as the district in making big strides thanks to K S Kandasamy, the district collector.

Since the day he took over as collector in September 2017, Kandasamy went into action. He was greeted by unprecedented problems crying for drastic solutions. Quacks operated in various parts of Tiruvannamalai performing selective abortion of female children. Women were afraid of delivering female children as they knew life of girls would be a horrid affair.

"Infanticide, school dropouts, child marriages, malnutrition, lower educational sta-

tus, high maternal mortality rates, were some of the issues haunting us. The maternal mortality ratio was 111.1 for the year 2017-2018. We brought it down to 54.36 by 2018 to 2019," Kandasamy told The Pioneer on the eve of his departure to New Delhi where he is being honoured on Thursday by the Prime Minister.

Along with the MMR, Kandasamy succeeded in bringing down the infant mortality rate which stood at 11.9 in 2018. "This is lower than the State average of 17. But we are working to bring it down to zero. There are many factors for this phenomenon and this needs multi-pronged strategy," said the district collector.

Since early marriages and teenage pregnancy are the root cause of the higher order birth, Kandasamy and his team have decided to eradicate child marriages. "During 2017-2018 we had stopped 168 child mar-



Mothers taking oath with camphor that they would not marry off their daughters before they turn 18



District Collector Kandasamy with schoolchildren who wrote letters to their parents not to marry them off before they turn 18

riages. And during the current year and up to December 2018 we have stopped 166 child marriages in our district and legal actions were initiated. All the children secured are being given training, counselling and career guidance," he said.

A simple but majestic event held at the initiative of Kandasamy turned out to be the game changer in the attitude of women and men towards girl child. "All rural women took a pledge by holding burning camphor that they would not

marry off their kids before the age of 18. This has paid rich dividends," said Kandasamy. Vijayashree Ramesh, a social activist from Chennai is optimistic about the future of Tiruvannamalai. "The collector has taken the women commu-

nity into confidence and he himself has become a role model in driving home the lesson that women should be respected. He had integrated schemes like Beti Bachao Beto Padhao with the local issues and this has paid good results," said Ramesh, a lawyer-turned-girl child activist.

One of the private colleges in the district came forward to implement the "Role Reversal Activity" suggested by Kandasamy. An equal number of boys and girls were selected for the mission. For one day, they had the roles reversed. Boys became home makers while the girls had fun. We cooked and cleaned and served them food of their choices. And the girls had fun playing games, dance, chit-chat, drive a battery operated car. It was a different experience and our perspective about women got changed," said Arun, one of the students who took part in this mission.

SC rejects bail plea of Unitech promoters

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to grant bail to Unitech Ltd promoters Sanjay Chandra and his brother Ajay Chandra in a case relating to alleged siphoning off the homebuyers' money.

A Bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Hemant Gupta said the Chandras have still not complied with its October 30, 2017 order which asked them to deposit ₹750 crore with the apex court registry by December 31, 2017.

"At this stage, we note that on October 30, 2017, petitioner were subjected to bail provided they deposited ₹750 crore in the apex court registry by December 31, 2017. The order was passed by a three-judge Bench. It is an admitted fact that said order of October 30, 2017 is still to be complied with. Therefore prayer for bail is misconceived. We see no reason to modify the order of a three-judge bench," said the SC.

The Bench also directed the trial court which is seized of the criminal case against the Unitech promoters to proceed expeditiously in the trial.

Advocate Rajiv Nanda, appearing for Economic Offence Wing of Delhi Police, informed the bench that charge sheet has

been filed in the case before the trial court and the matter is listed for framing of charges on February 7. Lodged in Tihar jail for over one and half years, the Chandras have sought bail on the ground that they were complying with the apex court order and have deposited over 400 crore till now.

Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi said that the company has deposited Rs 419 crore, and Rs 45 crore is ready to be deposited after the proposed sale of land in Sriperumbudur, while the rest of the amount will be deposited after transfer of its stake in a power plant in Maharashtra.

He said that Chandras, even while in jail, have delivered 2,839 flats to home buyers and if granted bail they would abide by every condition imposed on them including cooperating with court appointed forensic auditors.

The contentions were however opposed by the home buyers.

On December 7, 2018, the apex court has directed forensic audit of Unitech Ltd and its sister concerns and subsidiaries by Samir Paranjpe, Partner, Forensic & Investigation Services in M/s Grant Thornton India.

The forensic audit has been

proposed in various parts and in phase-1, it was proposed that the focus will be on 74 construction projects and the entities of Unitech involved in this project.

The court had directed Unitech Ltd to identify and nominate two of its Directors who are not in jail and a team of three senior officers for coordinating with the forensic auditors for the purpose of supplying all the data, materials and information as is required by the auditors.

The amicus curiae appointed in the case said in its report that out of 74 construction projects undertaken by Unitech, as many as 61 were incomplete and about 16,300 home buyers were involved in these projects.

The court had noted that the documents and report of Delhi police disclose disturbing state of affairs at Unitech in which funds were collected from home buyers and then siphoned off before the accounts were closed.

It had said that as per the annual report of the embattled company, the foreign subsidiaries of Unitech Ltd have Rs 4,500 crore as reserves and surplus capital and newly created 150 subsidiaries of the firm were closed down between 2011-2012 and 2016-2017.

Gauri's sister rubbishes cyber expert's claim

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ BENGALURU

Slain journalist Gauri Lankesh's sister Kavita Lankesh has rubbished the claim made by a US-based self-styled cyber expert and hacker that Lankesh was killed because she was planning to write an article on the hacking of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

"I am aware of it and I think it is completely false. I don't think it is true at all. I don't know why it was said like this. I don't believe my sister was targeting for that at all," Kavita Lankesh said.

Lankesh was shot dead on September 5, 2017 evening outside her house. Police have arrested 16

people, while two suspects are at large.

Police have claimed that a right wing criminal syndicate, which killed the left leaning journalist Lankesh, was inspired by the literature brought out by a right wing organisation Sanatan Sanstha and assassinated her for being 'Durjan' (evil person), as mentioned in the book.

However, adding an outlandish twist to the story, the man identified as Syed Shuja had said he had met Lankesh and wanted the article on EVM to be published in her weekly when the assassination happened.

Kavita said, "The murder was a political conspiracy but I don't believe in this kind of twist. So far, the investigation

is going in a right direction."

When asked whether she believed that there were political motives behind the claims, she said, "I guess so. It's a fake news. I don't need to go into it."

The Election Commission has filed a complaint with the Delhi Police asking it to register an FIR against Syed Shuja, who at a press conference in London on Monday claimed EVMs can be hacked, and the 2014 Lok Sabha elections were rigged.

In its complaint, the poll panel asked the police to investigate the matter "promptly" for violation of certain sections of the Indian Penal Code dealing with spreading rumour to alarm and "create fear" in the minds of the public.

Sitharaman slams Cong on EVMs hacking issue

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Amid the row over a self-styled expert alleging that EVMs could be tampered with, Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday hit out at the Congress for joining hands with elements in a foreign country who claimed that electronic voting machines could be hacked.

She dared the Congress to step down from power in Madhya Pradesh where assembly elections were held recently. A self-styled cyber expert had days ago claimed that

EVMs could be hacked and alleged that the 2014 general elections were rigged.

To a question on Tamil Nadu Congress demanding an inquiry into claims that EVMs could be hacked following a hackathon in London recently, she told reporters here that "if they win, EVM is working properly, if they lose EVMs do not function properly, and that too in a foreign country."

The Defence Minister attacked the Congress for what she termed pursuing the path of weakening democracy.

"This is an effort by the Congress to weaken democracy."

"The Congress party won the Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan Assembly elections only through the Electronic Voting Machine," she said and blamed the Rahul Gandhi-led party for changing stand on EVMs according to their convenience.

The Congress party should say they will step down from government in Madhya Pradesh since they won the polls through the EVMs.

STRENGTHEN INDIAN DIASPORA ...

From Page 1

they reached there in search of livelihood. He said that despite living far from the country, they maintained the rich Indian fabric and remained associated with India culture. "You're our brand cultural ambassadors," he told Pravas. He praised the External Affairs Ministry for strengthening the Indian diaspora by providing them services 24x7, apart from associating them with various social media platforms.

"We remain deeply committed to the safety and security of the Indian community abroad. In the last four years, our government has rescued over 90,000 Indians caught in political strife or natural disasters. We have also facilitated the return of over 94,000 Indians during Amnesty schemes in the Gulf coun-

tries," Kovind said.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said the three-day convention would help the Indian diaspora understand India, as well as UP, better. He said that ironically today was also the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose who fought against the imperialist forces with the help of Pravas. He also hailed the prime minister for helping the nation emerge as an economic super power.

Earlier, External Affairs minister Sushma Swaraj welcomed the guests. On behalf of the awardees, Norway member of Parliament Himanshu Gulati narrated his story as to how his parents left for Norway about four decades ago. He said that he maintained Indian culture and after he was elected to the Norway Parliament and reached

there for the first time, he broke a coconut there as per Indian traditions.

The function was also attended by first lady Savita Kovind, Prime Minister of Mauritius Pravind Jugnauth, Governor Ram Naik, Governor of Uttarakhand Baby Rani Maurya, Minister of state for External Affairs Gen VK Singh and MEA secretary Dyaneshwar M Mula.

Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth Wednesday called on President Ram Nath Kovind here and discussed ways to boost bilateral trade, investment and strategic cooperation.

On Thursday, the participants will visit the Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj. They will then proceed to Delhi on January 25 and witness the Republic Day Parade.

UP Congress workers elated...

From Page 1

Welcoming Priyanka's new role, UP Congress president Raj Babbar said, "Bringing in Priyanka Gandhi is not just for the coming Parliament elections but she would be the face of the Party here in UP during Assembly elections in 2022."

Besides Babbar, many other senior leaders, including Pramod Tewari, Vinod Mishra, Siddharth Priya Srivastava, Virendra Madan, Amarnath Agarwal welcomed the entry of Priyanka Gandhi into active politics and said that now the Party would make a comeback in UP in a big way.

The Congress has planned a press meet of Rahul Priyanka and Jyotiraditya Scindia on February 4 to launch its formal campaign in a huge rally likely to be organised here at Ramabai Maidan on February 10.

This probably will be the second time when both Rahul and Priyanka will be hosting Pramod Tewari, Vinod Mishra, Siddharth Priya Srivastava, Virendra Madan, Amarnath Agarwal welcomed the entry of Priyanka Gandhi into active politics and said that now the Party would make a comeback in UP in a big way.

Meanwhile, hours after the announcement of Priyanka joining active politics, posters comparing Priyanka with her grandmother and former PM Indira Gandhi came up in parts of UP. Some compared her to Goddess Durga while another in Lucknow UPCC office says, "Indira Is Back" and also thanks Rahul for bringing Priyanka in active politics.

The leaders burst crackers and distributed sweets to celebrate the occasion. Priyanka has played crucial roles in nursing Congress bastions Amethi and Rae Bareilly in the past.

First bullet...

From Page 1

"The project proponent (NHSRCL) will comply with all the conditions imposed by the State Chief Wildlife Warden and mitigation measures suggested by committee constituted by the State Board for Wildlife," said the sources.

Also, the project proponent has been asked to submit the annual compliance certificate on the stipulated conditions to the State Chief Wildlife Warden who will forward it to the Centre. As the said project is being in the areas classified in Coastal Regulation Zone-I, wide variety of avifaunal diversity is observed. Hence adoption of measures for conservation of habitat of the avifauna found in the region will be desirable, noted the Board members chaired by Union

Environment Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan. As per the sources, the NHSRCL has been asked to ensure construction of a combined overpass (over the existing Diva - Vasai railway line and proposed DFC line) and underpass (under MAHSR, MMC and an elevated PWD road).

A joint wildlife corridor expert team comprising SGNP and TWLS Wildlife department, BNHS, Wildlife Institute (WII), Satpuda Foundation, Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT) will design and implement the technical requirements (re-wilding, guide fencing and ground preparation) related to the creation of effective wildlife corridors, said the sources. However conservationists are not happy. They said that the mitigation measures remain only on paper and once the project is completed, neither the government nor the project agency is bothered about fulfilling them.

Cong's brahmastra...

From Page 1

Though the announcement came as a booster for the State unit party workers and reactions poured in from across the country, Priyanka has been always active in decision-making and also played a key role in the alliance with Akhilesh SP in the 2017 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections. She also participated in crucial party meetings, including the recent appointments of Chief Ministers in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh where the BJP was dethroned. She was also instrumental in initiating the entry of Manpreet Badal and Navjot Singh Sidhu in the Punjab Congress.

"This is an opportunity for the Congress to strike back in the most crucial state of the country where the organisation had all through been wanting her to plunge into active politics," said

Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee spokesperson Rajiv Bakshi.

"We welcome both Priyankaji and Jyotiraditya Scindia to lead all of us, and look forward for a 40 plus tally for the party in the coming Lok Sabha polls," Bakshi said adding that Priyanka belongs to Uttar Pradesh and the party needed her and reminded that 47 year old Priyanka is often compared with her grandmother, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

The Congress also appointed KC Venugopal as general secretary, organisation. He replaces Ashok Gehlot, who has since become Chief Minister of Rajasthan. Venugopal will continue to be AICC general secretary for Karnataka, where the party is in power with the Janata Dal Secular.

Priyanka's appointment will strengthen party: Pilot

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Deputy Chief Minister of Rajasthan Sachin Pilot on Wednesday said Priyanka Gandhi's appointment as AICC general secretary for UP East will inspire party workers across the country.

"It is a welcome development. This will boost party workers across the country. It has been a long standing demand of the workers to give her (Priyanka) an official role.

"Until now, she chose to restrict

herself to campaigning in Amethi and Raebareilly but now as a general secretary, she will strengthen the party's Lok Sabha campaign in the next three months," he said.

Pilot said her new official role will make a huge difference. "Today we understand India is going through a very challenging time and people are looking at the Congress to give an alternative and we need to really get our act together and give a very charged campaign..." said the Deputy Chief Minister of Rajasthan.

लखनऊ नगर निगम
निविदा सूचना: 655/मु.अ./18 शुद्धि-पत्र दिनांक: 22.01.2019
ई-निविदा नोटिस सं-518/मु.अ./18 दिनांक 01.01.2019 के अन्तर्गत दिनांक 01.02.2019 को आमंत्रित की गयी थी। उक्त प्रकाशित ई-निविदा में सूची क्रमांक-2 पर अंकित कार्य को निरस्त करने एवं सूची क्रमांक-3 पर अंकित कार्य में जमानत धनराशि ₹08.00 लाख के स्थान पर ₹06.00 लाख तथा निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य ₹08,960.00 के स्थान पर ₹06,720.00 समझा जाये। कृपया अवलोकन कर हस्ताक्षर करने का कष्ट करें।
मुख्य अभियन्ता लखनऊ नगर निगम
नगर निगम से सम्बन्धित शिकायतों हेतु www.lnnpgrs.in अथवा दूरभाष संख्या - 0522-2307770, 2307782, 2307783 पर सम्पर्क करें।

MOTOR SALES LIMITED
L65921UP1972PLC003642
11, Mahatma Gandhi Marg, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh - 226001
NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that pursuant to provisions of Section 110 of the Companies Act, 2013 (the "Act") read with Rule 22 of The Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, as amended from time to time and such other applicable laws and regulations, the Company has on Tuesday, 22nd January, 2019 (i) completed the dispatch of Notice of Postal Ballot containing draft resolution, Postal Ballot Form and a self-addressed postage pre-paid Business Reply Envelope to all the Members whose names appeared in the Register of Members maintained by the Registrar & Share Transfer Agent ("RTA") as on Monday, 14th January, 2019 and (ii) sent an e-mail of Postal Ballot Notice dated 22nd January, 2019 with relevant form to the Members whose e-mail IDs are registered with the Company for seeking their consent on the agenda item listed in the Postal Ballot Notice (along with the explanatory statement thereto as required Under the provisions of Section 102 read with Section 110 of the Act).
Please note that: The business to be transacted through Postal Ballot may also be transacted by e-voting as provided in the Act read with related Rules thereto and SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 ("Listing Regulations") as amended from time to time; In compliance of provisions of Section 108, 110 and other applicable provisions of the Act read with (i) Rule 20 and 22 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 as amended; and (ii) Regulation 44 of the Listing Regulations the Company has provided facility for e-voting through CDSL e-voting platform. The procedure for E-voting is given in the notes forming part of the Postal Ballot Notice. In case of electronic mode (for e-voting instructions), Members may go through the Instructions given in the Notice and in case of any queries connected with e-voting, the user manual is available for Members at download section of www.evoting.com or in case of any grievances with respect to e-voting/Postal Ballot, you may contact to CDSL by e-mail at helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com or in write to the Company Secretary at cs@motorsales.in or to RTA at admin@skynilneta.com.
E-voting would commence on Wednesday, 23rd January, 2019 from 10:00am and would end on Thursday, 21st February, 2019 at 5:00 PM. The e-voting module shall be disabled by CDSL thereafter, Voting rights of the Members has been reckoned as on 14th January, 2019, which is the Cut-off Date.
Member can opt for only one mode of voting i.e. either by Physical Ballot or e-voting. In case of receipt of vote by both the modes, voting done through e-voting shall prevail and voting done by Physical Ballot shall be treated as Invalid. Postal Ballot Forms should reach the Scrutinizer not later than the close of business hours i.e. 5:00 p.m on Thursday, 21st February, 2019. Postal Ballot Form received from the Members beyond the said date will not be valid and voting by post shall not be allowed beyond the said date.
The Notice of the Postal Ballot along with the explanatory statement and other annexure is displayed on the website of the Company www.motorsales.in and also on the website of the CDSL at www.evotingindia.com. Members who have not received the Postal Ballot Notice or Postal Ballot Form can download the same from either website as provided above, or seek a duplicate Postal Ballot Form from the Company or M/s. Skyline Financial Services Private Limited, the Registrar & Share Transfer Agents (RTA).
The Company has appointed M/s. Gunjan Goel, Practising Company Secretary, Lucknow as the Scrutinizer for conducting the Postal Ballot Process and e-voting in a fair and transparent manner.
The result of the Postal Ballot will be announced on Saturday, 23rd February, 2019 and shall be placed on the website of the Company, www.motorsales.in and on the website of CDSL and shall also be communicated to Calcutta Stock Exchange Limited (CSE), where shares of the Company are listed.
Date: 24.01.2019 Place: Lucknow For Motor Sales Limited (Akshat Gupta), Director (DIN-00728481)

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY Notification No.14/2019
Important Notice for the Rail Passengers
It is notified for information of general public that in order to provide extra facility to the passenger additional stoppages of following trains will be provided on experimental basis for 6 months as per particulars mentioned below:-
Train No. Station Arr. Dep. W.E.F.
12529 Patliputra-Lucknow Jn. Express Ekma 17:52 17:53 25-01-2019
12530 Lucknow Jn.-Patliputra Express Ekma 12:20 12:21 25-01-2019
15028 Gorakhpur-Hatia Express. Daudpur 10:34 10:36 25-01-2019
15027 Hatia-Gorakhpur Express. Daudpur 12:26 12:28 25-01-2019
CPRO/T-107 Chief Pass. Trans. Manager, Gorakhpur
About any passenger amenity complaint SMS on Mob. No.: 09794845955
Do not travel with inflammable article in train.

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (NORTH EAST)-I
2142 JANTA FLATS G.T.B. ENCLAVE DELHI-110093
PRESS NIT No-71 (2018-19)
S.N. No. Name of Work Amount put to tender Date of release of tender in E-procurement Solution Last date/Time of receipt of tender through e-procurement Solution
1. Boring & installation of 03 nos Tubewells at Horticulture nursery G.T.B enclave JE Store C-Block Dilshad Garden & Leprosy Complex Tahipur AC-63 NE-1 33,78,784.00 19-01-2019 2019_DJB_166278_1 04-02-2019 2:10 PM
2. Boring & installation of 03 nos Tubewells at Gali No. 05 Mandoli Extension & Bhagiriathi UGR/BPS in AC-68 NE-1 34,06,842.00 19-01-2019 2019_DJB_166278_2 04-02-2019 2:10 PM
Further details in this regards can be seen at <https://delhi.govtprocurement.com>
ISSUED BY P.R.O (WATER) Sd/-
Advt. No. J.S.V. 708/2018-19 EX. ENGINEER (NORTH EAST)-I

RESTORATION OF TRAINS
Railway administration has decided to restore the following trains earlier diverted due to Non-Interlocking work at Sone Nagar. Details are as follows:-
Train No From/To Earlier Diverted Via Earlier diverted dates (from originating stations) Restoration date from originating stations
12801 Puri-New Delhi Muri-Barkakana-Garwa Road - Chunar instead of Gomoh-Gaya- Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya 16.01.2019 To 26.01.2019 24.01.2019
12802 New Delhi-Puri Chunar-Garwa Road -Barkakana-Muri instead of Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya-Gaya-Gomoh 16.01.2019 To 26.01.2019 24.01.2019
Security Helpline No. 182 and Passengers Complaint Helpline No. 138
North Central Railway, Allahabad
North Central Railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @CPRONCR 93/19 Ad

Office Project Manager, Construction Unit
Uttarakhand Pejyal Sansadhan Vikas Evam Nirman Nigam
Lohaghat (Champawat)
E-mail- pmofficechampawat@gmail.com Ph./ Fax No.-05965-234152
Letter No. 106 / NIVIDA QUOTATION/ 04 Date: 23-01-2019
E - TENDER NOTICE
The Project Manager, Construction Unit , Uttarakhand Pejyal Nigam, P.G. College Road , Lohaghat (Champawat) 262524 , on behalf of Chairman Uttarakhand Pejyal Nigam invites item rate tender on e-Government procurement System (e-GPS) portal i.e.- <http://www.uktenders.gov.in> for following works:-
Sl. No Name of Work Estimated Cost of work Earnest Money Cost of tender document Tender/ Rates validity period Work Completion period Contractors' Registration
1 CONSTRUCTION OF TRANSIT HOSTEL FOR 12 MEDICAL OFFICERS AT DISTRICT HOSPITAL CHAMPAWAT DISTT- CHAMPAWAT ₹ 210.00 Lacs Rs 4.20 Lacs Rs 2000/- + GST @18% (Rs 360)- Total = Rs 2360/- 4 month 12 month "A" Class (Building works)
2 CONSTRUCTION OF TRANSIT HOSTEL FOR 08 MEDICAL OFFICERS AT C.H.C.PATI DISTT- CHAMPAWAT ₹ 170.00 Lacs Rs 3.40 Lacs Rs 1000/- + GST @18% (Rs 180)- Total = Rs 1180/- 4 month 12 month "A" Class (Building works)
The Tender form and other details can be downloaded from above portal from 28.01.2019 at 17:00 hrs to 12.02.2019 at 17:00 hrs Other details / information can be seen in tender form/ E-portal or obtained from office / phone no. 05965-234152 of Office of tender inviting authority .
(Sanjeev Verma) Project Manager.

There will be jobs...

...only if we change our beehive thinking and focus on making specific, systemic changes



Joblessness is like an albatross around our necks, noticeable and mentionable, but a drag that nobody has an idea of how to deal with. Even in poll season, none of the political parties has articulated specifics of a rehabilitation plan despite knowing that a manifesto of redemption would work with the masses. Perhaps, the political class, guilty of having created the mess in the first place, would not like to acknowledge their shortness of vision or the lack of it. Perhaps, they do not want to commit, knowing the anger non-fulfilment stokes. Or perhaps, by

letting the problem fester they have a better chance of fomenting political unrest. But cold statistics keep knocking at our door and the latest to hit us comes from Maharashtra, where 7,000 people, mostly college graduates, applied for 13 waiter jobs at the secretariat canteen, a job that requires candidates to be educated up to Class IV. And if that isn't a measure of desperation, consider that in a recruitment drive by Indian Railways, nearly 19 million people from across the country applied for 63,000 vacant posts! With no credible figures on unemployment being put out by the NDA government, which had promised to create two crore jobs per year ever since it took over the reins, we have the Centre for Monitoring of Indian Economy figures quantifying joblessness as nearly seven per cent despite GDP growth. Job elasticity is simply not there though the government is now desperately seeking cover in Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) figures of increased subscriptions. However, we must remember that much of that has to do with migration of labour from informal to formal sectors, reorganisation of the labour market and may not have anything to do with net job creation at all. The time for complaints and justification is over and we have to pursue a recuperative vision. Keeping to the flavour of popular parlance, *rozgari* cannot be milked as a poll plank till we see some *kaamdari* in right earnest.

India's unemployment challenge is more serious compared to others because of its large productive youth population, usually considered a demographic dividend but in the absence of jobs could very well become a demographic disaster instead. Yes, there is lack of growth in the industrial sector and in an automated scenario, that cannot be readily relied upon. Given the increased digitisation of operations, new jobs have to be reliant on the services sector while insular global trade policies mean that we must ramp up domestic demand. Medium-scale enterprises can emerge as the sunshine sector in terms of job absorption capacity while education, healthcare and tourism will have to be primed given their dominant service orientation. For all initiatives like Skill India, there must be an industry-aided skill requirement map so that the problem of overqualification, as evidenced by the latest job rush queues in Maharashtra, does not dash hopes. Besides, there must be a provision for career-long skill upgradation given that the economic paradigm can change due to technological breakthroughs and fluidity of the economy. Yes, use of AI may kill some traditional jobs but as seen with the IT revolution, it can also encourage an allied layer of human services and talent. Surely no change can be guaranteed overnight. That's why an integrated systems thinking is necessary to factor in future imperatives beforehand to ensure flexibility and adaptability. Albert Einstein had once said, "We cannot solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." We need to not only think out of the box but be ready to jump out of it.

Virat dominance

The cricketer's kind of achievements comes only once in a while to deck up the gentleman's game



After inspiring India to its first ever Test series triumph and the maiden bilateral ODI series win in Australia, Indian skipper Virat Kohli added another milestone in his list of achievements on the 22 yards of cricket glory. Kohli was in ravishing form throughout in 2018 amassing 1,322 runs in 13 Tests at an average of 55.08 with five hundreds while in 14 ODIs, he compiled 1,202 runs at an astonishing average of 133.55 with six hundred-plus scores. This was the second year on a trot that the modern-day great of the game has scored more

than a 1,000 runs in a calendar year in both Test and ODI formats. However, in comparison to previous years, the stupendous run of 2018 rates as a great record because out of the 13 Tests he featured in, 11 were in tough overseas conditions of South Africa, England and Australia. Often criticised as a flat track bully because a majority of his big scores has come on the Indian subcontinent, Virat demolished the jinx of poor performance in England and despite India suffering a humiliating defeat of 1-4 in five-match series last summer, he emerged as the highest run scorer with 593 runs in 10 innings, consisting of two tons and three 50-plus scores. In South Africa in the three-match series, he was the combined highest run scorer with 286 runs in six innings. And in the year-end series Down Under, though Cheteshwar Pujara and the Indian pace attack were the highlights of India's historic triumph, it was skipper Kohli who stood tall against the on-fire Australian attack in tough Perth conditions and scored centuries to keep India in the game. And if he was not given out controversially at the slips, the situation could have been vastly different.

Not only in the five-day format of the game, the talismanic skipper, who is now just 10 short of Sachin Tendulkar's record of most hundreds in ODI cricket, was in a completely different zone in the limited overs format. He started his campaign against South Africa in their home ground and amassed 558 runs in just six innings at an astonishing average of 186.00 and a strike rate of 99.47, which was a fair indication that he doesn't play too many dot balls. During the series, he scored three centuries and one 50-plus score and successfully led India to the 5-1 win in the six-match series. And after opting out of the Nidhas Trophy and returning in the England series, he was only second behind England's Joe Root with 191 runs and two half-centuries in three games. Then again after missing Asia Cup in the United Arab Emirates, he returned to lead the Men in Blue in the home series against West Indies and scored three back to back hundreds in the first three matches, topping the chart of highest run scorer with 453 runs in five matches at an average of 151. While in between these two formats, he featured in 10 Twenty 20 games, three each in three overseas tours of the team and one against Ireland. His unbeaten 61 in the final T20 at Sydney helped India chase down 165 runs and level series 1-1. Though India wasn't able to win the Test series in England and South Africa, it was Virat's impressive leadership that took his side close in most of the games. If any other batsman had stepped in to help Virat, the results could have been different.

No closure for Netaji

It's unfortunate that the man, who led India towards its freedom, was lost when India woke up to Independence. Till date only theories exist about his death



KINGSHUK NAG

When Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's death in an air crash in Taipei on August 18, 1945, was announced, the British Government suspected that this was a cover for his escape to the Soviet Union. Their suspicions were confirmed a few months later when transmitters in Calcutta's Governor's House caught three broadcasts on shortwave band 31 by Netaji between December 26, 1945, and February 1946. The broadcasts showed that he was alive: Netaji said that he was under the "shelter of great world powers" and his utterances revealed that he was aware "my men are being tried at the Red Fort."

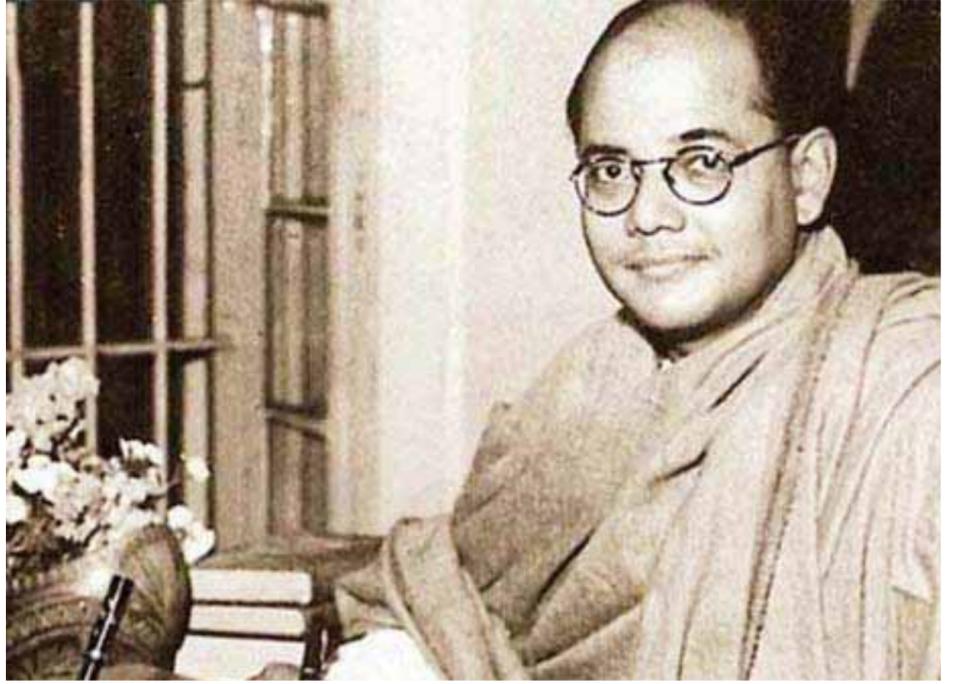
Subhas Chandra Bose promised to come to India and sit on judgement on "those trying my men at the Red Fort." He also said that the back of British imperialism had been broken and that the British could concede Independence to India in two years. Copies of these transmissions have now been made public after the declassification of records pertaining to Netaji in 2015.

Due to inferior technology in those times, transmissions never reached the ears of millions of Indians for whom they were meant, but the British masters were definitely alarmed on hearing them. The alarm spread to the Congress circles as well. Found among the records was a letter from Khurshed Naoroji, one of the Secretaries of Mahatma Gandhi to Louis Fischer (on June 22 1946). It read: "At the heart, the Indian Army is sympathetic to the Indian National Army (INA). If Bose comes with the help of Russians, neither Gandhiji nor Jawaharlal Nehru or the Congress will be able to reason with the country."

That Netaji was looming large on the British horizon was clear from the fact that on October 25, 1945, the then British Prime Minister chaired a Cabinet meeting for finalisation of a policy towards Bose, based on a confidential note on the subject from Lord Wavell, the then Viceroy of India.

Incidentally, the file also mentioned that Lord Mountbatten, who was the British Supreme Allied Commander for South East Asia Command, received a dispatch from the British directorate of military intelligence that said: "When Bose was preparing to leave Burma by plane, the Chinese intercepted a message from the Japanese, asking him to remain in Burma. Bose subsequently escaped to Thailand."

The file also mentioned that the case in support of Netaji's death in an air crash was based on evidence provided by Col Habibur Rahman and Japanese doctor T Yoshimi. But Habibur Rahman was "not willing to come out with the truth" and



there were a multitude of discrepancies in his version. Obviously, the British did not believe that Netaji had died in any air crash.

The British obsession with Netaji was natural in view of the INA, whose wartime activities had given a new dimension to the Indian freedom struggle. The INA had taken on the British Indian Army in the North-East during the World War II. Due to censorship in those parts (as a result of inner line restrictions), news had not been covered in mainland India and people did not know about the exploits of the INA (although they had lost the war).

Fresh from the victory in World War II, the British thought they would teach a lesson to the INA soldiers — like they had to the soldiers of the first war of Independence. They selected three soldiers — Hindu, Muslim and a Sikh — for trial for waging war against the King Emperor. This, they averred, would be a lesson to all Indians.

This policy had worked in 1857, when the last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, was tried in the Red Fort and deposed to Rangoon. But clearly, things had changed. The trial of the INA officers brought out before Indians the brave exploits of the INA. The British had thought pub-

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THAT NETAJI WAS LOOMING LARGE ON THE BRITISH HORIZON WAS CLEAR FROM THE FACT THAT ON OCTOBER 25, 1945, THE THEN BRITISH PRIME MINISTER CHAIRED A CABINET MEETING FOR FINALISATION OF A POLICY TOWARDS BOSE, BASED ON A CONFIDENTIAL NOTE ON THE SUBJECT FROM LORD WAVELL, THE THEN VICEROY OF INDIA
 ”

licity of INA activities would lead to their being hated by the Indian public. They were wrong; as Indians began to hear about the activities of the INA, their chests began to swell in pride.

Our men in the Indian Army also became restive and Naval ratings mutinied. There was also trouble among Army ranks in Jabalpur. It was clear that the colonialists, who had used the Indian Army to control India, would not be able to do so any longer as the INA had showed the Indian army men a new way of reclaiming their country.

Lt General S K Sinha, one of the most celebrated officers of the Indian Army, who also became Governor of Jammu & Kashmir and Assam after retirement, was a young Captain in August 1946 posted to the Military Operations Directorate (MOD) to replace English officers. Shortly before his death, Gen Sinha wrote in an English newspaper on February 16, 2016, that while going through the files left by his predecessor, he found a report from Major General O'Brien of Military Intelligence that raised serious doubts about the continued loyalty of thousands of emergency commissioned officers of the Army, who had been recruited in the World War II period and wanted to keep a

watch on them. More importantly, Sinha found plans for Operation Gondola, by which 43,000 British civilians would be escorted out of the country if the need arose. Obviously, the British were planning for an eventually averring trouble.

Although the British had originally planned to leave India in September 1948, they quit earlier on August 15, 1947, to avert trouble in the form of an uprising. The British were keen on a peaceful exit to keep its empire in other parts of the globe stable. If they were to be kicked out violently from India, their colonies elsewhere would be in threat.

Unfortunately, the Congress leadership, led by Jawaharlal Nehru, collaborated with the last Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, to allow this design that led to the Partition of India along with its freedom. What happened to Netaji one does not know.

Probably, he was packed by Stalin to the Gulag Archipelago; although some say he made his way to India as a mendicant Gumnami Baba. But when India woke up to freedom, the man, who made this possible, had been lost. An unsavoury fact at that.

(The writer is a senior journalist and an author)

SOUNDBITE

Sometimes judiciary has overstepped without referring to any particular case. It is not fair criticism that judiciary has overreached.



Justice (retired) —Madan B Lokur

Indians will not tolerate an atmosphere of coercion, intimidation and bullying. General elections may bring some change.



Historian —Rajmohan Gandhi

I was very close to being a part of a film, which finally did not happen. Not because of me though. Let's see, God has better plans.



Actor —Sushmita Sen

GDP is a fancy figure and at times it can be misleading as one needs to see where all a 7.5 per cent growth figure translates into.



Madhya Pradesh CM —Kamal Nath

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Citizen activists

Sir — Judicial scrutiny will likely render the 10 per cent reservation for the economically weaker sections null and void. However, removing the age and attempts barrier will go a long way in providing equal opportunity at the outset without affecting the status quo. In a highly competitive atmosphere, this can go a long way in ensuring that nobody is left out for want of chance and everybody gets to have equal access to job opportunities.

Anoop Hosmath Mysuru

Ability of a leader

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Didi's headline act" (January 21). The prime objective of Opposition parties, especially West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, appears to be to defeat the BJP and Prime Minister Modi in particular. It is an undisputed fact that regional parties have no specific policy, programme or an ideology for the development of the nation. Even if the mahagathbandhan is voted to power, the selection of

More questions about L'affaire Rafale

This refers to the article, "Demystifying the Rafale" (January 20) by Pathikrit Payne. The surmise of the article seemed to be based upon contract negotiations with the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, the only Indian Offset Partner (IOP) in the reckoning then, which ceased to make headway owing to "refusal by Dassault to guarantee quality of production if the jets were to be built by HAL in India", and also the refusal by Dassault to accept "the humongous man-hour quoted by HAL (2.7 times more than what Dassault needed to make a Rafale) for the deal." To recall, the Defence Offset Guidelines of Defence Procurement Procedure, 2013, had bestowed the Original Equipment Manufacturer unfettered freedom to select its IOP in any defence deal. The argument that unresolved issues with the "recalcitrant" HAL proved to be the nemesis of the earlier deal should be taken with a pinch of salt. And costing being a dicey affair, often, a conclusion based on numbers could be wide off the mark. One has reason to believe that Dassault had been placing hurdles deliberately to prevent the well-established Public Sector Undertaking from playing an active role in the deal.



The question is: Would Dassault have stayed as the L1 bidder even after the price was revised vertically skywards? In the early days of the BJP's tenure, in July 2014, in response to a request by its Finance Minister, the Eurofighter Consortium had offered to cut the 'total package price' by 20 per cent. Perhaps, an evaluation of the prices and benefits afresh in the changed context would have boosted national security even better and also accrued the concomitant economic benefits. Such unanswered questions about the 'L'affaire Rafale' are many.

Haridasan Rajan, Kozhikode

the Prime Minister will, undoubtedly, be an insurmountable problem for them. The winning of a majority of MPs in the Lok Sabha poll by any party may not be a criteria to decide who will clinch the top post. Regional parties will ultimately look for a remarkable personality, who enjoys popularity and has adroit administrative

abilities. Except for Banerjee, no leader has the ability, skill and dexterity to be the Prime Minister. But Banerjee is temperamentally emotional and not fundamentally rational. Her tempestuous attitude and outlook may not appeal to all regional parties.

Nimai Charan Swain Bhubaneswar

Celluloid falsehood

Sir — Making biographical films on politicians can hardly portray an impartial picture of their lives. For personal benefits, entertainment and commercial objectives, the real story gets twisted and hard realities are

ignored. Such films ought to be included in the category of fiction. However, hoi polloi can be attracted by the person in focus, and such cinema can be misleading, even controversial if not defamatory. Perhaps this is a marketing technique. Films on personalities, who are still around, must be avoided.

M Kumar Via email

No turning back

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Who let the cranks out?" (January 23). In an age of modern scientific technology and new inventions, it is surprising that people are crying foul over the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) in elections. India should not in any way get back to Stone Age practices just because a few modern scientific devices are faulty. EVMs have come here to stay and have saved us from the Herculean task of manual counting.

Srinivas Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Back in the cauldron

The weakening of American resolve and toughening of the Taliban's posture would turn Afghanistan into a medieval prison that it once was



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

Afghan Taliban's spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, refuted, on January 19, reports in Pakistani media that the organisation had agreed to talks in Islamabad with Zalmay Khalilzad, the US special representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation. This is not surprising; nor is the statement on the same day by a Taliban leader who wanted to remain anonymous, "We have rejected Pakistan's approach and suggestion. We are clear that Kabul's puppet regime is not in a position to fulfill our demands."

A bit of background needs to be recalled in respect of the issue of talks. In July, 2018, the Trump administration began seeking direct negotiations with the Taliban. Since then, Khalilzad has held at least three rounds of talks with the latter, the last one being in Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates, in December, 2018, in the presence of representatives from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. These, of course, were not formal peace talks to end the 17-year-old war in Afghanistan but rather exploratory talks leading to formal talks.

The future of these exploratory talks now hangs in the balance. Two questions arise here. What are the chances of these being resumed? What would happen if they are not? According to the Taliban leader, who sought anonymity, talks with the US could resume only if the latter assured that just three issues would be discussed — a US withdrawal from Afghanistan, an exchange of prisoners and the lifting of the ban on the movement of Taliban leaders.

They are unlikely to change their stand. Their strategy has been to drag on the war and tire out the US to the point where Washington is prepared to leave on any terms. They have fought — albeit with sanctuary and massive support from Pakistan — the US and their allies and the fledgling Afghan military and police, for over 17 years. They have expanded the territory under their control. According to a report by the US Government's leading oversight authority, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, the Afghan Government controlled, as of January 31, 2018, 229 (56.3 per cent) of the country's 407 districts, Taliban 59 (14.5 per cent) and 119 (29.2 per cent) were contested, controlled neither by the Government nor the Taliban.

A report in *The New York Times* of May 9, 2018, however, said that 65 and 35 per cent of Afghanistan's territory respectively were under Government and Taliban control or influence. According to an *Associated Press* report on December 21, 2018, half of Afghanistan was under Taliban control or influence. As a result, the US, which has spent over \$900 billion, and had over 2,400 of its soldiers killed since the launch of its post-9/11 offensive against the Taliban in 2001, is showing an increasing desperation to leave. Its reaching out for talks with the Taliban in July, 2018, marked a significant concession to the latter who had said that they would first discuss peace with the Americans alone, while Washington had insisted on talks with the Afghan Government's participation.

There have been other developments indicating a weakening of American resolve. One of these is the Trump administration's decision, announced on December 20, 2018, to withdraw 7,000 troops from Afghanistan by this summer. The result has been a toughening of the Taliban's posture, an example of which was their threat, delivered on January 15, that they would call off peace talks with the US if the latter's troops were not pulled out of Afghanistan. The threat came as Khalilzad and the delegation led by him arrived in Kabul for talks with the Government headed by President Ashraf Ghani.

Clearly, the Taliban will negotiate only on their terms. Pakistan's Government, its public statements notwithstanding, is not going to try to push them to accepting American terms because it wants to control Afghanistan through them. As for the US, its growing desperation may lead it to a final outcome which leaves the Afghan Government and its forces to fend for themselves.

The chances of their being able to do so are bleak. Lt-Gen Kenneth F McKenzie, set to become the commander of the US Central Command, told the US Congress during his confirmation hearings in December, 2018, that the Afghan Army would dissolve without American support. Coming in the wake of several major attacks like the one on Ghazni in August, 2018, Monday's one on a military installation in Maidan Wardak province, which reportedly killed over 100 personnel of the National Directorate of Security (NDS), Afghanistan's main intelligence agency, indicate that he may not have been wrong.

What would happen if the Taliban take over Afghanistan? The country would return to the medieval prison that it was — with its women reduced to domestic slavery — during their rule between 1996 and 2001. Islamist fundamentalism, and the terrorism spawned by it, would receive a massive boost worldwide. Europe would be a bigger target than now. And the US should remember what President Obama said while announcing his new Af-Pak policy on March 27, 2009, "If the Afghan Government falls to the Taliban — or allows the Al-Qaeda to go unchallenged — that country will again be a base for terrorists who want to kill as many of us as they possibly can."

(The writer is Consultant Editor, *The Pioneer*, and an author)

I HAVE FULL FAITH THAT THEY (PRIYANKA AND SCINDIA) WILL WORK TOGETHER AND WHAT UTTAR PRADESH NEEDS, THE CONGRESS WILL FULFIL THEM.

—CONGRESS PRESIDENT RAHUL GANDHI

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



THIS WAS EXPECTED. TO PROMOTE DYNASTY IS WHAT CONGRESS IS ALL ABOUT. PRIYANKA'S APPOINTMENT SHOWS RAHUL'S FAILURE.

—BJP SPOKESPERSON SAMBIT PATRA

Time's up, say #NeverAgain

Just as #MeToo, fuelled by the extraordinary courage and conviction of women, became a global force to reckon with, there is a need for a movement against domestic violence and abuse



ANU PESHAWARIA

There can hardly be a more opportune time than now, in the midst of a culturally, politically and economically powerful 'MeToo' movement across the world, to revisit the larger cause of domestic violence and abuse. There is an urgent need for an equally powerful social media-driven movement against it like #NeverAgain. As an Attorney with long years of passionate advocacy of this important socio-cultural and legal issue, this writer has been particularly focussed on issues of domestic violence and abuse in the diasporic Indian/South Asian families in the US. Anecdotal experience suggests that the problem exists in a significant way among the large expatriate Indian population around the world as well but does not often get the attention it so urgently demands.

Just as #MeToo, fuelled by extraordinary courage and conviction of women, who were silenced and oppressed for decades, as well as aided by the power and reach of social media, has become a global force to reckon with, there is a need for a scaleable movement on this issue. One is conscious that South Asian women, trapped in violent and abusive domestic situations, may find it hard to make their case on social media but it is a tool that ought to be employed to network, put abusive spouses and families on immediate notice and end it once and for all.

The case of Indian and South Asian women, who marry Indian/South Asian men living in the US and end up in violent or abusive domestic situations, is unique for several reasons. Perhaps the most important one is that many of them are either completely unprepared or ill-prepared to deal with it because they find themselves in a wholly new socio-cultural milieu in a country some 10,000 miles away from India and other South Asian nations. Many fall into such relationships even before they have had the time to familiarise themselves with their immediate surroundings, let alone social and legal services being available to them.

Overarching their rather harrowing lives is the fear of social stigma. More often than not, they are told stories of how a wonderful life awaits them in America, the world's richest country, which would be a dramatic improvement for them, compared to what they experience in India. With this as the backdrop, to find oneself in an abusive relationship so far away from familiar surroundings, makes things much harder for them. The consequence is that many of them choose to endure abuse rather than upset the rhythm of their lives.

This writer's extensive engagement with the women trapped in abusive relationships reveals that one common feeling among them is one of utter helplessness, exacerbated by what society back home might say about their failure to make their marriages work. The writer also found that a majority of these women would not only muster enough courage to speak out but even take legal action if they had a helping hand either from individual attorneys like the writer herself or legal aid groups.

Although there have been no national or state-wide studies of Indian/South Asian women and domestic violence in the US, there is reason to believe that this is a growing problem. Indian Americans are a reasonably large group of people. According to the US Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey, there are 3,982,398 multi-race, multi-ethnic and single-race Asian Indians, of which 3,699,957 are single race. While Indian Americans barely constitute about one per cent of the US population, because of their broad economic success, they are a force to reckon with far beyond their numbers. In terms of domestic and sexual violence among South Asian commu-



nities, a fact sheet released by the Asian Pacific Institute on gender-based violence is quite instructive. Here are some of their findings:

Domestic violence:

- In a study of 208 South Asian women recruited through community outreach in the Greater Boston area, 21 per cent reported having experienced physical and/or sexual abuse at the hands of their intimate partner; 15 per cent reported such experience during the previous year. (*Intimate partner violence associated with poor health outcomes in US South Asian women*).

- In a face-to-face interview study of 1,577 Asians recruited from Asian organisations and gathering places in the greater Houston area in Texas, 20 per cent of the Indian respondents (154 male and female) reported experiencing at least one form of intimate partner violence based on the eight-item Conflict Tactics Scale, ranging from "thrown objects at the respondent" to "used a knife or gun on the respondent" during the previous year. (*A prevalence study on partner abuse in six Asian American ethnic groups in the USA*)

- A study on life course experiences of intimate partner violence and help-seeking (lifecourse IPV and help-seeking study), which assessed experiences of IPV among 56 Indian and Pakistani abused women (and 87 Filipina women) aged 18-60 recruited via various community outreach methods in the San Francisco Bay Area, found that 96 per cent of Indian and Pakistani victims reported having experienced physical violence by an intimate partner. About 50 per cent of Indian and Pakistani victims reported having experienced stalking by an intimate partner. And 64 per cent of Indian and Pakistani victims reported having experienced sexual violence by an intimate partner. Indian and Pakistani victims born in the US, or those who had immigrated to America pre-adolescence (1.5+ generations), were more likely to experience all three forms of IPV — physical violence, sexual assault and stalking, compared to those born outside the US and those who immigrated post-adolescence. Younger Indian and Pakistani victims were more likely to experience stalking by intimate partners compared to their older counterparts. (*Lifecourse Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence and Help-Seeking among Filipina, Indian, and Pakistani Women: Implications for Justice System Responses*).

- A study of 160 South Asian women (who were married or in a heterosexual relationship), recruited through community outreach methods such as flyers, snowball sampling and referrals in

Greater Boston (*Raj and Silverman Study*), found that 42 per cent of the participants reported that they had been physically and/or sexually abused in some way by their current male partners in their lifetime; 36.9 per cent reported having been victimised in the past year. Around 30 per cent reported having experienced partners' physical abuse and 18.8 per cent reported having experienced partners' sexual abuse. About 65.2 per cent of the women reporting physical abuse also reported sexual abuse. Sixteen per cent reported injury or the need for medical services as a result of a partner's violence. Women, who reported intimate partner violence, were more likely than those who did not report violence to indicate that they had experienced "poor physical health in seven or more of the last 30 days" (20 per cent vs seven per cent), "depression [in] seven or more of the last 30 days" (32 per cent vs 10 per cent), "anxiety [in] seven or more of the last 30 days" (34 per cent vs 20 per cent) and "suicidal ideation during the last year" (16 per cent vs three per cent). No significant difference was found in the prevalence of domestic violence between arranged marriages and non-arranged marriages. (*Intimate partner violence against South Asian women in greater Boston*)

Abuse by in-laws

- Of a convenience sample of 169 South Asian women, who were married at the time of the survey, six per cent reported having experienced emotional abuse by in-laws. The proportion of women, who reported emotional abuse by in-laws, was higher among those reporting partners' violence in their current relationship (15 per cent) than those who did not report such violence (three per cent). (Victims of intimate partner violence more likely to report abuse by in-laws).

- In a telephonic interview survey of a random sample of Gujarati adults aged between 18 and 64 years, seven per cent of the female respondents reported that in-laws had called them names. (*The Shanti Project, Baseline Community-Wide Survey. Unpublished raw data*).

Domestic violence-related homicide

- A report on 160 US domestic violence related homicides in Asian families based on newspaper clippings and information from advocates for a six-year period from 2000-2005 found that 30 of 158 (19 per cent) victims with known ethnicities were South Asian. And 32 of 122 (26 per cent) perpetrators with known ethnicities were South Asian. (*Shattered Lives: Homicides, Domestic Violence and Asian Families*).

Seeking help

- The Raj and Silverman Study found that 11 per cent of South Asian women reporting intimate partner violence indicated receiving counseling support services for domestic abuse. Only three per cent of the abused South Asian women in the study ever obtained a restraining order against an abusive partner. This rate is substantially lower than that reported in a study of women in Massachusetts, in which over 33 per cent of the women, who reported intimate partner violence in the past five years, obtained a restraining order.

Seeking help from family members

- In a study of 62 battered women (20 African American, 22 Hispanic, and 20 South Asian), South Asian women were more likely to seek help from family members. South Asian women were significantly more likely to be advised by family members "to stay in the marriage" than other groups of women. (*Social support and disclosure of abuse: Comparing South Asian, African American, and Hispanic battered women*).

According to estimates, two out of five South Asian women report domestic violence, which is much higher than the general US population (28 per cent according to UNICEF, 2000). These statistics tell only a fraction of the story. They tell you how many women had the courage to report abuse or call for help. How many more are silent, terrorised, obedient to the abuser and isolated in an abusive situation we do not know. The numbers of those, who do not call for help, too are not known because they do not recognise the situation is abusive or they do not know their legal rights. All we know is that domestic violence in South Asian community "is seriously under-reported because we have seen many women who never get as far as the formal institutions" (Preisser, 1999).

However, because of the state of the current law, both in terms of immigration policy and in terms of where we are with international agreements between the US and India, in too many cases this writer's hands are tied. Much more should be done than simply answering their calls and do what can be done to counsel, educate and help them negotiate laws that too often keep them in unhealthy situations or separate them from their own children. Ultimately, the laws need to accommodate these special cases. The awareness must spread to citizens of the US so that we can all make a concerted effort to relieve the suffering of some of our most vulnerable residents.

(The writer is Attorney at Law, Supreme Court of the United States of America)

Paradise lost: India's biodiversity is in crisis

While developed nations are bending over backwards to usher in biodiversity into urban spaces, India is tracking backwards and losing its green cover. The Western Ghats are symbolic of the country's pristine hotspots and must not be allowed to wither away



KOTA SRIRAJ

Population pressures, hunger for land and prime real estate have all made many a nature hotspot disappear over the last decade. These permanent losses of biodiversity hotspots would seem insignificant when compared to the rather disturbing findings of a latest study published in the *Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine*. The study found that unplanned developmental activities and land use are reducing the ever-green forest cover and perennial streams in the central region of the Western Ghats in India.

While other developed nations in the world are bending over backwards to usher in biodiversity into

their cities and urban spaces, India is tracking backwards and losing its green cover and natural sanctuaries for its flora and fauna. The Western Ghats, a biodiversity hotspot known for its rich ecology, natural forest systems and perennial rivers, are slowly but steadily falling prey to large-scale human activities that are now beginning to erode the ecosystem of this central region of the country.

The study sharply focusses on the Kali river that originates in Uttara Kannada district in Karnataka and joins the Arabian Sea. The river is as old as the Western Ghats but over the years, it has been dammed at six locations. As a result, 325 species of flora and 190 species of fauna are at immediate risk of extinction. Remote sensing data formed the basis of the study and showed how the silent destruction of one of nature's best known habitats is taking place systematically. The data specifically shows that between 1973

and 2016, forest cover reduced from 85 per cent to 55 per cent.

Additionally, land use pattern in the region also underwent changes during 1980-2000 due to developmental projects such as the building of dams on the river Kali, Kaiga nuclear plant and Dandeli paper mill. The paper mill establishment itself led to large-scale conversion of forests to crops. These developments are not only sad but also irreversible. The study also noted that forests had shrunk thanks to the large water reservoirs, which had been constructed at the expense of forest cover.

The lush environs of the Western Ghats came to be replaced with exceedingly dry and dusty atmosphere. This mainly due to changes in water usage. Eco-hydrological footprint is a measure of how the ecology of a region responds to changes in water cycle and water usage. This can be measured by assessing the ratio of available water and water lost

due to usage and evaporation. Around 2,309 million cubic metres of water is required to meet demands of society and livestock in the region, while around 4,700 million cubic metres are required to maintain ecosystems and the aquatic life.

An analysis in the report also showed that although the Kali river has sufficient water supply and perennial streams in the Ghats and coastal area, regions that lie in plain lands with a higher degree of agriculture and cultivation, have intermittent and seasonal flow. This is leading to water scarcity for four to nine months in a year.

Whereas those areas, which have greater than 70 per cent of forest cover, are not experiencing any type of water scarcity. This shows the strong correlation between ecology and hydrology in the backdrop of land use. The unfortunate part is that in the process of clearing the forests for developmental activities, India is losing native

species of vegetation, which play a pivotal role in enhancing the water retention capability of the catchment area.

This levelling of the forests for dams and other development activities maybe touted as development but it is a skewed progress at best since it ensures the best interests of only a certain section of society. Indigenous population or the local people are paying a steep price as they not only lose the habitat but also their income and livelihood.

According to experts, villagers in the vicinity of native forests earn ₹1.54 lakh per acre per year, compared to ₹32,000 in villages with stream catchments experiencing deforestation. This confirms the vital role of native forests in sustaining water and people's livelihood.

The study also revealed that management practices adopted by engineers also contributed to the erosion of water retention capability in the river catchment with severe water

scarcity. Keeping these aspects in mind and for the best interests of the Western Ghats, a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) recognised World Heritage Site, the Government agencies must establish better management and conservation strategies to maintain the forest cover and take immediate measures to preserve the exclusivity of the flora and fauna of the region.

The role that the National Green Tribunal (NGT) can play to preserve the Western Ghats cannot be emphasised enough. Although it has already put in place many measures, in the light of the recent report, gaps in the efforts to conserve Western Ghats are becoming apparent. The NGT must take cognisance of the same and take suitable action. Western Ghats are symbolic of India's pristine biodiversity and must not be allowed to wither away.

(The writer is an environmental journalist)



FOREIGN EYE



REHAUL THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Political interference permeates every aspect of Government schools — from teaching to administration. Politicians in Sri Lanka are pampered and praised, they are cosseted, watched, admired and flattered beyond belief. Many are stupid enough to believe all this adulation that our people seem stupid enough to give! They must be told to keep out of schools and universities (Daily Mirror editorial)

Sensex slumps 336 points

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex on Wednesday tumbled over 336 points to end at 36,108 on emergence of intense selling towards the fag-end mainly in FMCG, financial and IT stocks, while renewed concerns over US-China trade tariff further jolted investors' sentiment.

Similarly, the NSE Nifty slumped over 91 points to close at 10,831.

In the Sensex pack, ITC Ltd emerged as the biggest loser with its shares plunging 4.16% after the company's quarterly results failed to entice investors.

Other top losers on the index were PowerGrid, Infosys, Mahindra and Mahindra and NTPC — falling as much as 1.85%.

Traders said market remained range-bound for the better part of the session as investors kept their exposure at a low ebb due to weak global cues. Towards the fag-end, the selling pressure gathered momentum after European markets opened in the negative zone.

However, some recovery in rupee amid slide in global crude brought some respite for domestic bourses that were otherwise appeared facing headwinds.

Global shares traded on a mixed note with a negative bias due to concerns over the state of ongoing US-China trade

negotiations, amid reports that the White House has cancelled a trade planning meeting with Beijing this week.

"Market continued to trade on the downside as absence of major upside from the quarter earnings failed to give direction. Investors are taking a cautious approach given their focus on global headwinds and upcoming general election. While FII's are sellers in the market, expectation of slow pace in US FED rate hike and possibility of rate cut in India will ease liquidity crunch in the market," said Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services Ltd.

The 30-share BSE Sensex opened on a firm note at 36,494.12 and advanced to a high of 36,521.47. However, it succumbed to a late-session sell-off and finally ended at 36,108.75, down by 336.17 points, or 0.92%. The gauge had lost 134.32 points in the previous session. The NSE Nifty too tumbled 91.25 points, or 0.84%, to close at 10,831.50 after moving between 10,811.95 and 10,944.75.

Meanwhile, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) sold shares worth a net ₹78.53 crore on Tuesday, while domestic institutional investors (DIIs) sold shares worth ₹84.15 crore, provisional data showed.

Other than ITC, other laggards include PowerGrid, Infosys, M&M, NTPC, SBI, HDFC, Kotak Bank, HDFC Bank, TCS, Hero MotoCorp,

Coal India, ONGC, RIL, Asian Paint, IndusInd Bank, ICICI Bank, Maruti Suzuki, Bajaj Auto, Tata Motors, Bharti Airtel and Axis Bank.

Among the winners, Sun Pharma continued to remain top performer, surging 3.04%, followed by Yes Bank at 2.71%.

Also, Tata Steel gained 1.53%, followed by HUL 0.90%, Bajaj Finance 0.75%, Vedanta Ltd 0.60%, HCL Tech 0.57%, and L&T 0.02%.

Sector-wise, the BSE metal FMCG index emerged worst performer by sinking 1.38%, followed by power 1.24%, IT 0.85%, PSU 0.85%, infrastructure 0.83%, auto 0.71%, bankex 0.68%, realty 0.66%, capital goods 0.37%, and oil & gas 0.03%.

While Metal index topped winner by surging 0.63%, healthcare gained 0.44%. In the broader markets, the mid-cap index and small-cap index fell up to 0.28%.

Globally, Japan's Nikkei fell 0.14%, Taiwan index fell 0.49%, Singapore declined 0.46%, and Hong Kong's Hang Seng shed 0.02%. Shanghai Composite Index, however, rose 0.05% in late morning deals. Japan's Nikkei also gained 0.04%.

The US Dow Jones Industrial Average ended 1.22% lower on Tuesday. European shares too were in negative zone in their early deals with Frankfurt's DAX falling 0.49% and Paris CAC 40 down 0.39%. London's FTSE fell 0.50%.

Maruti drives in all-new WagonR



Maruti Suzuki India Sr Executive Director (M&S) RS Kalsi, along with CEO and Managing Director Maruti Suzuki India Kenichi Ayukawa during the launch of new WagonR in New Delhi on Wednesday

New Delhi (PTI): The country's largest car maker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Wednesday launched an all-new version of its hatchback WagonR, priced between ₹4.19 lakh and ₹5.69 lakh (ex-showroom), as it looks to further strengthen its position in the compact hatchback segment. The new WagonR, which comes with a 1.2-litre petrol engine option along with another choice of 1-litre powertrain mated to manual as well as automatic gear shift transmission, will compete with the likes of Hyundai Santro and Tata Tiago. The one-litre manual versions of new WagonR are priced at ₹4.19 lakh and ₹4.69 lakh, while the automated gear shift trim is tagged at ₹5.16 lakh. The 1.2-litre variants are priced between ₹4.89 lakh and ₹5.69 lakh (all prices ex-showroom).

Tiago and Santro are priced between ₹3.9 lakh and ₹5.64 lakh. The new WagonR, which is based on Suzuki's fifth generation HEARTREC platform, is wider and longer than its outgoing version. It has led to improved interior space as well as boot capacity which has almost doubled up to 341 litres from the earlier avatar. The company said the use of high-tensile steel has improved the overall safety, rigidity and NVH (noise, vibration, and harshness) performance in the new offering which come with various safety features such as driver airbag, anti-lock braking system with electronic brakeforce distribution and front seat belts reminder, speed alert system and rear parking sensors.

ITC Q3 profit surges 4% to ₹3,209 cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Diversified group ITC on Wednesday reported 3.84% increase in standalone net profit at ₹3,209.07 crore in the December quarter 2018 helped by good performance in FMCG and agri businesses.

The company had posted a net profit of ₹3,090.20 crore in October-December quarter a year ago, ITC said in a BSE filing.

Gross revenue from sales was up 15.09% to ₹11,340.15 crore as against ₹9,852.74 crore in the year-ago period.

"Gross revenue for the quarter stood at ₹11,340.15 crore, representing a growth of 15.1% driven mainly by FMCG-others, agri business and paperboards, paper and packaging segment," said ITC in a statement.

In the third quarter of the previous fiscal, ITC had reported an exceptional income of ₹412.90 crore.

"Exceptional items in the previous period represent provisions for earlier years in respect of Tamil Nadu entry tax that were written back based on a favourable order of the Supreme Court," said ITC.

Total expenses of the Kolkata-based firm were at ₹7,446.46 crore, up 16.75% as against ₹6,377.90 crore in the December quarter 2017.

During the quarter, revenue from total FMCG business was up 10.31% to ₹8,274.36 crore as against ₹7,500.97 crore in the year-ago period. Revenue

INDIGO Q3 PROFIT FALLS 75% TO ₹191 CRORE

New Delhi: InterGlobe Aviation, parent of IndiGo, on Wednesday reported a 75% fall in profit after tax at ₹190.9 crore in the December quarter as high fuel prices and currency depreciation adversely impacted the bottomline. The airline had a profit after tax of ₹762 crore in the corresponding period of 2017-18. The carrier's total income rose over 28% to ₹8,229.4 crore in the three months ended December 2018. In the year-ago period, the same stood at ₹6,409 crore. IndiGo's co-founder and interim CEO Rahul Bhatia said the airline posted a profit of ₹1.9 billion in a continued difficult environment and have grown its fleet by one aircraft a week for a 33% capacity increase for the December quarter.

Vijaya Bank Q3 NET PROFIT SURGES 80% TO ₹143 CR

New Delhi: State-owned Vijaya Bank on Wednesday reported a 80.2% jump in its net profit to ₹143.38 crore for the December 2018 quarter. The public sector lender had posted a net profit of ₹79.56 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal. The bank's total income also rose to ₹4,106.42 crore during the period, compared with ₹3,450.81 crore a year ago, Vijaya Bank said in a regulatory filing. The bank's gross non-performing assets (NPAs) declined marginally to 6.14% against 6.17% in the same quarter of last fiscal. However, net NPAs rose to 4.08% during October-December 2018, compared with 3.99% in the year-ago period.

from cigarettes was at ₹5,073.38 crore, showing an increase of 9.59% from the year-ago period.

FMCG-others segment was also up 11.46% to ₹3,200.98 crore in October-December 2018 as against ₹2,871.78 crore in the year-ago period.

This was led by atta, snacks, premium cream biscuits and noodles in the branded packaged foods business, fragrance products and liquids (hand-wash and bodywash) in personal care products business and Classmate notebooks in education and stationery products business," said ITC. FMCG-others segment of ITC consists of branded packaged foods as

staples, snacks, meals, dairy and beverages, confections, apparel, education and stationery products, personal care products, safety matches and incense sticks.

ITC's hotel business was also up 11.72% to ₹451.86 crore during the quarter as compared to ₹404.44 crore in the corresponding period last fiscal.

Revenue from agribusiness segment was also up 25.72% to ₹1,924.61 crore as against ₹1,530.86 crore in the December quarter of the previous fiscal. Paperboards, paper and packaging segment was at ₹1,542.51 crore, up 20.54% from ₹1,279.60 crore earlier.

NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY50	10931.05	10944.80	10811.95	10831.50	-91.25
SUNPHARMA	417.70	434.40	411.65	430.40	11.45
YESBANK	194.50	199.50	193.65	197.25	5.05
TATASTEEL	457.00	467.85	457.00	463.10	6.55
WIPRO	348.65	355.80	348.00	351.00	4.50
ZEEL	424.50	439.80	423.80	430.30	5.05
BAJAJFINSV	6429.85	6528.00	6405.00	6505.00	69.45
TECHM	714.00	725.90	711.00	721.00	6.80
JSWSTEEL	278.00	284.90	277.20	280.45	2.45
INFRAEAT	278.00	281.40	274.80	279.75	2.10
HINDALCO	203.55	207.30	203.00	205.10	1.45
BPL	354.50	358.65	354.40	356.20	2.40
HINDUNILVR	1752.00	1784.05	1749.40	1760.55	10.35
VEDL	191.50	195.00	190.60	192.50	1.00
BAJFINANCE	2619.00	2653.00	2611.00	2633.05	11.15
CIPLA	510.00	511.70	507.10	509.95	1.90
HCLTECH	947.50	949.95	938.70	943.15	2.40
EICHERMOT	2007.00	2023.00	1999.10	2004.90	25.40
DREDDY	2639.85	2660.00	2630.00	2641.50	1.20
IOC	130.10	130.96	129.55	130.50	-0.35
LT	136.50	136.80	135.10	135.90	-0.45
UPL	674.00	782.15	759.85	762.85	-0.45
AXISBANK	659.50	667.00	658.60	659.85	-1.75
GAIL	334.50	336.50	330.55	332.00	-0.90
ULTRACEMCO	386.00	388.05	384.75	385.00	-10.50
MARUTI	7050.00	7132.25	7025.00	7044.00	-24.85
HINDPETRO	242.25	244.40	239.30	241.10	-0.90
BAJAJ-AUTO	2699.00	2699.00	2665.10	2677.95	-10.40
ICICIBANK	368.80	373.70	366.45	367.40	-1.65
ASIANPAINT	1429.00	1429.45	1390.00	1399.85	-7.10
TATAMOTORS	181.70	182.70	178.55	179.90	-0.95
BHARTIARTL	306.80	307.40	302.30	303.10	-1.75
ONGC	144.70	145.55	143.00	143.30	-1.05
INDUSINDBK	1497.15	1509.00	1486.20	1490.05	-11.50
RELIANCE	1233.30	1244.20	1222.00	1224.45	-10.70
COALINDIA	227.80	228.00	225.25	225.50	-2.20
HOMOTOCOS	2832.00	2851.45	2785.10	2794.35	-30.55
TCS	1901.00	1906.10	1870.00	1881.00	-20.90
HDFC	1981.80	1984.95	1951.30	1957.25	-22.15
POWERGRID	189.55	191.50	185.70	187.40	-2.20
NTPC	142.90	143.60	140.30	141.00	-0.90
HDFCBANK	2134.00	2135.85	2101.45	2106.95	-28.90
SBIN	298.45	299.25	285.50	286.20	-4.05
KOTAKBANK	1290.90	1298.90	1271.05	1272.05	-19.70
ADANIPORTS	390.00	392.00	383.60	384.50	-6.10
INFY	742.35	742.60	729.20	731.65	-13.70
M&M	708.50	709.75	693.60	694.10	-14.40
TITAN	807.40	807.40	797.60	797.00	-20.20
IBULHSGFIN	802.00	806.25	774.25	777.15	-22.50
GRASIM	805.60	806.50	777.00	780.50	-23.85
ITC	291.50	294.40	275.00	276.00	-13.75

NIFTY NEXT 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	27457.50	27479.35	27227.30	27264.05	-166.70
IDEA	33.70	34.50	33.30	34.50	1.00
OFSS	3665.00	3812.20	3655.55	3779.95	95.15
DMART	1357.90	1401.05	1346.30	1390.00	32.10
BRITANNIA	3177.00	3229.00	3161.05	3215.00	61.35
SUNTV	521.45	536.90	520.10	528.00	8.75
PETRONET	223.65	227.85	221.65	224.50	5.10
BANDHANBANK	409.00	419.60	409.00	414.05	5.50
MRF	6579.80	6628.95	6530.00	6590.00	69.40
ASHOKLEY	87.90	89.50	87.20	88.80	0.85
SHREECEM	15860.00	16638.50	15820.05	16070.00	152.45
PEL	2346.70	2375.00	2335.00	2356.60	17.45
SAIL	48.30	49.15	48.10	48.60	0.35
BIOCON	673.50	672.20	666.05	670.65	2.05
MARICO	376.00	378.25	370.65	376.60	1.05
COPAL	1304.05	1337.10	1302.65	1310.00	3.45
LUPIN	866.00	873.60	859.25	864.15	-1.30
L&FHT	137.00	138.35	135.50	136.60	-0.40
GODREJCP	795.00	798.00	785.90	790.00	-2.85
ACC	1436.35	1454.00	1425.00	1431.00	-5.35
NHPC	25.40	25.50	25.05	25.30	-0.10
OIL	170.50	171.60	169.10	169.80	-0.70
SBILIFE	623.00	628.90	612.20	617.00	-2.90
AUROPHARMA	792.00	793.40	780.35	784.15	-4.80
SIEMENS	1045.15	1053.65	1042.05	1043.00	-6.50
SIRTRANSFIN	1096.00	1107.00	1080.05	1089.25	-6.90
DABUR	433.35	436.05	428.65	430.30	-3.05
BOSCHLTD	19208.35	19277.95	19020.00	19053.90	-154.45
NMDC	90.60	91.40	89.65	89.80	-0.75
PGH	9961.05	10031.95	9905.00	9905.00	-82.95
INDIGO	1120.00	1126.00	1095.55	1111.00	-9.65
HINDZINC	260.70	262.00	258.00	258.00	-2.25
AMBIJACEM	213.00	215.55	211.50	211.90	-1.90
CADILAHC	346.00	346.00	340.70	341.30	-4.75
CONCOR	669.90	672.00	657.55	660.00	-9.50
ABB	1309.15	1312.80	1290.00	1290.00	-19.15
BEL	85.40	85.75	83.60	83.90	-1.25
DLF	180.40	180.85	176.20	177.10	-2.95
PIDILITIND	1160.60	1161.95	1128.50	1131.80	-21.00
LICHSGFIN	475.70	483.70	464.60	466.30	-8.90
GICRE	251.00	251.80	247.00	247.50	-4.75
NIACL	181.90	181.90	178.15	178.35	-3.45
ICICIGI	846.00	858.00	824.15	831.10	-16.50
BANKBARODA	114.00	114.70	111.05	111.40	-2.45
HAVELLS	721.00	721.05	691.00	693.55	-18.30
MCDOWELL-N	601.00	602.90	575.90	581.50	-15.70
BHEL	71.25	71.60	69.05	69.20	-2.00
HDFCLIFE	385.00	389.50	371.25	372.00	-11.85
MOTHERSUMI	162.30	162.30	156.85	157.40	-5.15
ABCAPITAL	90.85	91.85	86.60	87.75	-3.10
ICICIPRULI	330.00	337.00	301.20	306.35	

Thailand to hold first polls since coup on March 24

AFF ■ BANGKOK

Thailand will hold a general election on March 24, authorities said Wednesday, the first national poll since a 2014 coup knocked out the civilian government of Yingluck Shinawatra.

The military has since rewritten the constitution, muzzled all dissent and appointed junta allies across the bureaucracy in a bid to scratch the Shinawatra clan from the Thai political scene and embed its own influence in the country's future. "March 24 will be the election day," an Election Commission official told reporters, hours after the publication of a decree signed by King Maha Vajiralongkorn empowered the EC to give a date.

Thailand's history is pockmarked by coups, short-lived civilian governments and political crises. The poll date is set to ignite campaign season in a country where colourful and boisterous political rallies have often tipped into deadly violence.

The office of Prayut, who is also prime minister, called for an "environment of orderliness, civility and unity" — although violence is unlikely among a public tired of political conflict.

An array of new parties — including some aligned to the military, others to the still powerful Shinawatra clan — have already begun meetings and recruitment as a blizzard of names are tossed up as likely future prime ministers.

Those include Prayut, who has spent months touring the country as he rebrands himself from a gruff man-in-Khaki to an avuncular civilian leader with a common touch. Yet he is deeply unpopular among many Thais, who have wearied of his hectoring style as well as a junta accused of running down the economy and doing little to address graft, poor education standards and the kingdom's chasmic social inequality. Even if the junta's rivals do well in elections, any new civilian government is expected to be hamstrung by the military-scripted constitu-



In this Tuesday, Jan. 8, 2019, file photo, demonstrators hold a rally demanding the general election not be postponed in Bangkok, Thailand. Thailand's royal palace has issued a decree announcing the holding of the first general election since the military took power in 2014. The date of the vote is to be announced by the Election Commission within five days. AP

tion. It allows for a fully appointed upper house and embeds 20-year strategies governing everything from the economy to education.

"You can call it hybrid democracy," said Somjai Phagaphasvitat, a political analyst at Thammasat University. But he cast doubt on whether the caustic divisions of the past had been healed. "Under the coup... polarisation remained under the carpet; if you take the carpet up, the polarisation remains," he added.

Thailand last held a successful election in 2011. That catapulted the then-political neophyte Yingluck, the younger sister of billionaire Thaksin Shinawatra, into office as head of the Pheu Thai party. Questions remain over Pheu Thai's enduring electoral pull among its vote banks in the poor, rural north and northeast without the star power of the brother-sister duo, both of whom are in self-exile. The

party is "ready" for the vote, spokeswoman Ladawan Wongsriwong said.

"Pheu Thai is a big party and we have been trusted across the country for a long time."

But the long years of junta rule have decimated the networks of the Thaksin-affiliated "Red Shirts", while scores of key Pheu Thai politicians have been co-opted into the army-linked Phalang Pracharat party. The Shinawatra clan sits at the core of Thailand's political rupture. Their supporters say they are the first political dynasty to address the aspirations of Thailand's poor in a sharply hierarchical kingdom where wealth is hoarded by the Bangkok business elite.

To their enemies among the ultra-royalist, conservative elite, they toxified Thai politics and society with graft, nepotism and populist handouts. Thaksin, a policeman-turned-telecom billionaire, was toppled by a coup in 2006 and went into

self-exile in 2008 over a graft conviction.

Yingluck fled Thailand in August 2017 before she could be sentenced for criminal negligence linked to a rice subsidy scheme. The siblings have crept back to prominence in step with the approach of elections.

Thaksin has launched a weekly podcast, sharing his views on everything from Bangkok's pollution crisis to the global economy. "He still figures in Thailand as a popular hope," Chris Baker, a Thai history expert said, despite the "extraordinary myth" of the billionaire businessman as a kindred spirit of the common man.

Many Thais hold little enthusiasm for elections, widely seen as stacked in favour of the military. "Under the junta the country is just going from bad to worse," said news vendor Lek, declining to give her full name. "Even if there is an election, it will likely be the same prime minister."

Russia wheels out key missile in bid to save US arms treaty

AFF ■ KUBINKA (RUSSIA)

Russia on Wednesday unveiled a missile system that Washington claims is in violation of a key arms control treaty, in a last-minute bid to counter US criticism and save the Soviet-era agreement. President Donald Trump has threatened to walk away from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty (INF), with Washington claiming that Russia's 9M729 ground-based cruise missile system violates the deal. Moscow has repeatedly denied the system contravenes the treaty and, to prove its point, on Wednesday showed off the missile at Patriot Park, a sprawling theme park near the town of Kubinka just outside Moscow.

Standing next to the system, a Russian defence ministry official detailed the missile's



Foreign military attaches and journalists attend a briefing by the Russian Defense Ministry as the 9M729 land-based cruise missile, right, in Kubinka outside Moscow, Russia, Wednesday. AP

features to assembled foreign media and foreign military officials. Russian defence and foreign ministry officials insisted the range of the missile sys-

tem was allowed under the agreement. Mikhail Matveevsky, Russia's chief of artillery and missile troops, said its maximum range is 480 kilo-

metres (300 miles), while he said the INF treaty only bans missiles with ranges of 500 to 5,500 kilometres (310 to 3,400 miles).

China blasts US 'bullying' with Huawei CFO extradition bid

AFF ■ BEIJING

China on Wednesday accused the United States of "bullying behaviour" after US authorities confirmed plans to seek the extradition of a top Chinese telecom executive detained in Canada.

The United States faces a January 30 deadline to file an extradition request for Huawei chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou, whose arrest last month sparked diplomatic tensions.

"We will continue to pursue the extradition of defendant Ms Meng Wanzhou, and will meet all deadlines set by the US/Canada Extradition Treaty," said US Justice Department spokesman Marc Raimondi on Tuesday. Meng, the daughter of Huawei's founder, was arrested at Vancouver airport on December 1 at the request of the United States, which says she violated American sanctions on Iran.

She has since been freed on Can\$10 million (US\$7.5 million) bail and is awaiting a hearing on her extradition.



According to the agreement between the two countries, the United States has 60 days after an arrest made at its request in Canada to formalise an extradition request.

Once a request has been submitted, the Canadian justice ministry has 30 days to begin official extradition proceedings, though the process can take months or years. China, which has defended both Huawei and Meng since the CFO's arrest, criticised the US extradition request as without "legitimate reason" and "not in conformity with international law". "This is a type of

technological bullying behaviour and everyone can clearly see the real purpose," said Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying at a regular press briefing.

The US "will stop at nothing to suppress Chinese high-tech enterprises and restrain China's legitimate development rights", she added. Meng's arrest has sparked an escalating diplomatic crisis between Ottawa and Beijing.

Two Canadians have since been detained in China on national security grounds, in what is thought to be retaliation for the arrest.

US lawmakers reintroduce legislation enforcing fair trade with China

Washington (PTI): Two US lawmakers — one each from the Republican and the Democratic party — on Wednesday reintroduced a legislation in the House of Representatives to safeguard American assets from Chinese influence and possession, as well as protect American businesses from China's tools of economic aggression. Reintroduced by Congressman Tim Ryan and Mike Conaway, the Fair Trade with China Enforcement Act is the companion legislation to a similar legislation introduced by Senators Mark Warner and Marco Rubio in the Senate.

"Our imbalanced trade relationship with China poses profound national and economic security risks to the United States. The bipartisan Fair Trade with China Enforcement Act would help correct our trade imbalances with China and give American workers a level playing field to compete and succeed," said Ryan.

This legislation would further strengthen the American position by safeguarding our assets from Chinese influence and possession, and blunting China's tools of economic aggression, he added. "While the United States is operating in a 24-hour news cycle, China has a long-term plan reaching 50 to 100 years. We need to get ahead of the game and strengthen our economy, and this legislation will put us on that path forward," Ryan said. Conaway said Beijing's "Made in China 2025" initiative has made it clear that the Chinese government's objective is to drive American companies out of business and move their technology and jobs to China at any cost, including the use of illegal trade practices.

Search resumes for missing Indian, Turkish sailors in Kerch strait ship accident

PTI ■ MOSCOW

Russian authorities on Wednesday resumed search operation for 10 missing sailors after two ships carrying Indian, Turkish and Libyan crew members caught fire in the Kerch Strait, where the blaze was still raging following the accident which killed 14 seafarers.

At least 14 people reported dead after the fire broke out on Monday off Russia's territorial waters. A search for 10 others is ongoing in the Kerch Strait which separates Russia from Crimea. "The situation has not changed," an official from the

Russian Federal Agency of Maritime and River Transportation was quoted as saying by the TASS news agency. "The two ships are still burning, the Spasatel Demidov vessel approaches them from time to time in order to throw water on them, but it cannot stay close to the fire all the time," he noted.

Though there was no information from Russia and Crimea about the identities of those killed and missing, but Turkey said four of its nationals were killed, eight were rescued and four went missing after the fire. Indian authorities earlier said

the Indian embassy in Moscow was in constant touch with the concerned Russian agencies to get more information on Indian nationals affected in the incident and to extend necessary assistance.

Both vessels were flying Tanzanian flags. One of them was a liquefied natural gas carrier and another one was a tanker.

The fire broke out as the two ships were transferring fuel from one to the other. The search effort for sailors missing in the accident was resumed on Wednesday. A local official of



the maritime rescue service said that the Mercury tow boat, which brought the sailors to Crimea's Kerch on Tuesday,

was also returning to the accident scene. "Mercury is heading to the fire scene, it will be involved in searching [for the

sailors] and extinguishing the fire," a spokesperson said.

A special vessel, Spasatel Demidov, is continuing the effort to put out the fire, which is still underway. The ships have not sunk because their important parts remain intact. Citing a source in the Azov-Black Sea branch of the Maritime Rescue Service, the TASS said that attempts to extinguish the fire were failing because of burning LNG.

"Only LNG is burning at the moment. The fire engulfing parts of the ships has been extinguished but gas is coming out

and burning, it is like a gas burner," the source said, adding that according to recent information, the Candy was carrying about 2,500 tonnes of LNG.

There is no information about the amount of gas carried by the Maestro but the two ships are similar in size, so it might be the same.

The condition of sailors who were rescued during the ship fire incident in the Kerch Strait causes no concern, head of Crimea's Disaster Medicine and Ambulance Center Sergei Olefirenko was quoted as saying by the TASS.

'Indian couple who fell to their deaths from cliff in US were intoxicated'

PTI ■ NEW YORK

A travel-obsessed Indian couple, who plunged 800ft to their deaths after taking a selfie at a scenic cliff in California's popular Yosemite National Park, were "intoxicated" at the time of the incident, according to autopsy results. Vishnu Viswanath, 29, and his wife, Meenakshi Moorthy, 30, both engineers, were "intoxicated with ethyl alcohol" prior to falling 800 feet from Taft Point on October 25, but no drugs were present in their bodies, US media quoted the autopsy report as saying.

Ethyl alcohol is found in alcoholic beverages such as beer, wine and hard liquor. Due to the condition of the bodies after the extreme fall, investigators were unable to accurately discern a specific level of intoxication, Andrea Stewart, Assistant Mariposa County Coroner said. "All we can conclude is that they had been drinking and that they had alcohol in their systems. We don't know how much," Stewart was quoted as saying by Mercury News of San Jose.

The couple from Kerala died "of multiple injuries to the head, neck, chest and abdomen, sustained by a fall from a mountain," the autopsy



report said. The couple had been married since 2014. Both graduated in 2010 from the College of Engineering, Chengannur, Kerala. Viswanath was a software engineer with Cisco India at the company's headquarters in Silicon Valley.

Moorthy and Viswanath — who showcased their adventure-seeking travels on Instagram — had set up a tripod at Taft Point where they fell down the side of a steep cliff.

The tripod was later discovered on the edge of the overlook. Viswanath's brother, Jishnu Viswanath said it appeared the couple died trying to take a photo. Viswanath and his wife Moorthy, travelled the world documenting their

trips to locales like the Grand Canyon, Paris, New York City, Niagara Falls, London, Big Sur and other scenic destinations. Just months before her tragic death, Moorthy had warned in an Instagram post the dangers of taking photographs on the edge of cliffs and atop skyscrapers. She posted a picture of herself at the Grand Canyon, saying in the caption that "A lot of us including yours truly is a fan of daredevil attempts of standing at the edge of cliffs."

But did you know that wind gusts can be fatal? Is our life worth one photo? In an eerie coincidence, Moorthy appears in the selfie of another tourist couple at Taft Point, just minutes before she plummeted to her death.

Panama youth meeting offers pope respite from scandals

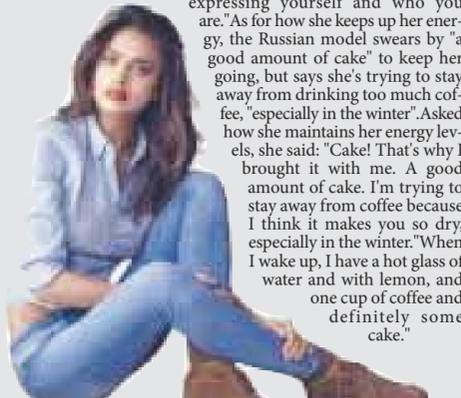
Panama City (AFP): Pope Francis jets into Panama on Wednesday for a gathering of young Catholics that will likely see him speak out strongly in defence of Central American migrants and human rights. The festive five-day meeting with an expected 200,000 young people from around the world offers the 82-year-old pontiff a brief respite from a torrent of sex scandals that have jolted his papacy.

Groups of young pilgrims have been flocking into the small Central American country for days. Wrapped in the flags of their nations, many resemble soccer fans on the eve of a major tournament, except this is one event in which they will be shouting for the same side. At a Mass to open the festivities on Tuesday evening, tens of thousands of young pilgrims stood to chant, "this is the youth of the pope." Panama's archbishop, Cardinal Jose Domingo Ulloa, told them the future of the church lay "in your vision of a better world". Ulloa said he prayed the gathering "will be a balm for the difficult situation in which many of them live without hope, especially the indigenous youth and youth of African descent, the youth who migrates after receiving almost no response from their countries of origin."

GLOBE TROTTING

'Motherhood is one of the greatest things in the world'

Los Angeles: The 33-year-old supermodel has 22-month-old daughter Lea De Seine Shayk Cooper with her husband Bradley Cooper, and has revealed that although becoming a mother didn't completely "change her life" it did make it better. In an interview with W magazine, she said: "I always say that being a mom is one of the greatest things in the world. I don't think it's changed my life. It did change in a way to make me better. Family is the most important thing in the world." The brunette beauty added that although becoming a mother has improved her life, it hasn't changed her personal style, and she thinks that having children shouldn't stop a person "expressing" themselves. When asked if her style changed when she became a mother, she said: "No. Not at all. Sometimes [people] will be like, 'Oh, she's a mom and she's wearing this?' I'm like, 'Give me a break, girl.' Again, we live in the 21st century. Just because you are a mom and you have a baby doesn't mean you have to change and dress different. Keep expressing yourself and who you are." As for how she keeps up her energy, the Russian model swears by "a good amount of cake" to keep her going, but says she's trying to stay away from drinking too much coffee, "especially in the winter". Asked how she maintains her energy levels, she said: "Cake! That's why I brought it with me. A good amount of cake. I'm trying to stay away from coffee because I think it makes you so dry, especially in the winter." When I wake up, I have a hot glass of water and with lemon, and one cup of coffee and definitely some cake."



Sophie Turner told 'Game of Thrones' ending to friends

London: Sophie Turner says she is "terrible" at keeping secrets and has already outed "Game of Thrones" much awaited climax. The actor, who plays Sansa Stark in the hit HBO drama series, said the more unfortunate part was that she was "sober" when she gave away the ending. "I'm so bad at keeping secrets. I don't think people tell me things anymore because they know that I can't keep them. I've already told the ending of 'Game of Thrones' to a few people. (I was) sober. I was like, 'Hey, if you want to know, I'll tell you.' But it's people that I know, not random people. It's people that I know will keep the secret," Turner told W magazine. The 22-year-old actor, who used to dye her hair red for the show, later in the series opted for a wig. "It gets very greasy. It never used to be like that. I think it's because I wear a wig on 'Game of Thrones', so the glue gets stuck in my hair, so I had to wash it every day and my hair is now used to that. "If it's any longer than two days, it gets greasy," she said. Kit Harington, Turner's on-screen "half brother", recently revealed he asked the makers to let him keep the crypt statue of his character Jon Snow. Turner said she ditched the wig and kept one of her most revealing costumes from the sets as a souvenir. "I didn't want to keep (the wig). I was like, 'Goodbye!' The only thing I kept was a corset from the show. I wouldn't have wanted that wig. I was thinking about framing it, but people might think it's a bit weird. Wearing it would be weird. And it's not the one that covers your b**bs," she said. The eighth and final season of "GOT" premieres April 14.



Pak court halts Mumbai attack case hearing

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has temporarily halted the hearing of the 2008 Mumbai attack case to let the prosecutor produce more witnesses. Ten Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists had sailed into Mumbai from Karachi and carried out coordinated attacks, killing 166 people and injuring over 300 in November 2008. The trial, underway in an anti-terrorism court in Pakistan against seven activists, has made little headway in more than 10 years as the Pakistani establishment has been claiming lack of enough evidence against them.

A divisional bench of Islamabad High Court, comprising Justice Aamer

Farooq and Justice Mohsin Akhter Kiyani, on Tuesday conducted hearing on a petition by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) seeking stay on anti-terrorism court proceedings.

The Express Tribune reported that the court initially granted one week stay in trial of the Mumbai attack case to let the prosecutor to summon some of the 19 witnesses for testimony.

During the hearing, FIA prosecutor Akram Qureshi appeared in the court. Justice Kiyani remarked several witnesses were not appearing due to fear and the whereabouts of some others were unknown.

The FIA prosecutor told the bench that many witnesses had been traced out.

Justice Kiyani

inquired if those witnesses will appear in the court to which Qureshi said some of the witnesses have been traced and they are ready to appear before court. Justice Amir Farooq inquired about the next date of hearing in the trial court. The FIA prosecutor replied the case is set for hearing on Wednesday (January 23) in the anti-terrorism court (ATC), while requesting for a stay on the hearing.

The court accepted the request and suspended proceedings of the ATC till the next week.

The court directed the registrar to set the hearing of the case in the next week. Seven LeT suspects — Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, Abdul Wajid, Mazhar Iqbal, Hamad Amin Sadiq, Shahid Jamil Riaz, Jamil Ahmed and Younis Anjum — are facing charges of abetment to murder, attempted murder, planning and executing the Mumbai attack since 2009.

Except Lakhvi, the other six are kept in the high-security Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi.

'Sharif's condition very serious'

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's condition is "very serious" after heart complications and he should be shifted to hospital without any delay, his doctor said on Wednesday.

Sharif, 69, who is serving a seven-year imprisonment in a Lahore jail, was rushed to a hospital from Kot Lakhpat jail on Tuesday after he complained of heart related complications. He was later discharged from hospital and taken back to jail following medical tests. Doctors of the Punjab Institute of Cardiology Lahore, where his medical tests were conducted, said Sharif's condition was "not very serious", but suggested "aggressive medication" and regular medical follow-ups to avoid cardiac complications.

However, Sharif's cardiologist Adnan Khan termed his condition as "very serious" and said he should be shifted to hospital without any delay. "Nawaz Sharif's treatment at jail is not possible because of his heart complications. He should be shifted to hospital forthwith so that he is properly



taken care of," Khan said. "Even a special medical board that earlier examined Mr Sharif had suggested shifting him to hospital for treatment but the government did not heed to the suggestion," he said.

Sharif's stress thalium test — a nuclear imaging test that shows how well blood flows into one's heart — suggests "post stress LV pump/contraction 56 per cent which is almost normal", according to his medical reports. The report says that the left ventricle, the main pumping chamber of the heart, is damaged on the

lower left wall, it said. Expressing concern about Sharif's health, his daughter Maryam tweeted: "My only source of information on what is happening to my father is the media only."

Sharif's brother Shahbaz Sharif asked the government to provide best healthcare facilities to the three-time prime minister.

A special medical board that examined Sharif in jail last week observed "he is not completely well" as more investigations (tests) are required before suggesting treatment for him. According

to the report of the special medical board, "Patient Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, 69, examined by the special medical board is a known case of diabetes Mellitus and hypertension for the last 10 years. He is also known case of Ischemic heart disease since 2001."

Sharif underwent Coronary Angioplasty (PCI) twice in 2001 and 2017.

He also had open heart surgery twice in 2011 and 2016 (no medical record/documents are available for these above said procedures at the time of examination), it says.

The board says after evaluating these test reports and availability of previous cardiac medical record further management plan will be proceeded. Sharif was shifted to the Kot Lakhpat jail on December 25, a day after he was sentenced by the accountability court in Islamabad to seven years' imprisonment in the Al-Azizia Steel Mills case.

A disqualification of 10 years from holding any public office is part of the sentences awarded to the three times prime minister of the country.

'GDP a fancy figure, growth must translate to well being on ground'

Davos (PTI): Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath on Wednesday referred Gross domestic product (GDP), as a "fancy figure" and said that economic

growth must translate into well being of people on ground. At a session on the emerging market outlook at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2019, Nath also strongly defended his government's farm loan waiver decision and said the agricultural sector in India and particularly in his state has been in distress.

Referring to the latest IMF forecast for Indian economy, he said, "GDP is a fancy figure and at times it can be misleading as one needs to see where all a 7.5 per cent growth figure translates into."

Defending the loan waiver, the Congress leader, who also had a long stint in central government in various ministries, said it was very necessary as agriculture is a backbone of the Indian economy and he had to take into account the distress the farmers were in.

He said, the waiver amounts to USD 8 billion, but what it amounts to is taking over the loans of scheduled banks that had gone bad and the lenders have taken a haircut in the process.

Anyway, an NPA would have hit the balance sheet of the banks and the decision was in their interest also, Nath said. Talking about the global economic scenario, he said the global order is getting changed.

"The world has changed but some of the people have not," he said while adding that the US leadership may think what they have done may be good but they need to realise that things have changed in terms of the world order. McKinsey & Company Global Managing Partner Kevin Sneider said business leaders are very confident about their own business but they are worried about others' businesses.

In the same panel, Hong Kong SAR Government CEO Carrie Lam said there are some underlying worries about global trade, but she is positive. Turkish Finance Minister Berat Albayrak said Turkey is the only stable economy in its region but it has learnt a lot from the problems of the region. He also said Turkey and the US has a very important relationship. He said Turkish economy has strengthened its immune system in a big way. Agility CEO Tarek Sultan Al Essa, the only corporate leader on the panel, said China and the US are still growing at a healthy rate while emerging markets are showing a superior growth rate.



Abe seeks rebuilding of trust in global trade systems

PTI ■ DAVOS

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Wednesday asked world leaders to rebuild trust in the international trading system and urged countries like the US, China and India to breathe fresh life into the WTO. He also cited the example of his own country for creating a new hope-driven economy, asserting that Japan has "defeated the defeatism" by pushing 'womemomics' to tackle the problem of its ageing population.

As the new Chair of G20, he also said Japan is committed to preserving and enhancing the free, open, and rules-based international order.

In a special address here at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2019, Abe said when he came back in office as prime minister in 2012, many were thinking Japan was doomed and the argument was its population was ageing and it could not grow.

"It was a wall of despair, a wall of Japan pessimism. Since that time, our working-age population has dropped by 4.5 million people. We have responded by pushing hard for 'womemomics', encouraging more and then still more women to work, while lessening the burden on women's shoulder," he said.

As a result, the country now has 2 million more women employed, the rate of female labour participation has hit 67 per cent, an all-time high for Japan, and higher than, say, in the US, he said.

All of this has "defeated defeatism", Abe added. "Meanwhile, the number of people over 65 still actively working has also increased by 2 million, thanks to our policies that enable them to keep working... Out of every 100 college

graduates looking to work, 98 find employment, also a record number," he said.

Abe said companies have raised the wages and the country's GDP has grown strongly in the last six years. He said he sees Japan hosting the G20 Summit in June as a chance to regain optimism for the future, providing reassurance that it is possible to achieve a hope-driven economy like in Japan.

"I would like Osaka G20 to be long remembered as the summit that started world-wide data governance," he said.

"It will be great if every one of us, from the US, Europe, Japan, China, and India, to leapfrogging countries in Africa, share our efforts and our successes in breathing fresh life into the WTO," Abe said. Regarding his second top priority for the G20 Osaka summit, Abe said there was a need for disruptive innovations for climate change.

On the changing international order, Abe asked the world leaders to "rebuild trust toward the system for international trade. That should be a system that is fair, transparent, and effective in protecting IP and also in such areas as e-commerce and government procurement."

He said the US, Europe and Japan must join forces to facilitate changes within the WTO, especially its rules for government subsidies. "The Osaka Track, needless to say, will make the WTO more relevant in the age of the data-driven economy... hope matters more than anything when it comes to generating growth," he said. "Most importantly, this year, for the first time in as long as 200 years, His Majesty the Emperor of Japan will abdicate and a new Emperor will take the throne. It is the dawn of a new era.



Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, speaks during a plenary session in the Congress Hall at the 49th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, WEF, in Davos, and in a pic (below) 16-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg arrives to attend the 49th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum, WEF, in Davos, Switzerland on Wednesday.

UK 'open for business' despite firms leaving

AFP ■ DAVOS

Britain remains a world-leading destination for foreign investment despite Brexit clouds and the departure of a number of companies, International Trade Secretary Liam Fox said Wednesday.

Interviewed by AFP at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Fox also welcomed a proposal by Poland that could potentially unblock a problem surrounding the Irish border that is holding up a deal on Britain's exit from the European Union.

And with the risk looming of Britain crashing out of the EU in March without a deal, Fox said he expected soon to sign several pacts with trading partners outside Europe to try to ensure a seamless transition.

He shrugged off news that both Sony and appliance maker Dyson are shifting premises out of Britain, pointing to figures showing Britain has attracted more foreign investment than Germany and France combined since it voted to quit the EU in 2016.

"So clearly the UK is open for business and is an attractive destination for foreign direct investment — and that during the time where there's been uncertainty over Brexit," he said.

Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz broke ranks with the rest of the EU this week by suggesting a time-limit of five years might



be possible on the so-called Irish backstop as a way to "unblock negotiations" between London and Brussels.

"It would obviously be less favourable for Ireland than no-deal Brexit," he told the Rzeczpospolita newspaper. Fox commented: "I welcome constructive thinking on this. The prime minister (Theresa May) has made it very clear that we will welcome any option that might enable us to deal with the backstop issue.

"We want to reach an agreement so that we can get the withdrawal agreement through parliament to give us a timely exit of the European Union, so that we can start to talk about our future relationship, rather than simply our exit."

Scotland Yard chief warns of Brexit-related terror threat

PTI ■ LONDON

Scotland Yard's counter-terrorism chief, Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu, has warned that the "febrile" atmosphere around Brexit could be enhancing the risk posed by far-right terrorism in the UK. The UK is due to leave the 28-member European Union (EU) on March 29. However, the government of Prime Minister Theresa May is facing massive resistance from her own Conservative Party MPs as well as the opposition Labour Party over her Brexit deal.

"We saw a spike in hate crime after the referendum (in June 2016), that's never really receded. So there's always a possibility people are being radicalised by the kind of febrile atmosphere we've got at the moment," Basu told BBC on Tuesday at the launch of a new film aimed at encouraging people to report their suspicions about all forms of terrorism.

"We want people to report anything that we think is going to lead to violent confrontation and people need to calm down and understand that we are



paying very close attention to that and we will stop it wherever we see it," said the Indian-origin Metropolitan Police Lead for Counter-Terrorism and the Head of its Specialist Operations.

Basu said there was no intelligence pointing to an increased level of attacks after Brexit, but noted: "What's most concerning me, is its potential to divide communities and set communities against each other."

"I'm really proud to be a UK citizen in a country that is largely tolerant, and we haven't seen an explosion in that (far-right) threat. What I'm concerned about is the creeping rise of that threat, and if we aren't clear that we are com-

batting that threat then that's my concern." Britain's senior-most counter-terrorism officer revealed that a record 700 terrorist investigations are currently taking place in the country, up from about 500 in March 2017 and that 18 terror plots had been foiled in Britain since 2017, four of which involved far-right groups and 14 of them involving Islamist terrorists.

He admitted that while extreme right-wing activity was still a "relatively small threat", it was also "something we've got to pay very close attention to in this country — that we don't let that kind of far-right drift into extreme right-wing terrorism and we're working very hard to stop

that". He added that the possibility of a no-deal Brexit was "incredibly concerning" for police operations, warning that the UK and Europe would be in a "very bad place" if police could not exchange data or biometrics on suspected criminals and terrorists.

Basu said the Met Police was working on contingency arrangements with police forces and agencies in Europe.

"For counter-terrorism, we have a lot of bilateral relationships, it is a devolved power for countries, it is not an EU power, so we are confident that my counterparts in those 27 countries want to exchange information with us and we are working very hard to make sure we put that in place," he said. The new 60-second film launched by the Met Police this week shows a series of scenarios, such as a man stockpiling hazardous material and another buying weapons, before rewinding and zooming in on the danger.

In 2017 and 2018, around a fifth of the information passed to UK police from the public had a "significant" role in thwarting terror attacks, Basu said.

Britain must pay EU bill even in 'no deal': Barnier

Brussels (AFP): The British government will face a multibillion euro divorce settlement with the European Union even if it leaves the bloc without a deal, Brussels negotiator Michel Barnier warned Wednesday. Some anti-Europeans, opposed to a negotiated settlement with Brussels, balk at the idea of settling a bill that their own government estimates at ?39 billion (44 billion euros) to cover outstanding obligations.

But Barnier, in interviews with several European newspapers, said the bill would still be settled at some point, even if London rejects the withdrawal agreement Britain signed in November and crashes out on March 29. "For the EU budget, we've always said one simple thing: the totality of the commitments made by the United Kingdom while still an EU member will be respected," the senior EU official said, according to Le Monde. "It will be more difficult to make them respect them in the case of a 'no deal', but we will continue to insist: These commitments are legally binding under international law and I can not imagine that Britain would not respect its commitments."

Thinking about romantic partner may help keep BP in check: Study

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Thinking about your romantic partner, when faced with a stressful situation, may help keep your blood pressure under control just as effectively as actually having the significant other present with you, a study claims.

In the study, published in the journal Psychophysiology, 102 participants were asked to complete a stressful task — submerging one foot into three inches of cold water ranging from 3.3 to 4.4 degrees Celsius. Researchers from the University of Arizona (UA) in the US measured participants' blood pressure, heart rate and heart rate variability before, during and after the task.

The participants, all of whom were in committed romantic relationships, were randomly assigned to one of three conditions when completing the task. They either had their significant other sitting quietly in the room with them during the task, they were instructed to think about their romantic partner as a source of support during the task, or they were instructed to think about their day during the task. Those who had their partner physically present in the room or who



thought about their partner had a lower blood pressure response to the stress of the cold water than the participants in the control group, who were instructed to think about their day. Heart rate and heart rate variability did not vary between the three groups, researchers said.

The effect on blood pressure reactivity was just as powerful whether the partner was physically present or merely conjured mentally, they said. Previous studies have suggested that having a partner present or visualising a partner can help manage the body's physiological response to stress. The new

study, led by UA psychology doctoral student Kyle Bourassa, suggests that the two things are equally effective — at least when it comes to blood pressure reactivity. The findings may help explain, in part, why high-quality romantic relationships are consistently associated with positive health outcomes in the scientific literature, Bourassa said. "This suggests that one way being in a romantic relationship might support people's health is through allowing people to better cope with stress and lower levels of cardiovascular reactivity to stress across the day," he said.

THAILAND'S NEW SHADES

Targeting mature, discerning Indian travellers, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is promoting niche hideaways beyond the Bangkok-Pattaya circuit. The tourism board has extended the visa-on-arrival fee waiver for Indians to April 30

■ ANKITA SAXENA

To ensure that Thailand remains the most preferred tourism destination among the Indian travellers, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has introduced new experiences and destinations for 2019. As a stimulus to encourage more Indians to visit the destination, the Thai government has extended the visa-on-arrival fee waiver from January 14 to April 30.

The TAT Governor, YUTHASAK SUPASORN said, "We want to change the perception of Thailand in India from a 'cheap destination' to a more value-for-money destination. We have been working towards this for some years now. We started with four key segments namely weddings and honeymoon, sports tourism, health and well-being and responsible tourism. We want to move away from a mass tourist destination to a niche destination. After in-depth research on Indian travellers' behaviour, we have identified some lesser known destinations and have formulated a strategy to promote them. I feel we will be able to achieve two million Indian tourists by the end of 2019, a year earlier than the previously set target of 2020."

The TAT Deputy Governor for Marketing Communications, Tanes Petsuwan, informed that India is now one of the top 10 source markets for tourist arrivals to Thailand, a member of a small club of countries that generate more than one million visitors a year. In January-November 2018, the arrivals from India were up by



TAT Governor, Yuthasak Supasorn

12.03 per cent to 1.42 million, generating an estimated 63 billion Baht in tourism income. In December 2018 alone, after the waiver of visa-on-arrival fee for Indians, Thailand

recorded 143,000 Indian visitors, registering a growth of over 63 per cent as compared to December 2017, taking the total figure of Indian tourist arrivals to over 1.6 million in 2018.

Petsuwan said, "The growing sophistication and maturity of the Indian travellers has given us an opportunity to promote Thailand's diverse range of niche market products to women travellers, high-net worth individual (HNIs), weddings and honeymooners and family groups. Today, a new strata of experienced, well-heeled and internet-savvy Indian travellers are venturing beyond the long-standing Bangkok-Pattaya circuit to new destinations such as Chiang Rai, Rayong, Trat, Hua Hin and Samut Songkhram."

Sharing some highlights of the Indian tourists, the deputy governor said that in 2018, of the total Indian visitors, 58 per cent were repeat travellers; the average daily expenditure was recorded at approximately ₹12,500; the average length of stay was 7.45 days and the visitor ratio of groups and individual travellers was recorded as 31 to 69.

"In 2019, the 'Amazing Thailand Open to the New Shades' campaign will be carried forward to invite travellers to indulge in unique experiences. We are targeting four segments of Indian travellers. A separate website—www.firstvisit.com, has been

launched to cater to the first time travellers. We are targeting women travellers and thus have introduced the website—www.women'sjourneythailand.com. Almost 300 Indian destination weddings took place in Thailand in 2018 and to further this segment, we have introduced www.myweddinginthailand.com for specific needs of those who wish to tie the knot in Thailand. For the family travel category, we are promoting Samut Songkhram as a new destination for local experiences. Luxury travel from India is also a segment of focus this year," added Petsuwan.

The tourism board further apprised that the bilateral airline capacity is at an all-time high with 307 weekly flights between Thailand and 16 major cities in India, served by 13 airlines which include, the Thai Airways, Bangkok Airways, Thai Smile, Bhutan Airlines, Druk Air, Jet Airways, Air Asia, Spice Jet, Thai Lion Air, Indigo, NokScoot and GoAir.

In August this year, TAT will undertake an Amazing Thailand roadshow to Tier-II cities—Ahmedabad, Pune, Amritsar and Bhubaneswar as part of TAT's strategy to tap the potential of India's secondary cities. Thailand expects to welcome five million Indian visitors by 2023.



Making railways safer and more punctual

The chairman of the Railway Board, TV K Yadav, recently chaired a Review Meet of the zonal performance at the Northern Railway's headquarter in New Delhi. The member of the Traffic Railway Board Girish Pillai, the general manager of the Northern Railway TP Singh, the principal heads-of-department of the Northern Railway, the divisional railway managers of the five Divisions of Northern Railway viz. Ambala, Delhi, Moradabad, Lucknow and Ferozpur were also present on the occasion.

Appraising the overall safety performance of the zone during 2018-19, Yadav noted the 31 percent noteworthy reduction in the number of accidents vis-à-vis 2017-18 and expressed his satisfaction on the mission mode of the zone in 100 per cent elimination of unmanned level-crossing on the zone, which is a part of the 'Mission Zero Accident'.

The chairman underscored the need for expeditious completion of infrastructure projects viz. new lines, doubling lines and so on to enhance capacity creation to meet the twin objectives of operation (punctuality) and safety. He noted that the Northern Railway has taken several steps to improve the punctuality of the passenger carrying trains during the



year which include elimination of traction change in 12 trains, standardising and factoring in mega corridor block in the new time table to rationalise train running time. He apprised that live monitoring of the asset failures is being undertaken and additional manpower and resources are being deployed on dense traffic sections.

One of the significant measures to augment punctuality performance was the de-congestion of major terminals of Delhi, Lucknow and Allahabad area. A noteworthy raise in speed of trains on loop lines enabled saving 86 minutes, while the track strengthening and electrification works enabled the raising of sectional speed. He also noted that the

PF berthing slots were rationalised to ensure better station punctuality.

Yadav also reviewed the ongoing action plans of the zone with regards to the rationalisation of rake links, terminal shifting to reduce station congestion and to ensure expeditious primary maintenance. The washing line OHE connectivity is on the anvil with other improvements viz. high-speed fuelling and watering.

The chairman further reviewed the various development plans proposed in the year ahead viz. the doubling works, flyovers (rail) to enable operational flexibility and by-passes/chord lines to avoid detention due to reversal. He also reviewed the various traffic facility up-gradation works viz. coaching terminal facility at Bijwasan and Varanasi yard remodeling plans. The capacity enhancement works through a target 41 km new line, and doubling spanning 137 km, are on the anvil for the year 2019-20.

Assigning a higher impetus to the modernised signaling, the zone has on its anvil projects for introduction of automatic block signaling on high density routes through an estimated ₹287.66 crore in the year ahead. This would enable better punctuality performance, commented the chairman.

Naqvi applauds Hunar Haat for employment generation

The Union Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, believes that more than two lakh artisans, craftsmen and culinary experts have been provided with employment opportunities through the 11 'Hunar Haats' which have been organised across the country during the last two years. The minister was speaking at the closing ceremony of the Hunar Haat held in Delhi from January 12 to 20. He said, "Hunar Haat has been organised across the country by the Ministry, and it has proved to be an 'empowerment and employment exchange', for the master artisans and craftsmen. The employment oriented programmes of the Modi



Government like the Hunar Haat has significantly encouraged and promoted the rich traditional heritage of artisans which had been marginalised for a long time. This ini-

tiative has become a 'credible brand' of indigenous talent of Indian craftsmen and will fulfill Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to 'Make in India', 'Stand up India', and 'Start up India'.

He further added that the event was a hit as over 13 lakh visitors from across the country and abroad visited the fair and encouraged the artisans by purchasing, on a large scale, their indigenous handmade products. The artisans have also received national and international orders worth lakhs of rupees.

In the coming days, the event will also be organised at other different locations in the country.

VIT's accelerated business coaching programme

The VIT Technology Business Incubator (VIT-TBI) is a joint initiative between VIT Vellore, and the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India. The VIT-TBI provides incubation support to start-up ventures and periodically organises capacity building and training activities to address the needs of the early-stage entrepreneurs and individuals, who are planning to start a business venture.

This six-week, non-residential training programme's objective is to expose the participants to the key steps in start up venturing process and equip them with adequate knowledge to initiate a venture in food processing and agro-based technologies. It equips the students with requisite skills, knowledge and competencies to convert their start up idea into a viable business entity.

The select qualifying individuals, with bankable project reports, get an opportunity to present the same for incubation support or appropriate funding support. The programme covers the essentials of entrepreneurship, basics of marketing, finance, human resource and so on. It will also provide ample exposure to various facets of organic agriculture, integrated farming practices, biofertilisers, composting, commercial business opportunities in medicinal plant and horticulture, food processing techniques, quality control, certification processes, hospitality industry, packaging and will include industry visits. This programme will also equip the participants to write and present a Project Report and throw open opportunities to Business Incubation at the VIT Technology Business Incubator, if found suitable.

CORPORATE BRIEFS

'ALUMOF'—MASCOT FOR INCAL 2019 UNVEILED

The Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Panchayati Raj and Mines, Narendra Singh Tomar, unveiled the official Mascot for the first International Conference on Aluminium 2019 (INCAL) called 'ALUMOF'. The INCAL 2019 is slated to be held in Bhubaneswar from Jan 31 to Feb 3, under the aegis of the Ministry of Mines and is organised by the Aluminium Association of India (AAI). ALUMOF, which stands for Aluminium — The Metal of the Future, was unveiled in the presence of the secretary of mines, Anil Mukim, joint secretary of mines, Anil Kumar Nayak, and the CMD, NALCO and the Chairman, Aluminium Association of India, Dr Tapan Kumar Chand. The mascot aims to raise awareness and promote aluminium as the metal of the future and a metal of national importance.



The Minister of State of Human Resource Development, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Dr Satya Pal Singh, flagged off the extension of 74027/74028 Delhi Jn to Baraut DEMU train to/from Qasimpur Khari in the presence of the additional divisional railway manager, Rajeev Dhankhar, Delhi Division along with several senior railway officials.



BHEL BAGS ORDER FOR EMISSION CONTROL EQUIPMENT IN MAHARASHTRA

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has secured an additional order from the Maharashtra State Power Generation Company (Mahagenco) for its ongoing 660 MW coal-based supercritical thermal power project at Bhusawal thermal power station (Unit 6). The project is being executed by BHEL on Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) basis at Jalgaon district in Maharashtra. Mahagenco has awarded the additional order to BHEL for installation of emission control equipment, changes in various equipment/subsystems due to change in coal, modification in CHP/AHP, and so on. With this order, the revised order value for the Bhusawal TPS Unit 6 EPC project is now around ₹3,750 crore.

TATA POWER-DDL'S 2ND ALL WOMEN CUSTOMER CARE CENTRE IN DELHI

The Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (Tata Power-DDL), has launched its second all-women Customer Care Centre at Civil Lines in Delhi. The centre will be entirely managed by a team of 12 women who are trained to handle the entire gamut of customer service offerings such as new power supply applications, monthly bill payments as well as addressing customers' concerns and queries. The centre was inaugurated by the commissioner of NDMC Varsha Joshi, in the presence of the CEO of Tata Power-DDL, Sanjay Banga, and other senior officials from the company.



After a gap of 11 years, the CISF Tableau will again showcase the multidimensional functioning of the force at the forthcoming Republic Day Parade on January 26. The tableau is a reflection of the aspirations, commitment and dedication of CISF towards its mandate and showcases the various domains of its professional conduct.



AAI AWARDED FOR PERFORMANCE IN ELECTRONIC TENDERING

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has recently been awarded as the Best Performer among the Central Public Sector Units based on the electronic tendering carried out in April 2017 to March 2018 through the Central Public Procurement Portal of NIC, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). The member of operations, AAI, I N Murthy, received the award from the secretary, MeitY, on the occasion of 2nd National Workshop on Central Public Procurement Portal organised by NIC.



OFB CONTRIBUTES TO ARMY BATTLE CASUALTIES FUND

As a part of social responsibility, the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) has contributed ₹10 lakh to the Army Battle Casualties Fund. The member of OFB, S P Mishra, accompanied by the deputy director general of OFB, Rajvir Singh, handed over a cheque of the said amount to Major General R P Kalita, Additional Director General (Ceremonial and Welfare). The Indian Army's account—'Army Welfare Fund Battle Casualties' accepts donations for the families of battle casualties which is utilised to pay financial assistance to widows of battle casualties, their next of kin and dependents.



DELHI-WARSZAWA DIRECT ON LOT POLISH AIRLINES FROM SEPTEMBER

LOT Polish Airlines, Poland's flag carrier will launch a new non-stop service between Warsaw and New Delhi, commencing on September 17 this year. The new route will be operated five times a week on the Boeing 787 Dreamliner which will feature three class of service - LOT Business Class; LOT Premium Economy Class and LOT Economy Class. The new route will provide the shortest and the most convenient connection from New Delhi directly to the centrally located hub in Warsaw as well as access to many Central, Eastern and Western European cities.



Trend Slazer

'I like doing challenging roles'

Actor **NAWAZUDDIN SIDDIQUI**, who is set for the release of his forthcoming film *Thackeray*, says he hates taking up roles which do not challenge him as a performer. "I love doing challenging roles. With each film, I want to try something new. I hate doing roles in my comfort zone. I want to be a versatile actor. I look up to only new, different and challenging roles for myself," said Nawazuddin. "There's only one life, we should keep trying new things. That's what I want to do," he added. He talked about his role in the film, "Balasahebji was an iconic figure. I am honoured to be doing a film based on his life. He was a cartoonist, writer and political figure. His journey has inspired me a lot." He said that it was a tough role for him because, "he was an iconic figure and while shooting the film on him, the only thing that I kept in my mind was to do justice to the role through my acting. I researched a lot about him, watched a lot of his videos, speeches and Sanjay Raut (writer) helped me in learning more about his life." The film is slated to release on January 25.



Photo: Pankaj Kumar

'Calling out patriarchy at home is very tough. The most difficult thing is to question people around you, especially whom you love the most like your parents, brother and boyfriend. I feel bad for boys sometimes because the problem lies with the parenting method which doesn't let them equip with strong, opinionated women.'



Hathaway quits drinking

Actress **ANNE HATHAWAY** said that she has quit drinking for the next 18 years because she does not want to drink around her two-year-old son Jonathan.

During an appearance on *The Ellen Degeneres Show*, Hathaway said: "I quit drinking back in October for 18 years. I'm going to stop drinking while my son is in my house just because I don't totally love the way I do it and he's getting to an age where he really needs me all the time in the morning." She added, "I did a school run one day where I dropped him off at school, I wasn't driving, but I was hungover and that was enough for me. I didn't love that one." She had earlier said that she feels at "greater peace" now that she's a mother.



Image enhancement is one thing; you are in the end in control of it. But when the projected image becomes bigger than you, then the mirrored image can eat into the reality of your self-esteem. A recent study, conducted by a cosmetic clinic chain, spanning over 300 people across four Indian cities, showed that the process of taking, altering and posting selfies negatively affects one's self-esteem and body image perception as well as promotes body dysmorphia.

Selfies, that have already been considered responsible for numerous deaths as well as injuries among people lost in the act of clicking themselves, are also making people anxious and less-confident about their own looks and physical attractiveness. As per the report, in Delhi, 68 per cent men and 82 per cent women showed an increase in levels of anxiety after posting their selfies on social media. Around 71 per cent men and 80 per cent women showed a decrease in self-confidence. Their feelings of physical attractiveness also recorded a dip. The feelings of inadequacy were intense enough to drive many of them to undergo cosmetic surgery in order to enhance their facial appearance.

The study noted that people posted selfies using filters more than without as their real features made them anxious about public approval. Also, the fact that filters work magically on the selfie saddened them, making them envy their own enhanced image.

In one of the recent lectures on the psychological effects of taking and posting selfies on social media, Debraj Shome, director of the said clinic chain, pointed towards men and women between 16 to 25 years of age who spend up to five hours per week clicking selfies and uploading them online. "People who took and posted selfies reported feeling more anxious, less confident, and less physically-attractive later. Even though people could retake or retouch their selfies through filters, we noted certain effects that could be harmful. It contributed to significant feelings of inadequacy over looks. This indicates that people in India will also become like the ones in California, USA, where a large majority of the population considers cosmetic surgeries."

The lecture also noted an important point by Dr Rinky Kapoor, cosmetic dermatologist. Said she, "The camera in the phone has ironically become the reason why the phone sells. It is well-known that selfies are a risk to one's life and limb, with hundreds of people dying or sustaining injuries while taking selfies. This study shows that selfies have an adverse psychological effect on one's personality too. The impact is even more devastating on people with low self-esteem who take to social media to engage in public behaviour with reduced risk of disgrace and social anxiety."

She suggested that since there is not

Selfie? Not me

Behavioural expert **DEBRAJ SHOME** explains why the mania of taking and posting selfies online is hinting at an insecure and a mentally-unstable generation.

By **TEAM VIVA**



any upside to the act of taking selfies as yet, the government "seriously" needs to consider banning front-facing cameras in smartphones. "There is also a need to launch a nationwide campaign that discourages people from taking selfies," she said.

As per the research, negative impacts of taking selfies were observed the most among people in Delhi, followed by people in Mumbai, Hyderabad and then Kolkata. The nationwide study showed an increase in anxiety among 60 per cent men and 65 per cent women. Of all the respondents, 61 per cent men and 70 per cent women recorded a decrease in confidence after posting their selfies.

Shome also pointed out that social media and celebrities have been hugely responsible in making selfies popular, especially among the youth. "Since famous celebrities and other TV person-

'Frequently taking selfies could be considered a body-checking behaviour, such as repeated weighing and recurrent checking of one's own reflection in the mirror'

alities also have social media accounts, youngsters tend to see how their favourite celebrities strike a pose and get million likes. Following them, they try to imitate their behaviour. They tend to feel depressed comparing themselves to the other so-called physically-attractive people. This eventually results in self-loathing."

He said that for some, taking and posting selfies is also a way of expressing themselves, testing how they really look. The number of likes determines their liking towards themselves.

The doctor explained how posting selfies to social media is making youngsters determine self-image and perception, which in turn is emerging as yet another psychological disorder. He said, "Frequently taking selfies could be considered a body-checking behaviour, such as repeated weighing and recurrent

checking of one's own reflection in the mirror."

He suggested that this should be considered a risky online health-related behaviour in terms of mental health, especially if it triggers weight and shape dissatisfaction. He added, "High body dissatisfaction is the primary risk factor for the development of eating disorders and is correlated with low self-esteem and depression. Interventions that aim to diminish or eliminate the harmful effects of social media engagement on one's psychological make-up need to be validated and implemented. This indicates that addition to phones and selfies may create a mentally-unstable next generation."

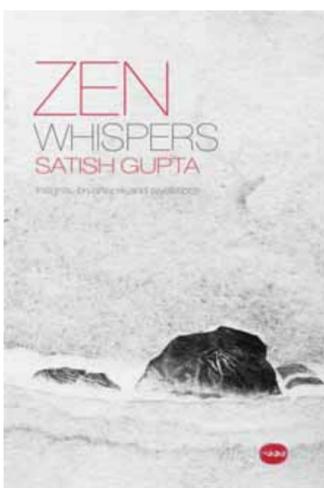
Youngsters need to realise that taking selfies is not about impressing people. They shouldn't let this control them. One should be satisfied with the way s/he looks.

AN INSPIRING SILENCE

When you tread on the terrain of **SATISH GUPTA's** *Zen Whispers*, it envelopes you in a mix of contemporary and traditional genres, says **UMA NAIR**

Cute and quaint in terms of a culling of statements, Satish Gupta's *Zen Whispers* is a representation of his many journeys in art as well as life. We get a glimpse into the Zen monk and artist who embodies the Buddha within.

The book, which was launched a week ago at the Visual Arts Gallery, is replete with paintings and sculptures from different periods of Satish's artistic endeavours that covers works selected from his monumental landscapes series — wave scene series, flower series. This leads to a deep understanding of his artistic developments during the past 25 years of art and readers alike.



res. Satish gradually develops his own artistic language by infusing Chinese contexts with a minimalist rendering of contemporary awareness. This distinctive style gains him critical acclaim and we look at his small word scapes in new dimensions.

INNER REALMS

The signature of antiquity in the paintings echoes the monumentality of inner realms, giving viewers an impression that they are not the works of a contemporary artist but a man who straddles through many realms. After studying them meticulously, one will, however, notice that Satish deliberately breaks away from the practice of contemporary art and instead uses world practices.

To remain still is one of the qualities that the Eastern philosophy teaches when facing the rapidly-changing world and we get an aura of stillness when we read through. The words are soothing yet delicate. Behind his meticulous

thoughts, which portray a discipline inherited from tradition, there are innovative and ingenious experiments. Satish creates a synergy by his seamless intertwining of tradition and the avant-garde both in his words as well as his paintings. Just after reading a few pages, it feels like we are being introduced to fantasies on paper and enchantment in the verbal world. The visual richness comprises colour splashes and bold strokes. We can gain multiple moments of silence through the pages, understanding the traditional aesthetics of both concept and imagery — the kinetics of consciousness also come into play — and you realise that silence is the source of his inspiration.

UNIVERSAL CULTURES

Satish's paintings are awash with the spirit of universal, traditional cultures, but they also go far beyond the conventional boundaries of ink/watercolour painting, exuding an aura that is both spiritual and filled with mystery. His words, thoughts and works are a mix of genres — Indian and international, traditional and contemporary. The sculptures are mesmerising if not filled with a dense gravitas.

This book tells us that the tides of the universe are in our veins and nature's peace flows around us. The sea is emotions incarnated for Satish, and we have to travel, stop and look at the waves to know and understand the beauty of the sheer surging of life, and the tidal wave of Being. The sinuous strokes of black and white embody the perfect joy of each separate muscle, joint and sinew in that it is everything that mirrors the waves and the soil and the sea. The book tells us that in life, nature is aglow and rampant, expressing itself in movement and we must be protectors as well as nurturers of the Earth and its bounty.

The rhythmic quality of the words resonates with the artist's underlying statements. The inner spirit of the paper used becomes the beauty of painting and the enchantment of the moment is the passion inherent. All great works of art and books have one thing in common — they touch hearts universally, across time and boundaries.



Oscar number game

From *Black Panther* to *Roma*, this year's nominations have been viral already but here are some fun and unknown facts behind these choices

After more than 30 years and some two dozen films, Spike Lee has received his first Academy Award nomination for Best Director for *BlacKkKlansman*. It's also the first time that one of his films have been nominated for Best Picture.

Glenn Close's Best Actress nomination for *The Wife* is her seventh, and could finally mean her first Oscar. She has more nominations without a win than any other living actor or actress.

Black Panther is the first Marvel movie — and the first superhero film of any kind — to be nominated for Best Picture. Its \$700 million box-office take is more than the earnings of the other seven Best-Picture nominees combined.

Roma is the first Netflix film to be nominated for Best Picture.

Sam Elliott's first Oscar nomination — for Best Supporting Actor in *A Star Is Born* — comes 50 years after his first acting credit, on the TV series *Judd for the Defense*.

Rami Malek, nominated for playing Queen frontman Freddie Mercury in *Bohemian Rhapsody*,

is the only first-time Oscar nominee among the men up for Best Actor. He's up against multiple nominees like Christian Bale, Bradley Cooper, Viggo Mortensen and Willem Dafoe.

Yalitza Aparicio's nomination for *Roma* comes in her first role as an actress.

This is the second of Hollywood's four versions of *A Star Is Born*, to get a Best Picture nomination, along with the 1937 original. The 1954 and 1976 versions each got several Oscar nominations, but not for Best Picture.

No women were nominated for Best Director this year. The number of female directorial nominees in the 91-year history of Oscars remains only five.

Eighty-seven countries had submitted films to be considered for Best Foreign Language Film. Only five of them got nominated — Germany, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico and Poland.

Bob Hope hosted the Oscars a record 19 times. No one is scheduled to host this year's ceremony.

—AP

MERE GULLY MEIN PLAGIARISED?

It hasn't been long that Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt-starrer *Gully Boy's* teaser went viral making waves across social media. The film is an intimate recounting of Mumbai's homegrown rap scene and the musicians who defined it.

With release of the film's *Mere Gully Mein* recently, there

was again appreciation going around. However, it turned out that there are issues with this track as well (as with *Apna Time Aayega*, which was said to be plagiarised), and this time it's not just an "inspired" look. The track is a cover of a 2015 song of the same name. While the filmmakers

noted that it was a remake, the song's original creator has now claimed that he "wasn't paid the royalties due to him."

Sajeel Kapoor, better known by his stage name Sez on the Beat, took to social media following the song's release and posted that while he appreciates the film's

attempt to trace the origins of Mumbai's indie rap scene, he was "not informed" that his track was being used for the film until recently, nor that it would be a cover instead of his original and, perhaps most pertinently, he was not paid royalties for it, despite having a contract with the makers.

Pliskova slays Serena's title bid

Karolina saves four match points to upset Williams in quarterfinal clash; Djoker marches past injured Nishikori

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Serena Williams's bid for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title was brought to a halt in sensational style at the Australian Open on Wednesday by Karolina Pliskova, but fellow former champion Novak Djokovic cruised into the semi-finals.

The American great had beaten world number one Simona Halep in the fourth round but folded against the tall Czech seventh seed, who saved four match points before winning 6-4, 4-6, 7-5 under the hot Melbourne sun.

Her reward is a clash against Japan's Naomi Osaka for a place in the final, after the Japanese fourth seed braved brutally swatted aside the injured Elina Svitolina 6-4, 6-1.

World number one Djokovic enjoyed an early night when courageous Kei Nishikori retired with a thigh strain when losing 6-1, 4-1 after going through three five-set epics during the tournament.

It kept the Serb's bid for a record seventh Australian title on track and he will now meet French 28th seed Lucas Pouille, who beat power-serving Canadian Milos Raonic 7-6 (7/4), 6-3, 6-7 (2/7), 6-4 to make his first Slam semi.

It was a gut-wrenching defeat for Williams, who battled back from a set down and was leading 5-1 in the third and serving for the match, only to throw it away with some wild shots as frustrations bubbled to the surface.

"There's nothing I did wrong on those match points. I stayed aggressive. She just literally hit the lines on some of them," said the dumbfounded 37-year-old, who rolled an ankle but refused to blame it for the defeat.

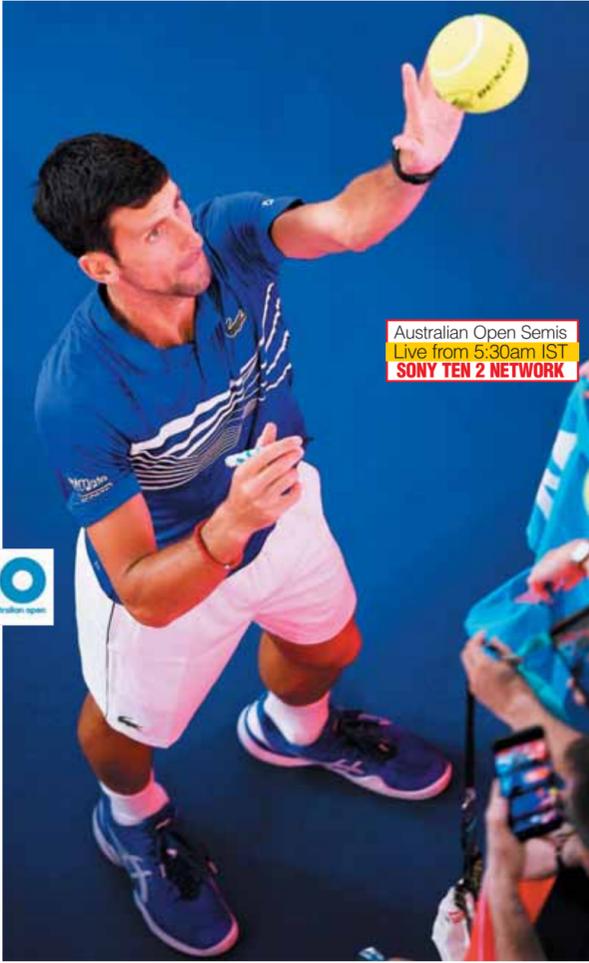
Since returning last year from giving birth, Williams has made four unsuccessful attempts to match Margaret Court's long-time standing 24 Grand Slam titles, and the wait continues with the French Open in May her next chance.

"The big picture for me is always winning," she added. "I'm not going to sit here and lie about that. It hasn't happened yet, but I feel like it's going to happen."

For Pliskova, it is only her third semi-final at a major.

She made the last four at Roland Garros in 2017 and the US Open a year earlier, where she beat Williams before losing the final to Angelique Kerber.

"I was almost in the locker-room but now I am standing here as a winner. It is



Australian Open Semis
Live from 5:30am IST
SONY TEN 2 NETWORK



a very good feeling," she said after depriving Williams of a US Open final rematch with Osaka.

CALM OSAKA

Asked about facing Osaka next, Pliskova replied: "She's dangerous but nobody is more dangerous than Serena."

A focused Osaka rolled past Ukraine's Svitolina, who was troubled by neck and shoulder problems.

Despite the Ukrainian suffering, it was nevertheless a serious statement from the steely-eyed Osaka, who was playing the sort of tennis which drove her to the US Open title.



HALEP'S REIGN AS NUMBER ONE OVER

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Petra Kvitova's surging win over Ashleigh Barty to make the Australian Open semi-finals ensured Simona Halep's reign as world number one is over, not that the Romanian is bothered.

The Czech star overtook Halep's points total, while Naomi Osaka and Karolina Pliskova also have a mathematical shot at assuming the mantle when the new rankings come out next week.

Entering the opening Grand Slam of the year, 11 players had a chance to hold the top spot, but that has now been whittled down.

Of the three in the running, only Pliskova has been there before, in 2017 when she became the first Czech woman to do so.

To do so again she must win the title on Saturday.

"I tried to be consistent, it's unfortunate that she got injured but playing against her even when she was injured was still really tough," said the 21-year-old.

"I just had one goal, to try as hard I can and not get angry. I didn't do that really well in the last two rounds and I did that



today so I'm really happy with the way I played."

Djokovic, who is targeting a 15th Grand Slam title, endured his own tough fourth round showdown with Daniil Medvedev and said he was glad to get off court early.

"As they say, this is exactly what the doctor ordered for me after the match two nights ago," he said. "Not to spend too much time on the court."

"I've had plenty of matches so far this year and I am in another semi-final and I will do everything to get ready for that one."

Pouille had never won a match in Melbourne before this year but has recruited 2006 Australian Open champion Amelie Mauresmo to his team and said it was paying off.



Sanjita Chanu celebrates after winning Gold at Gold Coast CWG

IWF lifts ban on Sanjita

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The International Weightlifting Federation has revoked the provisional suspension on weightlifter K Sanjita Chanu for a failed dope test, a major reprieve for the two-time Commonwealth Games Gold-medallist who has claimed innocence.

In a case that has dragged on for almost a year and has been marred by an 'administrative' goof-up in Sanjita's sample number, the IWF informed that a final decision on the matter is expected in the coming days.

"On the basis of the information at its disposal, the IWF has decided that the provisional suspension of the athlete (Khumukcham Sanjita) shall be lifted as of today (22 January 2019)," IWF's legal counsel Eva Nyirfa said in an e-mail sent to the national federation and Sanjita.

"The IWF Hearing Panel will render its decision on the athlete's case in due course," it added.

The 25-year-old Sanjita, who had won Gold in the women's 53kg category at the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, had tested positive for anabolic steroid testosterone. Her urine sample was taken prior to the World Championships in United States in November 2017, and she was put under provisional suspension from May 15 last year.

A final decision of the IWF panel is yet to come but Sanjita said her assertion of innocence has been vindicated.

"I have got a mail from the international federation and our national federation has also called me up this morning informing about the lifting of the (provisional) suspension. I am relieved and happy. I am innocent and I have never taken any banned substance in my career. I am vindicated now," she said.

"At the same time, I experienced mental trauma during these past 8-9 months (since May 15 last year) due to the mistake of the international federation. I hope nothing like this happens to any athlete in future. An athlete's reputation is very precious," she added.

Sanjita said the Indian Weightlifting Federation had asked her to join the national camp immediately if she wants.

"The federation official told me today to write if I want to join national camp. I am doing that. I missed the Asian Games and World Championships in 2018. I want to compete in the World Championships this year and qualify for 2020 Olympics. For any athlete, Olympics is the ultimate," she said.

The international body informed about her doping offence only in May last year. That meant the Manipuri weightlifter participated in the Gold Coast CWG, where she finished top of the podium. She had also won Gold in the 48kg in the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

Winning start for Saina & Sindhu

PTI ■ JAKARTA

The Indian trio of P V Sindhu, Saina Nehwal and Kidambi Srikanth dished out superb performances on the opening day to advance to the second round of the \$350,000 Indonesia Masters World Tour Super 500 badminton tournament here on Wednesday.

Olympic and World Championship Silver medallist Sindhu opened the new season with a fighting 22-24, 21-8, 21-17 win over 2012 London Games champion Li Xuerui of China in a 54-minute women's singles match.

The second seeded Indian will now be pitted against Indonesia's Gregoria Mariska Tunjung.

Eighth seeded Saina, who had reached the semifinals at the Malaysia Masters last week, recovered from a first-game loss to secure a 7-21, 21-16, 21-11 win over local hope Dinar Dyah Ayustine, ranked 50th, in another women's singles match. It was Saina's third win over Ayustine.



Saina Nehwal returns a shot during her first round clash

Saina Nehwal/Twitter

The 28-year-old from Hyderabad will next face another Indonesian Fitriani Fitriani, against whom she has a 4-0 head-to-head record.

In men's singles, eighth seed Srikanth eased past Malaysia's Chong Wei Feng 21-12, 21-8 to set

up a showdown with Japan's Asian Games bronze medallist Kenta Nishimoto.

But compatriots B Sai Praneeth and Subhankar Dey failed to cross the opening hurdle at the tournament.

2017 Singapore Open champion Praneeth was sent packing 12-21, 16-21 by Olympic champion Chen Long of China in 40 minutes, while Subhankar, who had won his maiden title at SaarLorLux Open in Germany last year, fought hard before going down 14-21, 21-19, 15-21 against former World champion Viktor Axelsen of Denmark.

Local hope Anthony Sinisuka Ginting, seeded seventh, proved a difficult customer for Parupalli Kashyap once again as he claimed a 21-12, 21-16 win over the former Commonwealth Games champion.

In men's doubles, national champions Manu Attri and B Sumeth Reddy dished out a fighting game to notch up a 14-21, 21-19, 21-15 win over Denmark's Mads Pieler Kolding and Niclas Nohr.

Commonwealth Games Bronze medallist pair of Ashwini Ponnappa and N Sikki Reddy also bowed out of the competition, losing 14-21, 14-21 to Thailand's Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai in the women's doubles opener.

LOCAL EVENTS

MORADABAD ENTER SEMIS

Moradabad women's team defeated Meerut 51-19 to enter the semi-finals of State-Level Senior Kabbadi Championship at KD Singh 'Babu' Stadium on Wednesday. In other quarter-final matches, Prayagraj beat Kanpur 27-13 while Varanasi and Moradabad defeated Lucknow and Meerut respectively to enter last four. In the men's category, Saharanpur, Moradabad, Meerut and Varanasi won their respective matches against Mirzapur, Prayagraj, Kanpur and Agra to book the semis berth.

TEAM ANNOUNCED

Lucknow boy's and girl's teams for the State Youth Athletics Championship were announced on Wednesday.

Boy's: Rajveer Gupta, Suber Alam, Rahul Gupta, Himanshu Yadav, Sachin, Ali Haider, Brijesh Yadav, Shashank, Ashutosh, Atul Yadav
Girl's: Arci Krishna, Shivanshi Awasthi, Riya Maurya, Akshara Mishra, Anamika Devi, Harshita Yadav, Pooja Kumari, Asmita Singh, Aasana Siddiqui. **Coach:** Vibha Singh. **Manager:** Haleemuddin.

HOCKEY TRIALS

Uttar Pradesh Hockey is organising selection trials for junior men's team at Mohammad Shahid Stadium on January 29. Uttar Pradesh Hockey secretary RP Singh said that the selected team would participate in the 9th Hockey India Junior Men's National Championship, to be held at Aurangabad from February 17.

CRICKET TRIALS

The trial forms of UPCA for U-14, U-16, U-19, U-23, Ranji Trophy and women's are available at Cricket Association Lucknow's office. Interested may contact ML Mishra on 9335214007.

None better than Harendra as India coach: Sandeep

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former captain Sandeep Singh on Wednesday slammed the frequent change of coaches in Indian hockey, asserting that there is none better for the job than the recently-removed Harendra Singh.

Harendra was sacked as India coach earlier this month following a disappointing 2018 and offered another stint with the junior squad. He became the sixth coach to be sacked in as many years.

"You can't be changing coaches this frequently. The crucial Olympic qualifier (FIH Series Finals in June) is ahead of us and we should not be experimenting too much. I don't think I have worked with a better coach than Harendra sir," Sandeep said at the launch of *Flickers Brothers hockey academy*, his joint venture with brother Bikramjeet.

"There are a few coaches (in India) who can coach at the highest level and Harendra paaji is one of them. He should have been given more time.

"Any new coach takes about six months to adjust to the system and players also need time to understand his methods. The team doesn't have that kind of time (ahead Olympic qualifiers)," he said.

India have had a variety of foreign coaches and Harendra helming the national team was a rarity in recent times. But he could not even last 12 months after taking charge, following the team's medal-less showing at the Commonwealth Games in April.

Hockey India has invited fresh applications for the post and Sandeep, who was best known for his ferocious drag-flicks, feels an Indian coach will be most beneficial for the team.

"There is no language barrier and more importantly, you don't hesitate while interacting with an Indian coach. Indian coaches are strict on the field but off the field they take very good care of you," he explained.

The phenomenon of dropping players without giving them ample opportunities is another aspect that bogs down Indian coaches, said Sandeep.

The biggest worry for the national team, according to Sandeep, is lack of world-class goalkeepers.

"My biggest worry is when P R Sreejesh retires, who will be replace him? I don't see anyone matching up to his standards. We have to prepare goalkeepers. Strikers and drag-flickers keep coming but not goalkeepers. I hope he plays for another five to seven years."

'India could have done better in Asian Cup'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian football team striker Ijeje Lalpekhlua on Wednesday rued the country's crashing out of the ongoing Asian Cup and said it could have done better in the continental showpiece event.

The Indian team was on the verge of booking a maiden knock-out round berth but conceded goal via penalty at the far end of the group match against Bahrain. India needed a draw to reach the Round of 16 but lost 0-1 to Bahrain to exit from the tournament.

"We gave our 100 per cent in every match. But we could have done better. Not qualifying out of the group stages is a setback for us. But it shows anything can happen in football," Lalpekhlua said.

"It was a very difficult match against Bahrain and it was unfortunate the way we lost. However, that is life in football, and the important part is the experience earned by the young players that will give dividends in future," he was quoted as saying by the official

website of All India Football Federation.

India outplayed Thailand 4-1 in the opening match to notch up its first win in the Asian Cup since 1964. Thailand eventually qualified for the Round of 16 where they lost to China.

"Our biggest achievement was the win against Thailand," said Lalpekhlua, who had scored India's fourth goal in that match.

"But we have to make Asian Cup qualification a regular feature. Now we need to focus to do well in World Cup Qualifiers, followed by yet again qualifying for the Asian Cup (for 2023)," said the player from Mizoram.

"The sleeping giant is now awake. We have shown to all in Asia that we belong on the same page as them. Our performance in the Asian Cup has improved tenfold, and it can only get better from here as young players have been given the needed experience. Indian football can go only upwards from here towards a brighter future," Lalpekhlua said.

SINGLES

BALOTELLI COMPLETES MARSEILLE MOVE

PARIS: Marseille have completed the signing of Italy striker Mario Balotelli from their French rivals Nice, the Ligue 1 club confirmed on Wednesday. Balotelli, 28, has signed for the former European champions until the end of the season after being released from the remainder of his contract by Nice and passing a medical at the Velodrome earlier in the day. The impending arrival of the former AC Milan, Inter and Liverpool forward, who has scored 14 goals in 36 games for Italy. Marseille coach Rudi Garcia said this week that signing Balotelli was his "number one priority". OM are currently seventh in Ligue 1 and have struggled for goals after failing in an attempt to bring Balotelli to the club last summer. Their main strikers, Valere Germain and Kostas Mitroglou, have scored just three league goals each so far this season.

CHELSEA CLOSING ON HIGUAIN DEAL

LONDON: Chelsea are in final talks to sign Juventus striker Gonzalo Higuain, head coach Maurizio Sarri said on Wednesday as he looks to bolster his team's firepower. Sarri previously coached Higuain at Napoli when he scored a Serie A record 36 goals in a league campaign in 2015/16. That sort of goalscoring prowess is what Chelsea have been badly missing in recent months, with Sarri's lack of confidence in Alvaro Morata and Olivier Giroud forcing Eden Hazard into an unfamiliar centre-forward role. "They're a few hours into signing a contract today," Sarri said. Chelsea play Tottenham in Thursday's League Cup semi-final second leg at Stamford Bridge, bidding to overturn a 1-0 deficit to reach the February 24 final.

DUSSEN LEADS SA TO SERIES-LEVELLING WIN

DURBAN: Hendrick 'Rassie' van der Dussen and Andile Phehlukwayo guided South Africa to a series-levelling win in a roller-coaster second one-day international against Pakistan at Kingsmead on Tuesday. The pair came together when South Africa were 80 for five in reply to Pakistan's 203. They put on an unbeaten 127 as South Africa won by five wickets with eight overs to spare. Van der Dussen, playing in his second one-day international, made an unbeaten 80 after scoring 93 on debut. Phehlukwayo was named man-of-the-match after two career-best performances. He took four for 22 in Pakistan's innings and then scored 69 not out. Earlier Hasan Ali, batting at number ten, hit a career-best 59 off 45 balls and helped captain Sarfraz Ahmed (41) put on 90 for the ninth wicket to enable Pakistan to reach 203.

SARFRAZ CAUGHT PASSING COMMENTS

DURBAN: Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed could find himself in trouble after he was caught by stump mics making what seemed to be racist comments against a South African player during their second one-day. According to reports, Sarfraz made these comments against Andile Phehlukwayo in the 37th over of South Africa's run chase on Tuesday. Phehlukwayo sided with a Shaheen Afridi delivery for a single. He was on 50 at the time and as he ran off to the non-striker's end, Sarfraz was caught on the stump mics passing some comments in Urdu. "Abey kaale, teri ammi aaj kahaan baithen hain? Kya parwa ke aaye hai aaj (Hey black guy, where's your mother sitting today? What have you got her to say for you today?)" Sarfraz was quoted as saying by 'ESPNCricinfo' website.

ANAND PLAYS DRAW WITH RAPPORT

WIJK AAN ZEE: Viswanathan Anand played out an easy draw as black with Richard Rapport of Hungary to stay in joint lead on six points after the end of the ninth round of Tata Steel Masters chess tournament. Tackling his first of the two back-to-back black games in a row with ease, Anand had a level position on board for the major part and is now in a three-way tie with four rounds still remaining in the first super tournament of the year. Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia joined Anand and world champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway in the lead following a fine victory over Indian Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi. Ding Liren of China played out a draw with tailender Vladimir Kramnik to be joint fourth along side Dutchman Anish Giri who was held to a draw by compatriot Jorden Van Foreest.

TIM HOWARD TO RETIRE AFTER 2019

NEW YORK: Former United States goalkeeper Tim Howard announced on Tuesday that he will retire from the sport after his 2019 Major League Soccer season with the Colorado Rapids. The 39-year-old former Manchester United and Everton stopper, a veteran of three World Cup campaigns, confirmed his decision to hang up his gloves in a statement on *Twitter*. "I'm greatly looking forward to kicking off the 2019 MLS season, as it will be my LAST," Howard wrote. "There will be plenty of time for sentiment later. For now, I am going to enjoy every minute. And as I've always done, compete hard and help lead the Rapids with the sole purpose of winning." Howard is the most capped goalkeeper in US national team history with 121 appearances. **Agencies**

All round India trap Kiwis

Kuldeep, Shami bowl Blackcaps out for 157 runs before Dhawan smashes 75* to help Men in Blue register 8 wicket win



PTI ■ NAPIER

India produced cricket of the calibre that has become synonymous with Virat Kohli's men to crush New Zealand in the first ODI but a bizarre and unprecedented sun-induced interruption overshadowed the on-field action on Wednesday.

Entering the five-match rubber following maiden Test and ODI series triumphs in Australia, India signalled their intent with a clinical display, which saw them chase down a revised target of 156 by eight wickets in 34.5 overs.

The Duckworth-Lewis method came into the picture for an interruption which was not caused by rain for the first time.

On a near-perfect day, the only thing that didn't go their way was the toss. But India made light of that by bowling out the home team for a paltry 157 in 38 overs.

Wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav was the most successful bowler, returning figures of 4/39 in 10 overs, while seamer Mohammed Shami finished with an excellent 3/19 in six overs. There were also two wickets for leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal.

Captain Kane Williamson top-scored for the hosts with 64 off 81 balls.

In response, Shikhar Dhawan began the innings with a flurry of boundaries, eventually finishing as the top-scorer with 75 off 103 balls.

The left-handed opening batsman, battling indifferent form, studied his innings with six boundaries.

India were comfortably placed at 44 for one when, in a bizarre turn of events, players walked off the ground after dinner because the setting sun made it difficult for them to spot the ball at McLean Park.



MS Dhoni stumps Lockie Ferguson during the 1st ODI between New Zealand and India in Napier AP

SHAMI FASTEST INDIAN TO 100 ODI WICKETS

NAPIER: Pacer Mohammed Shami on Wednesday became the fastest Indian to claim 100 wickets in One-Day Internationals, reaching the mark in the opening match against New Zealand.

This was his 56th game in the 50-over format.

Shami's wicket number 100 was New Zealand opener Martin Gupthill, who played onto his stumps a delivery that moved in after pitching on a good length.

With his brilliant opening burst at McLean Park, the 28-year-old Shami continued his good showing in the limited overs format, having impressed in Australia prior to this



five-match ODI series.

Before Shami, Irfan Pathan reached the 100-wicket mark in 59 ODIs, while Zaheer Khan (65 matches), Ajit Agarkar (67) and Javagal Srinath (68) are the other Indian bowlers to complete a century of wickets in the quickest time. PTI

FASTEST 5000 RUNS IN ONE DAYERS			
Batsman	M	Inn	Time Period
Hashim Amla (South Africa)	104	101	6y & 313 days
Viv Richards (West Indies)	126	114	11y & 237 days
Virat Kohli (India)	120	114	5y & 95 days
Brian Lara (West Indies)	120	118	6y & 359 days
Shikhar Dhawan (India)	119	118	8y & 95 days

Faisal Features

Kohli rested for last 2 ODIs and T20 series

PTI ■ NAPIER

India captain Virat Kohli was on Wednesday rested for the last two games of the five-match ODI series against New Zealand and the following T20 series owing to his "workload in the last few months".

Vice-captain Rohit Sharma will lead the side in his absence.

The selection committee and the team management took the call in view of his packed schedule over the past couple of months.

"Considering his workload in the last few months, the team management and senior selection committee is of the view that it would be ideal for him to get adequate rest ahead of the home series against Australia," said the BCCI in a statement.

"There will be no replacement for Mr Kohli in the squad for the



New Zealand series. Rohit Sharma will captain the side in the final two ODIs and T20I series," it added.

After the ongoing New Zealand tour, India will host Australia for five ODIs starting February 24 and soon after the IPL follows.

This led to an interruption that has never been seen in international cricket before.

Because of the nearly half-an-hour delay, the target was revised to 156 in 49 overs, which the visitors chased without much ado.

While Rohit Sharma may have lost his focus after the dinner break, Kohli and Dhawan didn't let the sun-induced stoppage distract their minds when play resumed. Kohli, though, got out five short of a fifty.

The Indian captain hit three boundaries in his 59-ball knock before pacer Lockie Ferguson had him caught behind with a quick delivery that caught the batsman by surprise.

In the course of his 26th ODI fifty, Dhawan became the joint fourth fastest batsman to reach 5000 runs. Dhawan needed 118 innings to reach the mark.

This knock will bring some relief for Dhawan as he hasn't scored a half century in his last nine innings.

Earlier, opting to bat, the New Zealanders were off to an inauspicious start, losing both openers Martin Gupthill and Colin Munro within the

first five overs with just 18 runs on the board.

By sending back Gupthill in his 56th match, the 28-year-old Shami became the fastest Indian to reach 100 wickets in ODIs.

Coming into the series after a hugely successful 2018, Ross Taylor looked good in his 41-ball 24, but he was brilliantly caught and bowled by Chahal, who lured the batsman to dance down the pitch a tad too early with his change of pace.

Till Taylor was there alongside Williamson, things looked good for New Zealand, as the duo played a few delightful shots, especially the skipper whose trademark backfoot punch through the covers stood out.

Tom Latham was dismissed in similar fashion, with leg-spinner Chahal being the bowler.

Henry Nicholls and Mitchell Santner came, swung their willows for a six and a couple of boundaries, and got out to Jadhav and Shami respectively as New Zealand stuttered at 133 for six in the 30th over.

By that time, Williamson too had had enough, and got out while trying to hoick Yadav over long-on.



THE BIZARRE SUN BREAK

PTI ■ NAPIER

Sun stops play after dinner. Sounds bizarre? But this is what happened in the first India-New Zealand ODI at the McLean Park.

Rain interruption in international cricket bringing the Duckworth-Lewis method into consideration is nothing new. But here it was the sun that troubled the batsmen by coming right in the line of their view, forcing play to stop for about half an hour.

Indian captain Virat Kohli said he has never experienced a sun-induced stoppage in his life.

"Never in my life," he said when asked about the halt due to which the target was revised by two runs and the match shortened by an over.

"It was funny. In 2014, I got out once with the sun in my eyes and this rule wasn't there then," Kohli said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

The decision to halt proceedings was taken after the dinner break of the day-nighter, keeping the players' safety in

mind, on-field umpire Shaun George said.

"The setting sun is in the eyes of the players and we need to think of their safety as well as umpires. There was an awareness of it by the players (they didn't appeal)," said the umpire.

New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson also took a light-hearted view on the situation.

"It is hard to move the sun and hard to move the Grand Stand. So, we didn't have much option and had to sit down a bit," he quipped.

Stoppages due to sun have been witnessed in the past here during the domestic competitions, and reportedly, also at few English grounds, but none of them were international matches.

In 1980, and India-England Test match in Mumbai, called Bombay at the time, was brought forward by a day due to a solar eclipse.

Normally, the cricket pitches are positioned in the North-South direction to avoid this scenario, but at McLean Park, the pitch is East-West facing.

Indian Eves eye on-field success after off-field drama

PTI ■ NAPIER

The Indian women's cricket team will aim to put behind the off-field furores and bring the focus back on the game when it clashes with New Zealand in a three-match ODI series starting on Thursday.

The Indian women's team was at the centre of a huge controversy after its semi-final exit in the T20 World Cup in the West Indies owing to a bitter public spat between ODI captain Mithali Raj and the then coach Ramish Powar.

Following the fiasco, WV Raman replaced Powar and this will be his first assignment at the helm. Mithali also had a fallout with T20 skipper and star batter Harmanpreet Kaur but asserted on the eve of the series that she has moved on from all the drama and is focussed on the task at hand.

The side would be aiming to improve its fifth position in the ICC Women's Championship table through this series, which is part of the world body's women's championship and will determine qualifiers for the 2021 World Cup.

India lost the home leg of the ICC Women's Championship series 2-1 to New Zealand during the last cycle that ran from 2014-2016.

However, the team has enough firepower in stylish opener Smriti Mandhana, who has already scored 488 runs in the championship.

New Zealand are presently in second position on the table with 12 points from nine matches while India are fifth with eight points and ahead of Pakistan only on net run rate. Defending champions Australia lead the table with 16 points from nine outings.

The losses at the ICC Women's World Cup 2017 and the Women's World T20 last year put paid to New Zealand's hopes of qualifying for the knockouts.

They now get a chance to outdo India in home conditions, which will also help their chances of qualifying directly for the 2021 Women's World Cup, which will be competed here. The hosts and four other top teams will direct entries to the premier event two years from now.

New Zealand are without wicketkeeper-batter Katey Martin, who is unavailable due to work commitments, but have match-winners in the likes of former captain Suzie Bates and Sophie Devine, who leads the championship run table with 592 with three hundreds.

Spin bowler Leigh Kasperk is another one to look out for with 19 wickets in the championship so far.

New Zealand have played England, Pakistan and the Windies so far while India have completed their engagements against Australia, South Africa and Sri Lanka.



Indian skipper Mithali Raj and her Kiwi counterpart pose with the trophy ahead of ODI series opener Blackcaps

New Zealand vs India
Live from 6:30am IST
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

Pujara, Mayank highlight Ranji semis

PTI ■ BENGALURU

All eyes will be on prolific India batsman Cheteshwar Pujara and Mayank Agarwal in opposite sides when domestic powerhouses Saurashtra and Karnataka take on each other in the five-day Ranji Trophy semifinal starting here on Thursday.

Pujara has been in supreme touch as he became India's highest run-getter with three centuries in their maiden Test series victory in Australia.

Just after the Test series, Pujara played a crucial role in Saurashtra's quarterfinal match against Uttar Pradesh.

He cracked an unbeaten 67 in the second innings to help Saurashtra defeat Uttar Pradesh by six wickets.

The visiting team also has the likes of Sheldon Jackson in the middle order to provide the much-needed stability.

For Karnataka batsman Agarwal, a good knock in the Ranji semifinals will help him cement his place in the Indian team. He scored 195 runs in three innings he played in Test series in Australia.

The local lad had returned to India a few days before the start of ODI series against Australia after sustaining a thumb injury in the Test series. Subsequently, he missed the Ranji quarter-final match against Rajasthan.

Apart from Agarwal, skipper Manish Pandey, who has been scoring runs, will be looking to continue his good form. Vinay Kumar, Karun Nair and Jaydev Unadkat are the other international players who would like to contribute for Karnataka.

Unadkat, Vinay and Abhimanyu Mithun have been in good form with the ball, while Krishnappa Gowtham is an all-rounder on whom Karnataka can bank upon.

While in the other semifinal in Wayanad, Kerala will hope to turn the tables on the in-form defending champion Vidarbha at the Krishnagiri stadium.

Karan apologises for Pandya-Rahul episode

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Breaking his silence on the controversy following comments by cricketers Hardik Pandya and K L Rahul on his chat show, filmmaker Karan Johar says he apologises for what happened and admits the conversation "may have crossed boundaries".

The filmmaker also said he feels very responsible for the remarks made on "Koffee with Karan" and has spent sleepless nights wondering how to "undo this damage".

Pandya and Rahul were widely slammed for their remarks labelled misogynistic and sexist and have been provisionally suspended by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), pending an inquiry.

"I'm not justifying the conversation that happened on the episode. I'm saying that perhaps things were said that may have



Hardik Pandya and KL Rahul pose for photo with Karan Johar during his chat show K/0

crossed boundaries and I apologise because it was my platform where it happened," Johar told ET Now in an interview.

"The filmmaker said the boys have 'paid the price' for what happened on the episode.

"I haven't spoken about it really... I feel very responsible because it was my show and my platform. I invited them as guests and so the ramifications and repercussions of the show are my responsibility.

"I have had so many sleepless nights, just wondering about how I can undo this damage. Who is going to listen to me? It has now gone into a zone that is beyond my control," Johar told the channel in the interview posted on Twitter on Wednesday.

Calling himself a feminist who has been brought up by strong women, Johar said he asks the same questions to everyone.

Asked if he has any regrets about the episode, Johar said he regretted what has happened to them.

After the controversy, the episode featuring the two cricketers was taken down by Hotstar.

"Certain remarks/comments made by the guests on the episode 12 of Koffee with Karan may hurt the sentiments of our users/viewers. As a responsible platform, we have removed the episode from Hotstar with immediate effect," Hotstar had tweeted.

Aus name two debutants

AFP ■ BRISBANE

Australia have named debutants Kurtis Patterson and Jhye Richardson and recalled opener Joe Burns for the first Test beginning in Brisbane on Thursday.

Patterson scored centuries in both innings playing for the Cricket Australia XI against Sri Lanka in Hobart last week, prompting selectors to call him into the squad.

The 25-year-old has scored 3,813 first-class runs for New South Wales at an average of 41.00 and will bat at number six.

West Australian fast bowler Richardson, who was impressive in the ODI series against India,

comes in for the injured Josh Hazlewood.

Selectors resisted the temptation to blood 20-year-old batsman Will Pucovski, who many are touting as the next Ricky Ponting, opting instead for the experienced Burns.

Burns, 29, played his last Test against South Africa in April last year but has three Test centuries to his name.

Australia: Tim Paine (capt), Marcus Harris, Joe Burns, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Travis Head, Kurtis Patterson, Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Jhye Richardson, Nathan Lyon.

Australia vs Sri Lanka
Live from 8:30am IST
SONY TEN 3 NETWORK

SL hoping for a miracle in Test series

AFP ■ BRISBANE

Sri Lanka have closely studied the way India defeated Australia in their recent Test series, but captain Dinesh Chandimal said on Wednesday that his side will still need a miracle to do the same.

Speaking to reporters ahead of Thursday's opening Test at the Gabba, Chandimal was cautious when asked about Sri Lanka's chances.

"It's definitely a challenge for us, and if you can take this challenge — and as a batsman or as a bowler you give it your best shot and give 200 percent to the team — we can do a miracle here," he said.

"That's what we want to do as a team, and we'll keep our fingers crossed."



Dinesh Chandimal and Tim Paine pose with trophy ahead of 1st Test AFP

The Sri Lankan skipper said he wasn't perturbed by the notoriously fast and bouncy Gabba wicket.

"When you look at the pitch you can see a lot of grass on the wicket," he said.

"We have got really good fast bowlers so that's a real plus," he added.

The skipper also said that he wanted to make history and become the first Sri Lankan captain to win a Test series in Australia, but wouldn't take his opponents lightly. "We never underestimate the Australians," he said.

"They have some really good players, but in their batting unit they are missing a lot of experienced players. So if we can get early wickets we can put them under pressure."