

Opp creates ruckus; demands motion of thanks to Gov's address first

Chhattisgarh Assembly Winter Session

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Opposition BJP members on Tuesday created ruckus in the Chhattisgarh Assembly during the discussion on Appropriation bill.

The members were protesting discussion on Appropriation bill taken up before motion of thanks to Governor's address and demanded discussion on Governor's address first.

When the discussion on Appropriation bill commenced, the Opposition members objected and said that instead of giving priority to discussion on vote of thanks to the Governor the Treasury bench is holding discussion on Appropriation bill which was an insult to the Governor, they charged.

BJP member Brijmohan Agrawal said that it was a tradition of the House that discussion on motion of thanks to the Governor is conducted first. Holding discussion on Appropriation bill prior to it was thus not justifiable, he said.

Leader of Opposition Dharamlal Kaushik said: "We are not running out of the Assembly and the discussion on Appropriation bill should be after the discussion on vote of thanks to the Governor", he said.

Legislative Affairs Minister Ravindra Choubey disagreed with the stand of the Opposition members



while asserting that they were opposing the issue related to interest of farmers of the State.

Earlier too in 2010, discussion on other topics have been done prior to discussion on vote of thanks to Governor, he said.

There would be point of order by the Chair on the issue and why you all are so furious over the issue of farmers, Choubey added.

Later, Speaker Charandas Mahant while dismissing the plea of Opposition members gave point of order that discussion on vote of thanks to the Governor would be held on January 9, 10 and 11 and said that there were examples earlier too when discussions on Appropriation bill had been done prior to the discussions on vote of thanks to Governor.

Kalluri headed panel to probe multi-crore PDS scam

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh Government on Tuesday announced that it had appointed Inspector General of Police (IGP), Anti Corruption Bureau and Economic Offence Wing S.R.P. Kalluri as Head of Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe alleged financial irregularities in the Chhattisgarh State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited.

The other members of SIT are — I Kalyan Elsel, SP, Narayanpur, Manoj Kumar Khilari, ASP, ACB, Raipur, Uneja Khatoon Ansari, ASP, Jashpur, Vishwas Chandrakar, Dy SP, EOW, Anil Bakshi, Dy SP, EOW, Raipur, I S Kashyap, Inspector, CID, Raipur, Brijesh Tiwari, Inspector, ACB, Raipur, Ramakant Sahu, Inspector, ACB, Raipur, Motilal Patel, Inspector, Kanker, Farhan Qureshi, Inspector, EOW, Raipur, NN Chaturvedi, Legal Expert and Retired Deputy Director.

The team will submit its report within three months.

The alleged scam was exposed in February, 2015 when ACB and EOW sleuths conducted simultaneous raids at 25 premises of Chhattisgarh State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited and residences of its officials.

During the raid, a 113-page diary (in which names of beneficiaries of the scam were mentioned) was allegedly recovered.

The Congress party had alleged then that the content of only six pages of the diary was covered in the probe while remaining 107 pages were skipped. The scam is of the size of Rs 36,000 crores, it had stated.



'SRP heading SIT is not without thought'



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Home Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu on Tuesday said that the responsibility of heading the SIT on PDS scam by IPS officer SRP Kalluri might have been entrusted upon the officer after some thought was given by the Chief Minister.

Some of the decisions are taken by the General Administration Department and Home Department can't intervene on them, he said.

SRP Kalluri might have been posted with the Home Department but all transfers of All India Service officers are done after consultation with the Chief Minister, Sahu said.



Panchayat and Rural Development Minister TS Singhdeo flags off the 'Gajraj Project Vehicle' from his official residence in Raipur on Tuesday

Santosh Sahu | Pioneer

J Yojganandanam Chhattisgarh College to hold symposium today

150th Birth Anniversary of Father of Nation Mahatma Gandhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

As part of the series of programmes planned to mark the 150th Birth Anniversary of Father of Nation Mahatma

Gandhi, Press Information Bureau and Regional Outreach Bureau, Raipur will be jointly organising a Symposium at Government J Yojganandanam Chhattisgarh College here on Wednesday.

The Symposium is titled 'Return of Mahatma Gandhi to India from South Africa'.

The symposium will be addressed by Professor Dr Vasudev Shahasi and Prof Rajesh Shukla along with PIB and Regional Outreach Bureau,



Raipur, Additional Director General Sudarshan S Pantode. Special guest will be College Principal Dr C.L. Dewangan. The students of the college would also express their views on the subject.

Eight C'garh IAS officers on Central deputation right now

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Eight IAS officers of Chhattisgarh cadre are currently on Central Deputation, the Central Government has informed.

Further, One officer is on Inter Cadre Deputation to Uttar Pradesh as approved by the Competent Authority, it informed.

At present, there are 158 officers in position against the Total Authorized Strength (TAS) of 193 officers in Chhattisgarh Cadre of Indian

Administrative Service (IAS).

Accordingly, there is a shortage of 35 officers in Chhattisgarh Cadre of IAS. The shortfall in various cadres of IAS is a pan India phenomenon. To address the problem the Government has increased over the years, annual intake of IAS officers under Direct Recruitment Quota. In promotion quota prompt actions have been taken for holding of Selection Committee Meeting for appointment by promotion/selection of State Service Officers in IAS.

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader and former Chief Minister Raman Singh during the discussion on Appropriation bill in the Chhattisgarh Assembly on Tuesday charged that the ruling party of backtracking from its poll promise of enforcing total prohibition.

Commenting on the Appropriation bill he said the government once again is depending on liquor contractors in the State.

The former Chief Minister also claimed that his Government did tenfold better work for the farmers than the Congress Government. "We had provided farm loan on zero percent interest and initiated scheme of supplying 7500 units of power to farmers, he said.

Singh further alleged that due to the Appropriation bill the fiscal deficit would get doubled. It would rise to 4 per cent from the present 2 per cent, he said.

Speaking about farm loan waiver by the Congress government as its poll promise, Singh said the Government might have taken lesson from Madhya Pradesh government where the government had



also waived farmer loans taken from nationalized banks.

The Government here is 'fooling' the farmers and they have now come to know that the poll promises were made by Congress only to win the elections, he said.

Singh said the Congress had won the elections on basis of its poll manifesto but they now have to stress on fiscal management.

Panchayat Minister T.S. Singhdeo interrupted Singh and said it was good that the

former Chief Minister had studied Congress party's poll manifesto.

Congress member Satyanarayan Sharma speaking thereafter said the former Chief Minister was giving so many advises to the new government but if he had done his work in a better way they might not have been sitting in the Opposition. The new government was committed to its poll promises and the former Chief Minister should not show apprehension on it, he said.

CM to open 24th All India Forest Sports Meet today: Akbar

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The five-day, 24th, All India Forest Sports Meet will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Wednesday at 4.00 pm at Swami Vivekananda Stadium in Kota here.

Addressing a press conference here, Forest Minister Mohammed Akbar said that Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Dr Harsh Vardhan, forest ministers from Bihar and Punjab, senior officials of forest department of different states and former International Cricket player V.V.S. Laxman will participate in the inaugural session.

"A total of 2400 players from across the 29 states and seven Union Territories will be participating in the event including participants from seven All India level Forest and Wild Life related Institutes", Akbar said.

The events to be held are -athletics, archery, badminton, basketball, billiards, snooker, carrom, chess, cricket, cycling, football, golf, hockey, kabbadi, lawn tennis, shooting, squash, swimming and others," he said

"All the preparation for event has been completed while around 230 officers and employees of the State have been trained to participate in the event, Akbar said.

Different committees have



been constituted while sports associations will extend all technical services. All the events will be played on Raipur based grounds," the Minister said.

"Cultural events will be held on themes of Chhattisgarh's art and culture along with tourist spot details to be shared with the visiting teams," he said.

"Last time , Chhattisgarh was runners-up but this time it hopes to be winner. The total budget is around Rs nine crore while the food, transportation and accommodation will cost around Rs 4-5 crores," said C K Khetan, Additional Chief Secretary, Forest Department.

Opp members stage walkout, shout breach of privilege

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Opposition BJP members staged walkout from Chhattisgarh Assembly while charging breach of privilege by Minister for Home Affairs, Tourism, Culture and Religious Endowment Tamradhvaj Sahu over declaration about Rajim Punni Mela in public despite the notification of Assembly session getting issued.

ilege was moved by BJP member Shivratna Sharma but Speaker Charandas Mahant didn't allow a discussion on it while ruling that the issue had not been brought before him on time.

Brijmohan Agrawal and said earlier the Opposition members were stating that Congress has 60 years of experience and now surprisingly they were alleging that new government was inexperienced, they said.

BSP registers full staff attendance despite strike call claims mgt

Bhilai: During the strike call by Employees Union there was full attendance at the Plant level and normal working and production was reported in Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP) on Tuesday, a company press release informed.

Bhilai Steel Plant, employees showed their utmost commitment and reached their work spot and to attend their duty posts, it informed.

'Probe on death of lion cubs to depend on evidence received'

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

If substantial evidence is received, then the probe will be conducted into the death of Lion cubs in the Jungle Safari at Atal Nagar, said Forest Minister Mohammed Akbar on Tuesday.

ago. After two of them died, the third one was separated from the Lioness. This led to her mating and then giving birth to second set of four newborns in month of November (2018). The weaker four new born cubs had died within a short period.

interaction was also done with doctors and they stated that due to hair, they could not find the point of snake bite on Tiger.

SC reinstates...

From Page 1 The Bench said all authorities should be kept away from "intermingling or interfering" in the functioning of the CBI director.

'Spirited' Delhiites gulped over 16.5L litre to ring in New Year

PTI ■ NEW DELHI Delhiites partied hard to welcome 2019, gulping down over 16.5 lakh liquor bottles on the eve of New Year.



and clubs in the national Capital on December 31, the official said.

crore for the Delhi Government from the sale of liquor. The city Government had earned revenue of ₹4,243 crore from the sale of liquor in the 2016-17.

Unanimous LS clears...

From Page 1 Quoting the Supreme Court judgment, he said, "We are also of the opinion that the rule of 50 per cent applies only to reservation in favour of backward classes made under Article 16(4)."

party. With Opposition members using 'jumla' jibe, Jaitley hit back saying if the mention of a similar quota for the general category in their manifestos was a jumla as well.

leading the youth. The Bill, he said, was about promising and not delivering and was a fake dream that will never become a reality.

Verma leave order bonafide: Jaitley

From Page 1 "The Government took this decision to protect the integrity of the CBI... Government took the action of sending two senior officers of CBI on leave on CVC's recommendation," he said, referring to the decision to send Verma and CBI Special Director Rakesh Asthana on leave.

Citizenship Bill pulls through LS...

From Page 1 "They have no place to go to, except India," he said, adding several leaders including first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru were in favour of giving shelter to persecuted minorities in the neighbouring countries.

The BJP appeared to have been isolated over the issue as the AGP broke up with the saffron party while the NDA allies, the Shiv Sena and the JD(U), have opposed this legislation.

safeguards will be provided to protect the interests, rights and privileges of existing Scheduled Tribes of Assam.

He said citizenship will be given to them only after due scrutiny and recommendation of district authorities and the State Government. The minimum residency period for citizenship in India is proposed to be reduced from existing 12 years under the present law to six years. The legislation also seeks to provide relief to persecuted migrants who have come through western borders of the country to States like Gujarat, Rajasthan, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and other States, the Home Minister said.

GOVERNMENT OF CHHATTISGARH, WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER MAHANADI GODAVARI BASIN RAIPUR (C.G.) e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE Repair, Replacement and Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract for UPS at Indravati Bhawan, Sector -19 Atal Nagar, Distt.- Raipur (C.G.)

PUBLIC NOTICE: LOST ID CARD ICICI Bank Registered Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, ICICI Bank Tower, Near Chakli Circle, Old Padra Road, Vadodara- 390007.

Bank of Baroda Bhatapara Branch, Bhatapara (C.G.) Tel: 07726-223322 E-mail: bhatap@bankofbaroda.com POSSESSION NOTICE

POLICE HEADQUARTERS, CHHATTISGARH, SECTOR-19, ATAL NAGAR, RAIPUR Notice Inviting Tender NO. PHQ/Sec-10/Prove-103 /19 Raipur, Dated 07/01/2019

GOVT. POLYTECHNIC KANKER (C.G.) - 494336 Email:govtpolykanker@gmail.com NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Quota politics

Unexpected announcement of a 10 per cent reservation for economically weaker sections is not a political masterstroke



The aftermath of the Mandal Commission report recommendations being implemented in India was to transform society in this country, and while it could never reverse the millennia of caste discrimination, it was believed at that time that the correct thing to do is to make India's growth more inclusive. And while that has, to an extent worked, it has like many other solutions to long-festering problems, turned into a case of opening a Pandora's Box of new problems. There is nowadays, for example, a perverse demand by caste leaders, once considered on the upper-end of the

spectrum, to be declared backward so as to take advantage of reservations. Other castes that have benefited from reservations have zealously tried to protect their 'turf' and have actively prevented other castes from getting a piece of the action, whether it is in Government jobs or educational institutions. Also, as evidenced by the demand for quotas by land-owning upper castes such as Jats and Gujjars in a belt near the capital to the Marathas in Maharashtra, upper castes are finding it increasingly difficult to compete in this environment and are being left behind. And this is a delicate balancing act for Governments both at the State and Central level because in large swathes of India, castes still tend to vote *en masse*.

So on the face of it, a reservation for economically weaker sections of society should be a political masterstroke. However, coming so late in the day, the cynic will obviously view it through politically-tinted glasses and believe that this is a way of keeping upper-caste votes within the Bharatiya Janata Party for Narendra Modi, who appears increasingly fretful of the general election coming up in three months. But there are a few issues here, the first is the need to pass a Constitutional amendment. While some caste-based parties might oppose it, smarter members of the Opposition could ensure it gets stalled in Parliament. And then there is the Supreme Court, which has previously ruled that breaching the 50 per cent reservation mark is unconstitutional, save in Tamil Nadu where prior reservations of 69 per cent were grandfathered in. Will the Supreme Court allow this amendment to pass? That is something for the justices to consider, which they almost certainly will have to. And if previous attempts at reservations for upper castes by State Governments is any indication, the shaky foundations of the Bills will be demolished by the highest court of the land.

But then comes the biggest problem of all: Where are the jobs? The Government of India and its public sector units still remain India's largest employer but over the years it is hiring fewer and fewer people and one could rightly think that this move is a cop out for Modi as his Government has failed to create enough jobs over the past few years, in no small part thanks to his own policies such as demonetisation. So all said and done, this is not a done deal as yet and Modi, faced with his facade crumbling, is trying to go all out to ensure a second term despite squandering the immense political capital he had back in 2014. But this could be a case of 'too little, too late.'

Ahom identity

AGP may have stood out as a champion but its real intention is to dent BJP's LS tally



In the end it is all about seizing the pre-poll narrative for the general election and whoever does that better, may just get some customers or force a self-serving discussion. That is why the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP)'s withdrawal of support to the BJP-led Government in Assam is more about finding a politically opportune moment than real dissatisfaction. Yes, the AGP is right in arguing that the new citizenship amendment Bill as proposed by the BJP granting citizenship to Hindu refugees from across the border till the cutoff year of 2014, is detrimental to

Ahom identity and the right of indigenous people over their land, indeed the wherewithal of its politics. However, it was not that the AGP didn't know that this was coming though, it can be reasonably argued, it found itself in a box in launching a counter campaign. It knew that the ruling Sarbananda Sonowal government would not fall if it withdrew support as it had overwhelming numbers (74 to AGP's 14) and was unsure about its standing as an independent party that had the faith of the people. The panchayat polls of December restored its confidence as did the Assembly election results that got the Congress back in reckoning in some states. But it was when other NDA allies became restive, demanding a pound of flesh or two from a dented BJP, that the AGP decided to get into the ring. Sensing the national sentiment at the moment, the AGP has realised that while the state government could run without it, it could threaten the BJP's winning prospects in the Lok Sabha with its pullout. The BJP, not exactly riding the wave pre-2014, may not get the monolithic heartland verdict and would need every extra seat from the Northeast, which it has been nurturing and betting on. In about four seats, the BJP needs the AGP to effect a swing or defeat an entrenched Congress vote. Pundits predict if the Congress woos AGP and other parties to form a state level alliance and ensures a convergence of vote shares, then they could halt the BJP juggernaut in the general election and push its tally back from the seven seats it won in 2014.

The AGP's main contention is a refugee influx, irrespective of religion, would change the demographic contours of the border districts that would forever be a prey base for the larger national parties and ensure the local parties are squeezed out. The BJP is clearly following a me-too model that has worked for the Congress and other Opposition parties at one time. As waves of Bangladeshi migrants crossed the borders, each Opposition party is equally guilty of legalising their stay and shoring up its respective votebank. If it was Muslims before, it is Hindus now. So the AGP has little choice now but to stand out as a strong regional voice. Meanwhile, the BJP is losing the tide of opinion as far as its allies are concerned. First, it was the TDP, then it was the PDP in Kashmir, followed by the Uppendra Kushwaha-led Rashtriya Lok Samta Party. The Shiv Sena still likes to trouble it now and then while the latest withdrawal missive from Apna Dal (Sonela) has revived the perception of the BJP as an arrogant big brother feeding off the smaller parties and then grinding them to dust. As we said, it is all about the visual narrative. Depending on trade winds, all allies jump ships.

What Imran Khan forgot

It is ironic that the Pakistan Prime Minister should want to teach India how to treat its minorities when the country has created a new minority with the passing of every decade



PRAFULL GORADIA

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has offered to teach India how it should treat its minorities. Is it not likely that when he said this, he was experiencing a flashback to his cricketing days, when our fast bowlers were not comparable to his country's pace attack? Traditionally, in the undivided India, it was Punjab that produced pacemen. The one outstanding name that comes to this writer's mind is that of Mohammad Nissar, the fastest opening bowler the sub-continent had produced. Certainly, even now, the pack of speed merchants may have something to teach our players.

An Oxonian had once said: Imran is cricket and cricket is Imran. Similarly, Zubin Mehta is music and cannot be imagined in terms of cricket. It is also difficult to reconcile Imran Khan's image with prime ministership. It is not possible that while he was talking of minorities, he was thinking about how to teach India play cricket and to play in India at the Eden Gardens? It goes without saying that Imran Khan has not seen the holocaust of Hindus and Sikhs, starting with Rawalpindi in 1947, nor would he know how his Christian compatriots had rejoiced at the birth of Pakistan only to subsequently regret it, plus, of course, being frequently accused of blasphemy. The Communist Party had wholeheartedly sponsored Partition, only to later beat its breast — it was simply eliminated by the torrent of Islam.

The Ahmediyas, whose hero, Sir Muhammad Zafarullah Khan, had drafted the Pakistan Resolution of March 1940, also had their taste of 'glory' of the state they helped birth. Imran Khan was certainly not born then to witness the magnificent work done by Zafarullah Khan. Nor perhaps in 1953, when the latter's house in Lahore was set on fire, which induced him to flee to Pakistan to not return until his dying days. The rest of the years he spent at The Hague in the Netherlands to bring majesty to the glittering Benches of the International Court of Justice. In the meantime, the charismatic Prime Minister, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, expelled the Ahmediyas from the sanctified garden of Islam.

Another Ahmediya hero who brought glory to Imran Khan's country was Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan, whose thuggish doings in the Netherlands enabled him to obtain the secrets of atomic bomb — all, of course, in the cause of Khidmat-e-Allah, the first Islamic nuclear bomb. He too was rewarded by his faith being expelled.

This writer was educated by two men. The first was his grandfather, one of whose friends was Ahmed Ali Jinnah. He relished Parsi humour and claimed to culturally be a Parsi. Although he was not a practicing Muslim, he acquainted my grandfather with his insights into Islam. That when a Muslim wishes to convert someone, it is with the best intention of opening a possible chance of the convert entering *jannat*. No other god can



enable a non-believer to cross the gateway of heaven.

The second gentleman who taught this writer was his spoken Urdu teacher who did not overtly suggest a conversion, but did say that the future lay with Islam. Just extrapolate the progress of a number of religions. The Yehudis (Jews) had reduced in number and shrunk to a fraction of what they were. The Christians have scattered into many denominations. Many a worshipper in Europe has given up worship. Christianity's priests have come to Asia, where according to the late Pope John Paul-II, there are innumerable souls to harvest. Contrast these performances with the progress of Islam, whose tide is continually rising.

It is ironic that Prime Minister Imran Khan should want to teach India how to treat its minorities. He has held out Pakistan as an example of good treatment. He is probably unaware that Dr Rafiq Zakaria, in his widely read book, *The Man Who Divided India*, clearly stated that but for the Muslims of Uttar Pradesh (especially Aligarh), Bihar and Mumbai (then Bombay), Pakistan might not have been. Young men from Aligarh went all the way to Punjab to campaign for the 1945-46 general election, which proved decisive for Partition. They propagated Pakistan as the new Medina. Moreover, if India should seriously follow the Pakistani example, it should

reduce its minority population to three per cent from the 22 per cent in Pakistan of 1947. Does the cricketing legend expect his country, with its vast land space, to absorb up to 25 crore Muslims now in India? He could not have forgotten his cricket and probably believes that greater the population, higher are the chances of throwing up more players. If not, the new Prime Minister has forgotten that his country has created a new minority with the passing of every decade.

The saga of creating ever new minorities began with the Sikhs at Rawalpindi; soon thereafter, the Hindus. Then came the turn of the Ahmediyas at Lahore. Pakistan's Christians, who had backed Partition, in due course became unpopular enough to be frequently accused of blasphemy and awarded the death sentence by being stoned. The Balochs, of course, were never fully trusted but gradually became suspected if not also positively distrusted. The latest is the turn of the Shias, who are routinely killed by bombs while praying. There is also a proposal to expel Shias from the fraternity of Islam. They are followers of Imam Hussein, who was the grandson of Prophet Muhammad. A distinguished Shia was Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah without whom Pakistan might not have been.

Even since his college days, this writer has been told that all Sunni Muslims of the world belong to a single community,

which is their first loyalty. It is, therefore, a mystery why most Pakistanis are callous about the safety, security and welfare of their brethren in India. Regimes in Islamabad pursue their own interests without caring for any repercussion in India. Earlier, their great *guru* was the US. Now, they look to China for direction; ostensibly, others be damned. This is as old a syndrome as 1947. Within two months, Pakistan had no compunction in invading the Kashmir Valley.

As long ago as in 1951, Dr Zakir Husain, the then vice-chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University and later Rashtrapati, took the lead along with 13 other Muslims eminences to submit a memorandum to Dr Frank P Graham, the United Nations representative in Kashmir on August 14, 1951 said:

"It is indeed a pity that India has never thought of taking the help of its Muslim citizens, most of whom can be the country's useful allies against Pakistani misdemeanour. There is no doubt a problem. The only viable Muslim leadership in the country is ecclesiastical. The luminaries, who are not *maulvis*, do not have sufficient following. Addressing Muslim citizens through the *ulema* has its limitations. The substantive interest of the masses lies in a peaceful life where the individual and his family can try and prosper, to educate the children and so on. Whereas the thrust of the *ulema*

would be to protect and promote the influence of Islam, leaders in India should, therefore, find a channel of informing and seeking cooperation of our Muslim brethren directly."

The memorandum was also signed by Sir Sultan Ahmed, Sir Mohammed Usman, both former members of the Viceroy's Council. The signatories included the Nawab of Chhatari, Chief Justice of Allahabad, Sir Iqbal Ahmed, Sir Fazal Rahimtoola, AK Khwaja, TM Zariif, BH Zaidi and Hafiz-ur-Rehman; the last two were MPs. Their submission also said: "If the Hindus are not welcomed in Pakistan, how can we, in all fairness, expect Muslims to be welcomed in India? Such a policy must inevitably, as the past has already shown, result in the uprooting of Muslims in this country and their migration to Pakistan, where as it became clear last year, they are no longer welcome, lest their influx should destroy Pakistan's economy".

There was also a background to this fear. Several Muslim League leaders had repeatedly emphasised in the years preceding Partition that when the country was divided, there must be an exchange of population. Sir Feroz Khan Noon had gone to the extent of threatening the re-enactment of the violent orgies of Chengiz Khan and Hulagu Khan.

(The writer is a well-known columnist and an author)

SOUNDBITE

We will not hesitate in imposing the NSA on those who run gangs that aid the use of unfair means during board exams and mass-copying antics.



UP Deputy CM
—Dinesh Sharma

We (Norway) will intensify cooperation on issues relating to the sea, including a new joint task force on the blue economy focussing on integrated ocean management.



Norway Prime Minister
—Erna Solberg

Actors get paid a lot while technicians don't get paid enough. This should change because a good film needs every single member of that team.



Filmmaker
—Zoya Akhtar

The decision to allow private FM channels to broadcast AIR news empowers me as a citizen. What else does a democracy need?



I&B Minister
—Rajyavardhan Rathore

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Election propaganda

Sir — The West Bengal Government has been denying permission to the Bharatiya Janata Party's proposed *rath yatra* in all the 42 parliamentary constituencies as it may lead to law and order problems. The Calcutta High Court has gauged the agenda of the organisers of the *yatra* and has rightly refused permission for the same. One only hopes that the Supreme Court will also appreciate the concerns of the State Government and deny permission for the *rath yatra*. The Union Government has failed to deliver on its promises to the masses and this is a last-ditch effort by the RSS-BJP combine to woo the people by playing the Ayodhya card yet again.

Shalini Gerald
Chennai

Careful decision

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Behind the scenes" (January 8). Emboldened by its tremendous wins in Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, the Congress should have acted

A path to elections with no holds barred

This refers to the editorial, "Behind the scenes" (January 8). We all know that apart from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) are the two main protagonists in Uttar Pradesh, the largest State of India in terms of population. What started during last year's by-polls, where most opposition parties united against the ruling party, this pre-election alliance between the SP and BSP is only a natural progression. But unlike various Opposition combinations that exist only in the air, the SP-BSP combine seems to be a real possibility. It was sensible on the part of BSP supremo Mayawati and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav to leave aside the Congress because the grand old party remains only a fringe player in Uttar Pradesh. Second, more the number of seats these two parties get, better will be their bargaining power to form a Government.

amicably towards the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). It should have accommodated the SP's lone MLA in the Madhya Pradesh Cabinet. Similarly, it should have withdrawn all Bharat Bandh cases filed against the Dalits. It was only when Mayawati threatened them that she would take back the BSP's support to them did they act. Additionally, the Congress is

yet to prove its worth in Uttar Pradesh. It has been out of power from the State for decades.

Taking political equations into consideration, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav and BSP supremo Mayawati seem to have taken a final call on keeping the Congress out of the grand alliance in Uttar Pradesh.

Azhar A Khan
Rampur



Besides, the alliance between the two parties has sent across a message that the next general election will witness more State-specific alliances than a broad nation-wide arrangement against the ruling BJP. But one thing is certain that the 2019 general election is going to be a no-holds-barred battle.

Bal Govind
Noida

Taking lessons

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Real lionheart" (January 7). The English phrase, "A kind gesture can reach a wound that only compassion can heal," best suits the lion-leopard story. Such compassion and affection between inter-species holds lessons for humanity. Every

individual must be more compassionate and be more than ready to assist others in their bad times. Humanity is far greater than exploiting the enemies.

Dimple Wadhawan
Kanpur

Real empowerment

Sir — It is not the State Government's business to interfere in the rituals of a religion. In doing so, it will only be hurting the sentiments of the people because traditions are one that are followed since ages. As long as the rituals are harmless and are respected by one and all, including the women, one cannot understand why the State Government must interfere at all. As a matter of fact real empowerment for women will not come when they break old traditions by entering the gates of a temple, where their entry has been banned. Our society will be enlightened only when it protects its women.

Suruchi
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Smelling trouble in Uttar Pradesh

The collaboration of SP-BSP and troubles with its own allies have made matters worse for the BJP. But the party remains hopeful



KALYANI SHANKAR

It is often said that 'Uttar Pradesh is India and India is Uttar Pradesh.' A win in India's most populous State can prove to be a game-changer for any party, nationally, as it accounts for 80 out of the 545 parliamentary seats. Besides, Uttar Pradesh has gifted many Prime Ministers to our country. As the two foetured-friends — Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Samajwadi Party (SP) — inch closer towards a grand alliance in Uttar Pradesh ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha election, minus the Congress, the poll scene is becoming interesting. The Congress could still become a coalition partner if there is any breakthrough in alliance talks. But as of now, the two regional satraps want to keep the Congress out as it does not have a place in their scheme of things as yet. They want to win the maximum number of seats in their stronghold and take matters from there to a post-poll scenario to do the final bidding for the top job.

First, the SP and the BSP do not need the Congress which is a lightweight in that crucial State. Second, the Congress' votes are not transferable. Third, the SP feels that its experience of aligning with the Congress during the 2017 Assembly election did not work. Also, the Congress did not include the lone SP legislator in the recent Madhya Pradesh Cabinet. Though it was the Congress that had been stressing on the need to bring regional parties together to take on the BJP after its recent wins in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, it failed to honour the demands of smaller parties. Fourth, BSP supremo Mayawati is worried about some Dalit votes moving to the Congress' camp. She has made her political calculations keeping her party's interests in mind. Fifth, both parties feel that a three-cornered contest would benefit the alliance as it can stop the Congress' votes from going to the BJP in protest against the grand old party joining the alliance as the former's core voters are from Dalits, Other Backward Classes and minorities.

The grand alliance might include Ajit Singh's Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) and some smaller parties. The RLD, once strong amid sugarcane farmers of western Uttar Pradesh, has just begun to re-organise itself. The alliance is also trying to get Om Prakash Rajbhar's Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party and the Krishna Patel faction of Apna Dal. Not only does the tie-up have arithmetic but also chemistry as the once bitter enemies — Mayawati and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav — are now on 'aunt and nephew' terms. In 2014, the BJP had a vote share of 42.63 per cent in Uttar Pradesh, while the SP-BSP combine got 42.19 per cent — its almost the same. With Mayawati winning 22.23 per cent of the votes even in 2017 and the SP securing 28.32 per cent, together, they polled over half of the total votes. If the Congress also joins the alliance, the combined vote share of the three parties will be more than that of the BJP's. There is a divided opinion in the Congress about it joining the alliance. This is in sharp contrast to 2017, when the party, in one voice, favoured a tie-up with the SP. One section feels that making the contest triangular is bound to hurt the BJP. The grand alliance might have a strategic understanding with the Congress to help each other.

But where does all of this leave the BJP? Experts say that it means the alliance might pick up about 50 seats. Then the BJP and the Congress would be left with 30 seats. The Congress could pick up two seats — that of the Gandhis and perhaps one or two more. The BJP can at best hope to get 24 or 25 seats. After the recent loss of three Hindi heartland States — Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh — it might lose another 30 seats. In other States, it might shed 20 seats. So, expectation is that the BJP could lose as many as 100 seats. The party would have to cover up the gap from other regions to reach the 282 mark that it won in the 2014 Lok Sabha poll. But how much can they make up in West Bengal, south and Odisha? Moreover, the BJP does not have any big alliance partner. The Telugu Desam Party has quit and the Shiv Sena is threatening to break alliance. The Peoples Democratic Party has left and the Akali Dal is disgruntled. About 18 smaller parties have left the NDA fold since 2014. However, the BJP does not agree with this analysis. They believe that the people will vote for Modi. The party is hopeful that with a strong leadership, effective communication, disciplined organisation, unlimited funds and a divided Opposition, it can make a come back.

However, one can sense a certain degree of worry within the party. BJP chief Amit Shah is subdued and the top leadership is already on a course-correction mode. It will be looking for a new narrative in its national council meeting next week. But Modi can spring surprises. One week is said to be long in politics and three months is quite long to make any prediction. One thing is certain that the BJP will emerge as the single largest party with or without forming the Government.

(The writer is a senior political commentator)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

I APPEAL TO THE EDUCATED YOUTH TO JOIN PDP AND HELP IN BRINGING THE PEOPLE OUT OF THEIR MISERY. ALL THE GARBAGE IN THE PARTY HAS GONE NOW.

—PDP LEADER MEHBOOBA MUFTI



THE PEOPLE, WHO WERE HONEST, DECENT AND HARDWORKING TILL THEY WORKED WITH HER (MUFTI) ARE DUBBED GARBAGE NOW.

—NC LEADER OMAR ABDULLAH

Rabies threatens our lion

Progressive control pathways and procedures for international certification of rabies-free status should be established to save our wild cats from the madness syndrome



HARI SHANKER SINGH

If you thought that rabies concerned only dogs, then one must look back to the records at the King Edward Memorial Pasteur Institute and Medical Research Institute, Shillong. It had published a scientific article in 1950 recording two instances of a positive microscopic finding in the brain — evidence of rabies — of the Bengal tiger in Assam, the first in 1943 and the second in 1950. In the first case, the tiger severely mauled 18 people in just over 24 hours before it was killed but made no attempt to eat any of the victims. In the second case, the tiger terrorised the inhabitants of five or six villages and attacked 14 people, at least five heads of cattle and a dog, of whom one person and the dog were killed on the spot and two others died in hospital the following day. Subsequently, the animal was killed.

The rabies virus was found in both cases. And though these two cases were examined following complaints of unseemly behaviour, several others were ignored. A few cases of leopards dying ostensibly due to rabies were also reported in south India during the British period. The rabies-inflicted stray dogs, living on the boundaries of Kruger National Park in South Africa and other reserves, are threats to predators such as lions, leopards, hyena and wild dogs. Perhaps deaths of predators by rabies do not get the exposure they deserve. The veterinary advisor for the Siberian Tiger recommended the vaccination protocol for use in all wild tigers to save them from viral disease.

Four years ago, a similar behaviour was observed in two lions — first was a male lion in Gir on May 31, 2011, and the second was a young lioness in the Khamba range of the Gir forest on December 15, 2015. In both cases, the frenzied felines chased people and attacked a few of them, including the forest staff. The injured people were vaccinated and saved but both lions died within a few days. Symptoms like biting of tyres and frequent roaring in the daytime indicated the presence of rabies but cases were never examined to know the truth. The extent of damage by the fatal Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) attack, ostensibly a mutation or aggravation caused by the rabies virus, was taken seriously only when 23 lions died in September 2018 in the Gir forests.

In the past, deaths of the lion by virus attacks were detected but ignored because the number was not high. Unlike the lion, tigers or leopards do not live in groups. Thus, death of one or two of them at a site by the fatal disease was ignored. It was recorded as a natural disease but facts prove otherwise. Almost every other day, news reports cite the recovery of dead leopards, tigers, lions and several other carnivores from their habitats but the cases have never been examined by virologists to confirm the cause of deaths.

In a study, four concomitant incidents of rabies related deaths were recorded in Gujarat during 2012-2014. Brain samples were collected from two buffaloes, nilgai and mongoose and rabies virus was found in all of them. Further, the genetic relationship of these isolated specimens was determined and the rabies virus transmission among the wild and domestic mammals was established. In Deva village in Allahabad district, two cows and a young buffalo cub were bitten by a rabies-infected dog. All



“DOMESTIC LIVESTOCK, INCLUDING DOGS, CONSTITUTE MAJOR FOOD FOR WILD ANIMALS. CASES OF TIGER AND LEOPARD DEATHS ARE REPORTED FROM TIME-TO-TIME, BUT THE INSTITUTE ENGAGED IN THE FIELD OF WILDLIFE RESEARCH DOES NOT GIVE PRIORITY TO SUCH AN IMPORTANT PROBLEM”

died within two weeks. Finally, the dog was killed and the carcass was disposed off in a remote area of the village. What had happened to carnivores such as jackals and foxes, which consumed the carcass, is not known but the villagers confirmed that the carnivores had not been spotted. Why is it that the jackals are fast disappearing from the villages? Why are the hyenas becoming rare in the countryside? Why is it that the population of the wild dog (dhole) declined drastically in its habitats such as the Satpura Tiger Reserve and then recovered in a few years and again declined drastically? Is it due to the spread of rabies or any other virus? Has rabies' presence in the domestic dog caused the loss of wildlife in an unbelievable scale? Perhaps yes. Casualties of the major wild carnivores in India due to transmission of rabies, CDV, FIV or other viruses are high but it is impossible to provide facts about the scale of the crisis. After the lion deaths due to a CDV attack in the Gir forests, investigations indicated that like the African lions, the CDV and other viruses are present in some wild lions in the Gir forest. All of these become fatal when other diseases such as Babesia protozoa are transmitted from an unhealthy prey.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) reported that rabies is a vaccine-preventable viral disease which occurs in more than 150 countries. Dogs are the source of a vast majority of human rabies deaths, contributing up to 99 per cent of all rabies transmis-

sions to humans. Human deaths due to rabies are known and have been well-documented but it is also primarily a disease of terrestrial mammals, including dogs, wolves, foxes, jackals, big cats (lions, leopards and tigers), mongooses, badgers, bats and monkeys. Rabies is endemic to India and accounts for 36 per cent of the world's human deaths due to this disease. The true burden of rabies in our country is not fully known; although as per a WHO report, it causes 18,000-20,000 deaths every year. Nobody knows how many wild carnivores die due to this disease. India had over 19.1 million domestic dogs in 2007 and a majority of them belonged to the category of feral or stray dogs. A substantial number of this forms the prey base for carnivores, especially for leopards, tigers, lions, hyenas, wolves and jackals.

In India, dogs play an important role in rabies transmission to wildlife. However, little is known about the role of wild animals in rabies transmission. As per a study in the US, the rabies disease unexpectedly re-emerged in wildlife. Rabies is a viral zoonosis associated with many species of carnivores, including cats, jackal, hyena and bats, which are the primary hosts of the Rabies virus. Although sporadic cases of rabies in wildlife have been documented across the African continent, convincing evidence for the circulation of rabies in populations of wild carnivores has been found only in south Africa, where wild canids, such as jackals and bat-eared foxes, are assumed to be primary hosts of the virus. Although

wolves, wild dogs, jackals and foxes are susceptible and readily succumb to the disease, they can disseminate the disease in other wildlife.

The carnivores — lion, tiger, leopard, hyena, wolf, and jackal — are susceptible to diseases as they largely prey upon domestic animals, including dogs and pigs which are a carrier of pathogens. Domestic livestock, including dogs, constitute major food for these wild animals. Cases of tiger and leopard deaths are reported from time-to-time, but the institute engaged in the field of wildlife research does not give priority to such an important problem. In the absence of adequate studies, it is difficult to assess deaths of wild carnivores due to rabies but it seems a major hurdle, although not accepted till date of wildlife conservation in India.

To eliminate rabies in wildlife, 'progressive control pathways' and procedures for international certification of rabies-free status should be established. To achieve this, wildlife managers should know the extent of the problem. The sample of every dead animal should be examined scientifically in institutes that deal with wildlife or virology. Institutes, too, need to focus on the scale of natural deaths rather than just concern themselves with environment impact assessment (EIA). It has taken us long to maintain a healthy population of the big cat. Let us not lose them to another threat.

(The writer is Member, National Board for Wild life)

A diversified investment strategy

Dynamic asset allocation is the ideal way to invest. It helps one to strike a balance between associated risks and rewards. This strategy holds the potential to outshine all other forms of investments when market conditions remain volatile



HIMA BINDU KOTA

When it comes to investments, the adage, 'Don't put all your eggs in one basket', comes to mind. Diversification essentially means the strategic allocation of investments among different assets and their categories to spread the money around so that exposure to any one type of asset is limited. This helps manage risk and reduce volatility of portfolio over a period of time. One of the keys to successful investing is to learn the art of maintaining fine balance between comfort level and time horizon.

If one invests conservatively for retirement at a young age, he/she may run the risk of investment growth not keeping pace with inflation. Conversely, if one invests too aggressively,

when one is older, they may face a situation where their savings are exposed to market volatility. This can erode the value of their assets at an age when one has fewer opportunities to recoup losses.

One way to balance risk and reward in an investment portfolio is to diversify assets. Although diversification does not ensure profit or guarantee no losses, it may help mitigate risk. It does help in reducing the number and severity of ups and downs. Diversification does not aim to maximise returns but limits the impact of volatility on a portfolio. To better understand this concept let us look at the table along with this article which contains hypothetical portfolios with different asset allocations from 1926 to 2017.

The most aggressive portfolio shown in the table comprises 60 per cent domestic stocks, 25 per cent international stocks and 15 per cent bonds. It has an average annual return of 10.02 per cent. The best 12-month return stood at 134 per cent, while its worst 12-month

ASSET ALLOCATION OF DIFFERENT PORTFOLIOS

	Aggressive Growth	Balanced	Conservative
Average Annual Return	10.02%	8.05%	6.34%
Best 12-month return	134.46%	74.29%	30.76%
Worst 12-month return	-61.26%	-39.53%	-16.65%
Best 20-year return (annualised)	15.49%	13.65%	11.01%
Worst 20-year return (annualised)	2.54%	3.02%	2.95%

return lost nearly by 61 per cent. This is too much of volatility for investors to endure.

However, as we can see, a slight change in the asset allocation tightened the range of those swings. It is also clear that additional fixed income investments to a portfolio slightly reduces one's expectations for long-term returns. But this may significantly reduce the impact of market volatility. This is a trade-off many investors feel is worthwhile, particularly as they get older and more risk-averse.

Factoring time into diversification strategy: People are generally

accustomed to thinking about their savings in terms of goals —retirement, college, a down payment or a vacation. But as one builds and manages his/her asset allocation, regardless of which goal he/she is pursuing, there are two important things that must be considered: First, the time horizon ie the number of years when one would need the money back and second, attitude toward risk.

To take an example, a young adult may think of a goal that is 25 years away, like when he/she retires. Since the time horizon is fairly long, he/she may be willing to take addi-

tional risk in pursuit of long-term growth. The investor may be under the assumption that there's enough time in hand to regain lost ground in an event of short-term market decline. In that case, higher exposure to domestic stocks may be appropriate.

However, risk tolerance plays a crucial role here as well. Regardless of the time horizon, one should undertake risk with which he/she is comfortable. So even if one is saving for a long-term goal, or is more risk-averse, he/she may want to consider a more balanced portfolio with some fixed income investments. Regardless of the time horizon and risk tolerance, even if one is pursuing the most aggressive asset allocation model, he/she may want to consider including a fixed income component to help reduce overall volatility of the portfolio.

The other thing to remember about time horizon is that it keeps changing constantly. So, let's say one's retirement is 10 years away, he/she may want to re-allocate their asset to

help reduce exposure to higher-risk investments in favour of more conservative ones like bond or money market funds. This can help mitigate the impact of extreme market swings on portfolio, which is important when one needs the money relatively soon. Once they enter retirement, a large portion of the portfolio should be more stable. Lower-risk investments can potentially generate income. But even in retirement, diversification is key to help manage risks. So just as one should never be 100 per cent invested in stocks, it's probably a good idea to never be 100 per cent allocated in short-term investments if time horizon is greater than one year.

After all, even in retirement one needs exposure to growth-oriented investments to combat inflation and help ensure that the assets last for what could be a decades-long retirement. Regardless of the goal — time horizon or risk tolerance — a diversified portfolio is the foundation of any smart investment strategy.

(The writer is Assistant Professor, Amity University)



FOREIGN EYE



BASTARDISATION OF THE OVERALL POLITY

Education was the immediate victim of the buffoonery and opportunism of the Sri Lankan leaders. The gradual deterioration of education also had predictable outcomes: It crowned the nincompoops as masters of universal knowledge. What hides the magnitude of the real problem is the reliance on tradition indicators like adult literacy rate, percentage of children of school age who attend primary and secondary school, et al.

(Daily Mirror editorial)

Sensex jumps 130 pts; banking stocks rally

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices ended higher for the third straight session on Tuesday on widespread buying in banking stocks towards the end amid fresh inflows by foreign funds and positive global cues.

The BSE Sensex spurted 130.00 points to end at 35,980.93, while the broader NSE Nifty advanced 30.35 points to 10,802.15.

Both indices traded in the negative zone through most part of the session as investors booked profits in recent gainers amid weakness in the rupee due to rise in global crude prices.

The index had rallied 336.45 points in the previous two straight sessions.

The 50-share NSE Nifty settled 0.28 per cent higher. Intra-day, it touched a low of 10,733.25 and a high of 10,818.45.

According to Hemang Jani, Head— Advisory, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, banking stocks remained in focus after the RBI governor Monday expressed satisfaction over the performance of the banking sector by saying bad loans have declined, particularly that of state-owned banks.

Also the sharp moderation in bond yields should significantly boost the treasury performance of the banking sec-

tor," he pointed out.

Market traded on a range-bound with a positive bias in which PSU banks led the gains on account of improving non-performing asset (NPA) resolution along with capital infusion and depressed valuation, said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Investors have some caution ahead of corporate earnings and a hope over ongoing US and China trade meeting, he added.

Earlier in the session, investors logged gains ahead of Q3 earnings of bluechip companies such as TCS and Infosys later this week amid fresh weakness in the rupee which again breached the ₹70-mark against a dollar, traders said.

However, losses were capped on Central Statistics Office's positive advanced estimates of national income for 2018-19.

The domestic economy is expected to grow at 7.2 per cent in 2018-19 against 6.7 per cent in the previous fiscal mainly due to improvement in the performance of agriculture and manufacturing sectors, the CSO had said on Monday.

In the Sensex kitty, Sun Pharma was the top gainer, surging 3.98 per cent; followed by private lender ICICI Bank 3.46 per cent ahead of earnings.

Shares of Tata Motors surged 2.34 per cent largely on reports of strong JLR UK sales. Other gainers include SBI, Yes Bank, Axis Bank, Bajaj

Undisclosed assets of ₹6K cr detected under foreign black money law

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Undisclosed assets totalling ₹6,000 crore have been detected under the foreign black money law enacted by the Government in 2015, Parliament was informed on Tuesday.

Further, as on October 31, 2018, 34 prosecution complaints have been filed under the foreign black money law.

"As an outcome of the actions taken by the Income-tax Department under the Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015 (The Black Money Act), as on October 31, 2018, undisclosed foreign assets and income valued at over ₹6,000 crore have been detected," Minister of State for Finance Shiv Pratap Shukla said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha.

Under the Act, a one-time compliance opportunity for a limited period was provided to those persons who have any foreign assets which have hitherto not been disclosed for the purposes of Income-tax.

In this compliance window, which closed on September 30, 2015, 648 declarations involving undisclosed foreign assets worth over ₹4,100 crore were made. An amount of over ₹2,470 crore has been collected by way of tax and penalty in such cases.

₹ tumbles 53 paise to 70.21 against USD on crude woes

PTI ■ MUMBAI

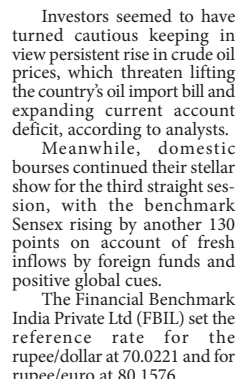
The Indian rupee on Tuesday plunged by 53 paise to close at 70.21 against the US dollar as a mild renewed concerns over widening of current account deficit following constant rise in global crude oil prices.

Besides, strong demand for the American currency from importers also weakened the rupee performance. The US dollar's gains against major rival currencies yen, pound and euro too impacted the domestic currency market sentiments.

At the Interbank Foreign Exchange (forex) Tuesday, the rupee opened on a sluggish note at 69.83. It weakened further to hit a low of 70.23 (intra-day), before finally closing at 70.21, showing a loss of 53 paise.

This was the first loss for the Indian currency unit in three sessions. It had risen by 52 paise in the previous two trading days.

On Monday, the rupee had gained 4 paise to end at 69.68 against the US dollar.



The Brent crude, a global benchmark, was trading at 58.07 per barrel, up 1.29 per cent.

Business Corner



As part of National Level Pollution Response Exercise (NATPOLREX-VII) a workshop titled "Marine Environment Protection" was inaugurated by Director General Rajendra Singh, PTM, TM, DGCIG.



Union MoS (IC) for Power, New and Renewable Energy, RK Singh, released a book titled Smart Grid: Fundamentals & Applications co-authored by IS Jha, CMD, POWERGRID, Subir Sen, COO (CTU Pkg. and Smart Grid), Rajesh Kumar, Sr. DGM (Smart Grid), POWERGRID and renowned academican, Prof. DP Kohari

MSME loan NPAs improve to 8.5% in the yr to Sept '18: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

There has been a marginal improvement in bad loans among micro-small and medium enterprises (MSME) segment in the year to September 2018, a report said Tuesday.

The non-performing assets (NPAs) for both banks as well as the non-bank finance companies (NBFCs) from the 'micro' enterprises segment have improved to 8.5 per cent in September 2018 from the 8.7 per cent last year.

The report by state-run lender Sibi and credit information company Transunion CIBIL comes days after the Reserve Bank announced a special dispensation to restructure MSME loans because of heightened stress due to events such as the note ban and implementation of GST.

The same for the small and medium enterprises has improved to 11.3 per cent from the earlier 11.4 per cent.

Credit to the MSME segment as a whole grew 13.5 per cent, the quarterly report said.

The RBI had announced a forbearance for MSME loans up to ₹25 crore following pressure from the Government.

In a January 2 comment, domestic brokerage Kotak Securities had wondered about the timing of the MSME dispensation at a time when the banks are growing the portfolios rapidly, while other analysts had termed it regressive.

"We are quite surprised at the timing of the notification by the central bank. Lenders usually step back lending when the early warning indicators suggest rising trends of deterioration," the report said.

Meanwhile, the Cibil report said lenders may be erring on fresh borrower acquisition in the segment going by the stress in asset quality and need to be more attentive on this aspect.

Mistry was removed from Tata Sons without any intimation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Cyrus Mistry was removed as chairman of Tata Sons without any prior intimation, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) was told on Tuesday by two investment firms promoted by the Mistry family.



Senior advocate C A Sundaram representing the two firms said that removal of the chairman was not even on the agenda item of the board meeting of Tata Sons on October 24, 2016, when he was sacked.

"The agenda did not contain anything about removal of chairman," said Sundaram adding the proposal to remove him was brought "under any other item" of the meeting. Questioning the order of the Mumbai bench of National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) in this, he said that it

Concluding his arguments for the investment firms, Sundaram said: "In our opinion, he (Mistry) is the best man for us (to protect minority shareholders)." J a n a k Dwarakadas, who is representing Cyrus Mistry, in the matter has started his arguments and would continue on

Wednesday. Cyrus P Mistry has also moved NCLAT in his personal capacity against his removal. The Tata side was represented by senior advocates, including Harish Salve, Abhishek Manu Singhvi and others during the hearing. The Mistry camp had chal-

lenged the July 9 order of the Mumbai bench of the NCLT which dismissed the pleas against his removal as Tata Sons chairman, as also the allegations of rampant misconduct on part of Ratan Tata and the company's board. A special bench of the tribunal had held that the board of directors at Tata Sons was "competent" to remove the executive chairperson of the company. The NCLT bench had also said that Mistry was ousted as chairman because the Tata Sons' Board and its majority shareholders had "lost confidence in him".

Under the Companies Act 2013, an order of NCLT can be challenged before the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT). Mistry, who was the sixth chairman of Tata Sons, was ousted from the position in

October 2016. He had taken over as the chairman in 2012 after Ratan Tata announced his retirement. Two months after his removal, Mistry's family-run firms approached the NCLT as minority shareholders, against Tata Sons, Ratan Tata, and some other board members.

Mistry in his pleas primarily argued that his removal was not in accordance with the Companies Act and that there was rampant mismanagement of affairs across Tata Sons. He also alleged that Tata Trust chairperson Ratan Tata and trustee N Soonawala interfered with the day-to-day operations of the group companies, they acted as shadow directors, and all of the above caused massive revenue loss for the group.

US, China hold more trade talks overshadowed by Kim visit

AFP ■ BEIJING

US officials held a second day of trade talks with Chinese counterparts in Beijing on Tuesday, overshadowed by an unannounced visit from North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

This is the first time the two sides have met face-to-face since President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping agreed to a tariff truce during a meeting in Argentina on December 1. The talks between the US delegation — led by Deputy US Trade Representative Jeffrey Gerrish and including officials from the Treasury, Commerce, Agriculture and Energy departments — and the Chinese side were still ongoing late Tuesday, a source told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Negotiators are seeking to resolve a number of thorny issues that have threatened an all-out trade war between the world's two biggest economies. These include more Chinese purchases of US goods and services to reduce a yawning trade gap, increased access to China's markets, stronger protection of intellectual property and a reduction in Beijing's subsidies. Neither side has provided any details about the talks.

The temporary ceasefire came after the two sides imposed import duties on more than \$300 billion of each other's goods. US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said Monday that China's economy was more vulnerable to the fallout from the trade war.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one girl (depicted in the photo) namely Chanchal, D/o Raj Pal Sharma, R/o E-3/253, Shiv Ram Park, Nihal Vihar, Delhi, has been missing/kidnapped since Dated 16.12.2018. In this regard a FIR No. 817/18, u/s 363 IPC, Dated 17.12.2018 has been registered at Police Station — Nihal Vihar, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:-

Age: 16 years, Complexion: Fair, Height: 4'5", Face: Round, Clothing: Wearing grey colour Suit-Salwar, white colour Sweater and Chappeli in feet.

Any person is having any information/Clue about this missing girl, may inform undersigned.

Website: http://cbi.nic.in E-mail: cbi@cbi.gov.in Fax: 011-24368639 Ph. No.: 011-24368638, 24368641 P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi DP/1748/OD/18 Ph.: 011-25946700, 25946710

ICICI Bank advertisement for a public notice - tender cum auction for sale of secured asset. Includes details of the auction, terms and conditions, and contact information.

Iran seeks Indian investments in fertilisers, petrochemicals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Aiming to boost ties with India, Iran welcomed investment proposals from the country in urea and petrochemicals and is willing to provide fertilisers at reasonable rates, an Iranian minister said Tuesday.

After meeting Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, Iranian foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said India can look at investments in sectors like petrochemicals and fertilisers in the Chabahar area.

"We have offered discussions in that area (urea) and we welcome proposals from India...India has been a customer for Iranian urea fertilisers for a long time.

"Because of the illegal US sanctions, the Indian consumer, the Indian farmers are paying 38 per cent more for the fertilisers and we have possibilities of providing that to India at a reasonable rate," Zarif said.

He said trade arrangement with the European Union (EU) was moving slower and Iran was working with its traditional partners like India, China and Russia to protect its interests.

"While we continue to work with Europeans on their special purpose vehicle, we are working with our traditional partners like India, China, Russia so that we continue to work in the interest of our people.

"Europeans have been trying...But they have not been able to do it as rapidly as we had expected them to do...We are in touch with Europe but we are not waiting for Europe..." Zarif said. In November last year, Iran said the EU must be given more time to set up a trade mechanism meant to circumvent reimposed US sanctions on Tehran, but warned it could not "wait forever". The EU is working on a payment system to continue trade and business ties with Iran after the US ditched a landmark 2015 nuclear deal with Tehran in 2018 and reintroduced a raft of sanctions on the country.

Executive Engineer, Dharmanagar Division, PWD(R&B), Dharmanagar, North Tripura, invites e-tender against Press NIT No 23/EE/DD/2018-19. Includes details of the tender, estimated cost, and contact information.

Wolves throw Liverpool out of FA Cup

Goals from Raul Jimenez and Neves sent the hosts into fourth round



Wolverhampton's Ruben Neves, left, celebrates after scoring his sides second goal during the English FA Cup third round match against Liverpool at the Molineux Stadium

AFP ■ WOLVERHAMPTON

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp believes an early injury to defender Dejan Lovren highlighted why he chose to name a second-string side in bowing out of the FA Cup 2-1 to Wolves on Monday.

Klopp on what forced Lovren off. "I asked everybody, no signs, nothing, just out of the blue, so that's the decision you have to make."

"I am not sure what you all would have said if immediately from the beginning if our central-half situation was Fabinho and Ki-Jana; then probably a few very smart people would tell me that I don't respect the competition or whatever."

Goals from Raul Jimenez and Ruben Neves either side of half-time sent the hosts into round four, where they will face Shrewsbury or Stoke City, despite Divock Origi's fine strike briefly bringing Liverpool level after the break.

Arsenal to host Man Utd in 4th round

LONDON: The FA Cup's two most successful ever sides will meet in the fourth round as Arsenal host Manchester United in the last 32, Monday's draw confirmed.

However, the introduction meant Liverpool fielded three teenagers for the majority of the match with Rafael Camacho and Curtis Jones also handed debuts.

Burnley, while Tottenham face a tough trip to Crystal Palace. Chelsea have an easier task with Sheffield Wednesday or Luton to travel to Stamford Bridge.

possession in midfield and put Jimenez clean through for the Mexican to score his seventh goal of the season.

of nothing when Origi collected a loose ball on the edge of the area six minutes into the second period and smashed the ball high past John Ruddy.

Wolves, though, have made a habit of upsetting the Premier League's established top six in their first season back in the top flight.

After beating Chelsea and Tottenham and holding City, Manchester United and Arsenal in the Premier League, Liverpool can now be added to the list of scalps for Nuno Espirito Santo's side thanks to a wonder strike from Neves.

"He has talent, he has done it before and we encourage him to shoot from range," said Wolves boss Nuno Espirito Santo. "It was a good strike." Only a brilliant save from Ruddy denied Xherdan Shaqiri a stunning equaliser and Liverpool a replay as the Swiss's free-kick was touched onto the inside of the post by the Wolves goalkeeper.

However, with Liverpool still in pole position to deliver a first league title in 29 years, the German coach defended his selection to minimise the chance of his stars suffering injuries.

"We played a similar line-up and had three tough games in the last couple of weeks, so it was clear we had to change," Klopp added after a run of four Premier League games in 13 days over the festive period.

"The intensity of the last few games gave me the information it was not possible to start with these three up front. Only Dejan played a lot of games in the last three or four weeks, pretty much all the games... He played today and was injured."



Stephens, Kvitova advance in Sydney

AFP ■ SYDNEY

World number five Sloane Stephens battled back from the brink of a shock defeat to a qualifier on Tuesday to join two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova in round two of the Sydney International.

Less than a week before the Australian Open — the season's first Grand Slam — the American was twice two points away from losing to 72nd-ranked Ekaterina Alexandrova, who had the former US Open champion on the ropes.

Alexandrova won the first set to love and was serving for the match and two points away from victory in the second set. But Stephens somehow rallied to win 0-6, 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (7/3).

"I was, like, it's not going to get any worse than this," Stephens said of the first set.

"So it was like I might as well just play."

"Obviously she was playing well. Sometimes when you play a player that's just playing like that, there is not much you can do."

Earlier, Kvitova avenged her US Open defeat to in-form Aryna Sabalenka.

The Czech, who slumped to 29 in the world after being attacked in her home by a knife-wielding man

in 2016, has battled back to number eight and was encouraged by her 6-1, 7-5 win over the Belarusian.

Sabalenka is a form player, racing to number 11 in the world after a stellar 2018 and starting the year by winning the Shenzhen Open.

There was no such joy for 2017 French Open winner Jelena Ostapenko, whose poor form continued in a 6-3, 6-3 defeat to Australia's Ash Barty, who is rewarded with a second-round clash against world number one Simona Halep.

After picking up a thigh injury at the Hopman Cup, Garbine Muguruza — another major winner — safely negotiated her first-round encounter with fellow Spaniard Carla Suarez Navarro 6-3, 6-4.

Last year Muguruza was the top seed and world No 2, but 12 months on she is unseeded and down to 18.

In the men's draw Australian teenager Alex De Minaur, a finalist last year, continued his preparations for the Australian Open with a 6-4 6-3 win over Dusan Lajovic.

Towering Americans Sam Querrey and Reilly Opelka are also through to the next round.

SINGLES

PAK RESCHEDULES KABBADI SERIES

KARACHI: The Tri-nation Kabbadi International series involving India, Pakistan and Iran was rescheduled after the organisers on Tuesday failed to get security clearance for the inaugural matches in Jhang. The organizers said that the series was scheduled to start from Tuesday with a clash between Pakistan and Indian teams at Jhang but the tournament will now be held from January 10 to 14. "We didn't get security clearance from the interior ministry and now the event will start from January 10th from Bahawalpur and continue in Sahiwal and end in Lahore on the 14th," the organisers said.

EGYPT TO HOST AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS

DAKAR: Egypt will host the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations between June 15 and July 13, Confederation of African Football (CAF) president Ahmad Ahmad announced on Tuesday. The CAF executive committee preferred Egypt to South Africa as replacements for original hosts Cameroon, who were dropped due to delays in preparations and concerns over security. It will be the fifth time Egypt stage the biennial showpiece of African football after 1959, when the country was called the United Arab Republic, 1974, 1986 and 2006. Egypt only entered the running to host the Cup of Nations when fellow north African country Morocco announced they would not bid to do so.

WEAH JOINS CELTIC ON LOAN FROM PSG

PARIS: Scottish champions Celtic reinforced their striking options on Monday with the signing of USA international Timothy Weah on loan from Paris Saint-Germain for the rest of the season. Son of 1995 Ballon d'Or winner and Liberian president George Weah, the 18-year-old has scored two goals in three appearances for PSG this season but saw his opportunities limited by a star front three of Neymar, Kylian Mbappe and Edinson Cavani. "He has a long career ahead of him but he has those natural attributes in terms of his pace and technique. He's hungry too," Celtic manager Brendan Rodgers told the club's website.

KROOS FACING 3-WEEK INJURY LAYOFF

MADRID: Spanish football giants Real Madrid have announced that their German midfielder Toni Kroos faces three weeks on the sidelines after tearing his left hamstring. Kroos will miss both legs of the club's Copa del Rey tie against Leganes as well as La Liga matches against Real Betis and Sevilla. The 2014 World Cup winner, who celebrated his 29th birthday last Friday, has played 14 league matches so far this season, contributing one assist. Real Madrid have been beset with injuries since the beginning of the 2018-19 season, and are currently languishing in 5th place in La Liga.

RAMKUMAR, ANKITA MAKE WINNING START

MELBOURNE: India's Ramkumar Ramanathan and Ankita Raina recorded straight sets victories to make a promising start at the Australian Open qualifiers but Karman Kaur Thandi went down fighting in the first round here on Tuesday. Seeded 21st, Ramkumar knocked out Spain's Sergio Gutierrez-Ferrol 6-3, 6-2 in his men's singles opening round. Appearing in her third Grand Slam Qualifiers, Ankita (ranked 205) got the better of Myrtille Georges (ranked 238) from France 6-2, 6-2 in her opening round.

Mumbai on brink of maiden win

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Hosts Mumbai, who are already out of contention for a quarter-final berth, are on the cusp of registering their first win of the season against Chhattisgarh in their Elite Group A game.

At the end of day two of the four-day game at the Wankhede Stadium, the 41-time champions needed 14 runs more to notch a consolation victory.

Mumbai ended the second day at 77 for 0 in their second innings, chasing a target of 91, with their openers Jay Bista (36 not out) and Vikrant Auti (32 not out) at the crease.

Mumbai, who had bundled out the opposition for 129 in the first



innings on Monday, replied with 188 after starting day two on 118 for three.

The hosts then shot out the visitors for 149 in the second innings to place themselves on the cusp of their maiden outright win of the season.

First innings wreckers-in-chief, pacers Shardul Thakur (4-47) and Tushar Deshpande (4-53) were again the main destroyers in the visitors' second innings.

At Rajkot, Saurashtra posted 356 in their first innings with some vital contributions from the lower-order against reigning champions Vidarbha.

At close of play, Vidarbha were 63 for 2, having lost their openers Aharva Taide and Faiz Fazal, and adrift by 293 runs.

In another inconsequential Elite Group A tie, hosts Railways thrashed Maharashtra by an innings and 58 runs in New Delhi.

Railways bundled out Maharashtra for 131 in the second to record the win and grabbed seven points.

Rajasthan rout Tripura to enter Ranji quarters

PTI ■ AGARTALA

Rajasthan trounced Tripura by an innings and 77 runs to book a berth in the quarter-finals from Elite Group C on Tuesday.

Led by pace spearhead Deepak Chahar, the Rajasthan bowlers bundled out Tripura for 106 in the second innings to guide their team to a massive victory and enable it to storm into the last eight of the national championship.

With this emphatic win, Rajasthan became the first team from the group to qualify for the knockout rounds by topping the pool with 51 points, having won 7 of their 9 matches.

After bowling out Tripura for a paltry 35 in their first innings, Rajasthan took a dominant 183-run lead by scoring 218 in their first essay.

Chahar wreaked havoc as he returned with figures of 5-17 in just eight overs and was well supported by pacers Aniket Choudhary (2-18) and T M Haq (2-21).

Meanwhile, at Rohtak, hosts Haryana needed 98 runs to win against Services, with nine wickets in hand.

Haryana conceded the first innings lead, but fought back and dismissed Services for just 79 in their second essay to tilt the match in their favour.

At Bhubaneswar, Odisha secured the crucial first innings lead against Goa.

The hosts, who decided not to enforce the follow-on, ended the second day at 37 for 1 as the overall lead swelled to 273 runs.

At Kanpur, hosts Uttar Pradesh, who secured the crucial first innings lead, ended the second day at 377 for 5 in the second essay, with middle-order batsman Rinku Singh unbeaten on 96.

At Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir, who chose to bat, were shot out for 151 with Ajay Yadav (5-16) being the wrecker-in-chief for the visitors.

TN SEIZE ADVANTAGE AGAINST DELHI

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Two late strikes helped Tamil Nadu seize the advantage against Delhi at stumps on the second day of the Elite Group 'B' match at the M A Chidambaram stadium.

Delhi ended the day at 35 for 2 in reply to Tamil Nadu's massive first innings score of 422 built on Abhinav Mukund's superb 134 (319 balls, 13X4) and half-centuries by captain Baba Indrajith (86) and debutant

For Delhi, Vikas Mishra was the best bowler, picking up 5 for 142 from 45.4 overs while Shivam Sharma took 4 for 105 from 44 overs

UK inch closer to quarters

PTI ■ DEHRADUN

Uttarakhand enforced follow-on against Mizoram after bowling out the visitors for 198 to inch closer to grabbing the solitary quarterfinal berth from Plate Group.

Taruwar Kohli remained unbeaten on 96 on day two after Mizoram were bowled out for 198 in their first innings in

reply to Uttarakhand's first innings total of 377 at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium.

Asked to bat again, Mizoram were 32/1 at stumps, still needing 147 runs to avoid an innings defeat.

Earlier the visitors were 31 for no loss but they slipped to 67/4 with Sunny Rana (2/46) striking twice.

Pradosh Ranjan Paul (78, 129 balls, 12X4, 1X6) and M Shahrulkhan 55 (139 balls, 4X4, 1X6).

For Delhi, Vikas Mishra was the best bowler, picking up 5 for 142 from 45.4 overs while Shivam Sharma took 4 for 105 from 44 overs.

R Sai Shihore struck the first blow for the host, dismissing opener Shivam Sharma (7) before Vijay Shankar effected a superb run-out to send back the other opener Kunal Chandel for 27 in the 13th over.

Dhanraj Sharma was the pick of the bowlers, claiming 3/49.

Taruwar found some support at the other end from Lalhrui Ralte (30) as the duo added 57 runs to repair the damage.

But Mayank Mishra dismissed Ralte to break the partnership before they folded in 75.2 overs.

Baroda prevail over Karnataka

PTI ■ VADODRA

Deepak Hooda and Bhargav Bhatt claimed five wickets each to help Baroda register a nail-biting win against Karnataka in a Group A match and keep their quarterfinals hopes alive.

On a day when as many as 16 wickets fell, Baroda almost lost the match, but ultimately won by two wickets, chasing down a 110-run target in their second innings.

After this win, Baroda are now placed third with 26 points from eight matches. They had won three matches, lost one and drew the remaining matches.

On the other hand, Karnataka retained their second place with 27 points from eight matches. They have won three matches and lost two.

Yet, both Baroda and Karnataka's fortunes of qualifying for the quarterfinal depend on other match results.

Batting first, Baroda dismissed Karnataka for 112 before the hosts scored 223 runs, riding on Sonalki's 69 and a 60-ball 51 by Hooda, to take a crucial lead.

In the second innings, Karnataka were bowled out for 220, leaving Baroda to get 110 runs to win the match. Yusuf Pathan's 41 off 30 balls with seven boundaries and a six played a crucial role in achieving the target.

Bhatt produced an impressive performance as he bagged eight wickets in the match. He ended the first innings with figures of 3 for 27 and 5 for 116 in the second innings. Bhatt was ably assisted by Hooda who also claimed five wickets while conceding 31 runs in 14.4 overs.

