

Victory for agitating Ayurveda students

Uttarakhand Govt directs officials to enforce HC order on excess fee refund



PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The CM further said that a permanent fee fixation committee should be constituted for the Ayurveda colleges. He said that the HC should be requested to designate a judge to head the committee

Downing to the demand of the Students of the private Ayurveda Colleges on refund of excess fee, the Uttarakhand Government on Thursday asked the private colleges to implement the orders of the Uttarakhand High Court (HC) on fee refund. This decision was taken in a high-level meeting chaired by the Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat at State secretariat on Thursday evening. In the meeting, the CM directed the officials that the HC order should be enforced. He said that the studies of the students are being affected due to the agitation.

The CM further said that a permanent fee fixation committee should be constituted for the Ayurveda colleges. He said that the HC should be requested to designate a judge to head

the committee. The meeting was attended by the AYUSH Minister Harak Singh Rawat, chief secretary Upal Kumar Singh, secretary Dilip Javalkar and others.

Later, while talking to the media persons, replying to a query on why it had taken so long to take this decision, the CM said that firstly the agitating students didn't meet the State Government. When they finally met the authorities, they were unable to explain their case properly. "However, now I called a meeting with the

departmental Minister and all officials concerned. After assessing the case, all had a positive opinion regarding the demand of the students."

It is pertinent to mention here that the students of the private Ayurveda colleges of the state have been camping and demonstrating at the protest site adjoining the Parade Ground for nearly two months now. They have been demanding that the HC orders on refund of excess fee should be implemented without any further delay.

THDC disinvestment; Congress cries foul

Why selling stakes in a profit earning company: Cong spokesperson

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Opposition Congress party has questioned the motive of Government for disinvestment of THDC India Limited (THDCIL). The speaker of the Uttarakhand Congress, Garima Dassani, said that the THDC figures in the list of five companies, which the Union Government has decided to sell its stake.

She said that it is unfortunate that the Government is trying to privatise/ disinvest a company for which an entire city was submerged and thousands of people were forced to migrate. The Congress leader said that the present status of THDCIL should not be disturbed as its merger would ensure that its existence is finished forever.

She also accused the Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat of misguiding the people of the State on the issue. Dasani added that the disinvestment and privatisation of THDCIL raises questions as it

Union Govt to transfer its stake in THDC to NHPC

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday decided to sell the stakes of Government in the companies including Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited and Shipping Corporation of India. The Cabinet also gave the go ahead for the proposal for transferring its entire stake in the THDCIL and North Eastern Power Corporation Limited to the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), a public sector undertaking (PSU).

It is pertinent to mention here that former Chief Minister and general secretary of All India Congress Committee (AICC) Harish Rawat had staged a sit in at the head office of THDC at Rishikesh recently in anticipation of Government's move. Incidentally, the Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat had denied having any knowledge about plans of privatisation of THDC.

The CM had also accused Harish Rawat of misguiding the people of the State on the issue.

a company which is earning profit for the country. She said that if the decision is not

reversed then the people of the state would be forced to start an agitation.

Solar fencing cut by mischievous elements

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

The forest department in Haridwar had installed solar fencing along a five-kilometre stretch on Wednesday. However, during the night, mischievous elements cut the solar fencing meant to keep elephants away from human settlements.

The department had installed solar fencing on a five-kilometre stretch from Bilkeshwar to Ranipur and Convention Hall.

Considerable effort was put in for the solar fencing as the area is densely



forested. The fencing work was completed on Wednesday

Candid Notes

Gajendra Singh Negi

PROMOTION BECKONS

Recent surge in the activities of a junior Minister of the Himalayan State which involved a series of review meetings with officials not even distantly related to the departments assigned to him coupled with the new found spring in his stride suggests that a promotion is on the cards for him. Given the fact that three berths of Cabinet-ranked Ministers are at present lying vacant in the 'Team TSP', the speculation about imminent elevation in the rank of the junior Minister is not unfounded. His long stint in the party organisation of the BJP, immaculate organisational skills and proximity with those calling the shots in the saffron party at national level often prompts his supporters that their leader has all the attributes to become a face of the party in future. The excess representation of Ministers from Garhwal region of the State can be the only deterrent factor in otherwise smooth sailing for the diminutive leader.

NAME GAME

The name change syndrome which saw a spurt in recent times owing to politico-religious reasons has caught up with the Himalayan State also with the Chief Minister making his intention clear to rechristen Kotdwar town. The important town considered as an entry point of Garhwal hills would be renamed as 'Kanvanagar Kotdwar'. It is good that the Uttarakhand Government has kept 'Kotdwar' intact while renaming the town and preferring Kanvanagar with it in the honour of the celebrated saint Kanva who is said to have lived in the area around present day Kotdwar town. One feels pride in the fact that our country derived its name from legendary King Bharat who, along with his mother Shakuntala, lived at the Ashram of Kanva in his childhood. One hopes that the renaming of Kotdwar would also bring change in the fortune of the sleepy town which is marred with issues like unplanned urbanisation and lack of civic amenities. The residents of the area also anticipate that the Government would be sympathetic enough to fulfill their long-pending demand for a separate district.

MEDIAEVAL MINDSET

A lady police officer holding an important assignment in the provisional State Capital is learnt to be deeply hurt by the male chauvinistic approach and medieval mindset of some of the fellow officers of the force which takes pride in calling itself a friend of people. The female officer is particularly peeved at the manner in which she being a woman is looked upon by others including some among the senior officers. These officers are said to be of the view that being a woman, she would not be able to do justice to her assignments especially in the cases involving hardcore criminals. To pile on more insult to the aggrieved feelings of the lady officer, the secret hand of her husband who also happens to a senior officer in force is rumoured to be behind her success in solving some very complex cases by the police teams under her command.

morning but on visiting the site to inspect on Thursday morning, the department staff found the wiring cut at many places.

The Haridwar divisional forest officer Akash Verma said that the solar fencing was put up as part of an Indo-German collaboration.

The solar fencing has been erected without using poles, snapping the fence at one spot will deactivate the entire powered network.

It is suspected that the fencing was cut by some mischievous elements.

The department has repaired the fencing and patrol teams have been directed to keep a watch on it during the night.

Illegal call centres operating in Doon

Departments shirk responsibility

ANANYA GAIROLA ■ DEHRADUN

The recent raid in a Delhi-based call centre by the police authorities has elicited focus on some illegal call centres operating in Dehradun and other parts of Uttarakhand. However, the departments concerned seem to be waiting for someone to raise the alarm or file a formal complaint. The inspection and technological advancement of the monitoring authorities appears more on papers and less in action. Even in the wake of such complaints, the departments concerned also seem unaffected and non-committal towards the enforcement of given guidelines, but are consistently trying to shift the blame or brush off their responsibilities.

A former employee at one of the illegal call centres in Dehradun told The Pioneer on the condition of anonymity that most of the people working in such call centres are in the late teens or 20s. These young people usually are interested in earning quick money and care less about the medium being legal or illegal.

He further said that even after knowing that what they were doing is illegal, the company used to constantly shift their office and switch off the lights and pretend no one is inside on hearing police sirens, they continued to stay there and work for about eight to 10 hours daily, five days a week.

About the programme, they used to use he said, "The main catch is the programme. Why? Because earlier tech support programmes were more popular, but now as most of the foreign consumers are aware about getting fake calls, the programme is becoming increasingly difficult for earning money by duping people. The programme we were asked to handle was scamming the citizens of United States of America (USA) by virtually impersonating an officer from social security administration of the USA.



FBI Headquarters as such cases cannot be taken lightly. Once the case is in the court, they will face a lot of trouble. If you have decent accent and fluent English, it is not hard to convince them. Especially the old people and ladies were the target. Then we used to ask them to help the treasury department for help in return and promise that we will be going after the real culprit. Once they are convinced they will easily pay at least \$ 1,000."

He added, "I have worked in a number of call centres, both in Dehradun and in Delhi. Tech support though is the biggest scam, but is also providing employment to thousands of people. These call centres are better than most of the private jobs. They pay salary on time, with bonuses. It is easier to get attracted towards such call centres even though they are illegal."

The Director of Telecom Enforcement Resources and Monitoring Cell, Uttarakhand, Samit Gupta said, "We conduct verification of all registered Other Service Providers (OSPs) including Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and Knowledge Process Outsourcings (KPO) from time to time. We also take help from local police. In fact, we recently conducted a meeting with all Internet Service Providers (ISP) and Telecom Service Providers (TSP) and have given them brief about our guidelines."

They have also been strictly directed to not provide their services to any un-registered OSP. If there is any such case,

A former employee at one of the illegal call centres in Dehradun told The Pioneer on the condition of anonymity that most of the people working in such call centres are in the late teens or 20s. These young people usually are more interested in earning quick money and care less about the medium being legal or illegal. He further said that even after knowing that what they were doing is illegal, as the company used to constantly shift their office and switch off the lights and pretend, no one is inside on hearing police sirens, they continued to stay there and work for about eight to 10 hours daily, five days a week

we will surely verify it on our end."

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Special Task Force (STF), Ridhim Aggarwal said, "It is part of our routine to check and verify and discrepancy in cyber law. If there is any such case we will surely verify it."

According to an official, the resources such as the Enforcement Directorate (ED) have more equipped in dealing with such cases. The Department of Telecom (DOT) basically focuses on paper work.

The police department of course has several duties to per-

form. So, they wait for a concrete complaint before taking actions.

It is pertinent to mention here, earlier this year district police had conducted raids in three call centres at Doon Business Park and Sandhu Centre and five people were arrested in the case.

The working of enforcement department that is police has always been under the scanner but the question arises whether the present technological status of Uttarakhand police is properly equipped to handle such international level cyber crimes.

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Finalise online transfer policy: Khattar to Secretaries

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Thursday directed Administrative Secretaries of all the departments to ensure finalization of online transfer policy in respect of every category of posts whose sanctioning authority is more than 500 under their control as well as data entry of all employees at that designation latest by February 28, next year in consultation with Unions.

Presiding over a review meeting with all the secretaries and department heads of various departments regarding transfer policy here,

Khattar said that the data in respect of all employees of every Department, Board, Corporation and Authority must be got filled up by the respective Administrative Secretary before December 25, this year positively.

Khattar said online transfer policy of School Education Department is not only appreciated in Haryana but other States are also following it. He said that it is also a matter of pride for the officers. He said that if any system is to be run with complete satisfaction, the system will have to work dedicatedly.

He said the number of vacant posts (sanctioned

minus filled up posts) of every category whether more or less should be evenly distributed over the administrative unit(s) district/blocks/tehsils etc.

"These evenly distributed posts would be blocked latest by 5 PM on November 25, 2019 by every Administrative Secretary at their level followed by a confirmation to the Chief Secretary the same day," he said adding that employees of all departments should get the stations of their choice is the main objective of the online transfer policy. The service manual of all employees, whether old or present,

should also be linked on the Human Resource Management System (HRMS).

Chief Secretary Keshni Anand Arora, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Rajesh Khullar, Additional Principal Secretary V. Umashankar, Administrative Secretary and Department Heads of various other departments were present in the meeting.

QUICK DISPOSAL OF FILES IS IMPORTANT

Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar also directed the Finance Department officials

to develop a mechanism for expeditious disposal of files related to important issues through Run Through File (RTF) system for quick disposal of the files related to important issues. He also suggested the officials to prepare a checklist of queries for the concerned department to facilitate quick disposal of files by the Finance Department as well as the Chief Minister Office.

During the meeting, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department, T.V.S.N. Prasad also made a presentation regarding the operations of the Finance Department and the fiscal position of the state.

CII DELEGATION MEETS KHATTAR

A delegation led by Sameer Gupta, Chairman of the Northern Region of the Federation of Indian Industry (CII) met Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar

and held discussion on the topics of employment, renewable energy, industry, economy, infrastructure etc.

Gupta told the Chief Minister that they want to work on renewable energy in the State, which will boost the pace of development and an alternative of the energy can be developed. He further told the Chief Minister that they want to work on a pilot project with the government in the field of energy so that affordable energy can be prepared. After this the Chief Minister expressed his concern of officials present at the meeting to work together with the Federation and

explore possibilities for this type of project.

The Chief Minister informed the delegation that the State has improved its ranking in Ease-of-Doing-Business and in this case, Haryana is now at the first place in North India. The Chief Minister further said that he wants to empower the State to the forefront of development and in this direction his government is ready to give all possible support in the start-up sector.

The delegation also expressed their willingness to work with cooperation in areas like electricity, water, pollution.

56,171 challans issued in Chandigarh under new traffic rules

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

As many as 56,171 challans have been issued in the union territory of Chandigarh after the implementation of Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Act, 2019, which came into effect from September 1 onwards.

This was stated by the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in a reply to a question tabled in Lok Sabha on Thursday.

It stated that after the implementation of provisions of Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Act, 2019, 56,171 challans were issued in the city. Overall collection from traffic rule violations this year stood at Rs 5.58 crore (Rs 5,58,25,650) in the city. The challans are being referred to courts and actual revenue is not available, the reply stated.

On impact of the new traffic rules, it stated that eight accident fatalities were reported in September and October 2018 while two such cases have been reported during the corresponding time period this year.

Notably, the Chandigarh Administration had earlier this month decided to reduce the high traffic fines under new rules, implemented from September 1. The decision was taken at a high level meeting chaired by Punjab Governor and UT Administrator, V.P. Singh Badnore here.

As per the data tabled in Parliament on Thursday, as many as 24,401 challans have been issued in neighbouring

Punjab after the implementation of new traffic rules and an overall collection from traffic rule violations stood at Rs 85.64 lakh.

The Congress ruled Punjab had decided against implementing the new rules.

In BJP ruled Haryana, 99,962 challans were issued from September 1 onwards and an overall collection from traffic rules violation this year stood at Rs 72,18,84,608 (72.18 cr) till now.

The data revealed that 497 road accident fatalities were reported in September -October 2018 and this year the number of accident fatalities during the same period stood at 438.

In another BJP ruled state, Himachal, a total of 1,41,529 challans were issued under the new rules till now and an amount of Rs 4.47 crore is collected from the challans.

Notably, from jumping the red light signal to not wearing a helmet, the challan had gone up multi-fold under the new rules from September 1. The penalty for driving without a license was increased from Rs 500 to Rs 5,000 while fine for not wearing a seatbelt now attracts a fine of Rs 1000 as against Rs 100 earlier.

The new rules had also enhanced the penalty for drunk driving to imprisonment up to 6 months and/or fine up to Rs 10,000 for first offence and imprisonment up to 2 years and/or fine of Rs 15,000 for the second offence. Similarly, penalties for other traffic violations had seen multifold increase.

Fancy number 'CH01BZ001' fetches whopping ₹15.35 L

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Registration number 0001 of 'CH01BZ' series fetched a whopping bidding price of Rs 15,35,000 against a reserve price of only Rs 50,000 in an e-auction of fancy numbers held by Registering and Licensing Authority, Chandigarh.

A businessman namely Kulwinder Singh Bassi made the highest bid of Rs 15,35,000 (Rs 15.35 lakh) for the 'CH01BZ0001' in the e-auction.

The number 'CH01BZ0003' received the bidding price of Rs 7,77,000 (Rs 7.77 lakh) against the reserve price of only Rs 30,000 followed by 'CH01BZ0007' which was e-auctioned for Rs 5,86,000 (Rs 5.86 lakh) against the reserve price of Rs 30,000.

The fancy numbers including '0009' and '0005' in 'CH01BZ' series received bidding price of Rs 451,000 (Rs 4.51 lakh) and Rs 201,000 (Rs 2.01 lakh) respectively against the reserve amount of Rs 30,000.

Among other fancy numbers, '9999' was auctioned at Rs 1,60 lakh against the reserve price of Rs 20,000, '0010' fetched Rs 1.57 lakh against the reserve price of Rs 30,000, '0006' received bidding amount of Rs 1.47 lakh against the bidding price of Rs 30,000, '7777' went for Rs 1.41 lakh against the bidding price of Rs 20,000 and '0011' fetched bidding price of Rs 1.40 lakh against the reserve price of Rs 30,000.

Only those who have purchased vehicles at a Chandigarh address were allowed to participate in the e-auction after submitting the sale letter, i.e. Form No. 21, UID i.e. Aadhar card and Chandigarh address proof.

Under the e-auction process, the vehicle owners have to deposit a registration fee for participating in the e-auction and the reserve amount for the special choice registration number at the office of the Registering and Licensing Authority in Sector-17 here through demand draft.

Notably, a city resident namely Amarjit Singh had in the year 2012 broken all previous records by winning the bid for a registration number for his luxury car for a whopping Rs 26.05 lakh. Interestingly, the reserve price for '0001' number for the CH-01-AN series was only Rs 25,000.

The persons who had failed to deposit the house tax or property tax within three months with certain conditions.

The person who had failed to deposit the house tax or property tax as the case may be, levied under the Act within the time specified may now deposit the principal amount in lump-

Punjab extends timeline to pay outstanding house tax or property tax

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In a big relief to the citizens of Punjab, the State Government on Thursday announced to extend the deadline for a period of three months to pay the outstanding house tax or property tax without any penalty.

The Government has decided to partly exempt a class of persons from the payment of certain charges levied under the Punjab Municipal Act, 1976, as announced the state Local Bodies Minister Brahm Mohindra.

Mohindra said that now the property holders may pay the outstanding house tax or property tax within three months with certain conditions.

The persons who had failed to deposit the house tax or property tax as the case may be, levied under the Act within the time specified may now deposit the principal amount in lump-

sum with the rebate at the rate of 10 percent of the amount being deposited within a period of three months from the date of issue of the order as a onetime settlement; and penalty at the rate of ten percent on the said amount within the period of next three months.

Mohindra said that the persons, who still fail to deposit the due amount as above, within the period and the manner specified above, shall be liable to pay a penalty at the rate of 20 percent on the amount due along with interest at the rate of eighteen percent from the date it became due till the date of its realization.

The Minister said that the Government's decision, on one hand, will give a big relief to such property holders who have missed the timeline to pay the house tax or property tax and whose property has been sealed by certain Urban Local Bodies as penalty.

Cong MLA claims his phone being recorded; Opp corners Punjab Govt

Chandigarh: A ruling Congress MLA in Punjab has accused the police of tapping his phone, prompting the Opposition to attack Amarinder Government.

The matter of phone tapping came to light when Congress MLA from Samana Rajinder Singh raised the issue in a district grievance redressal committee meeting on Tuesday in Patiala.

Singh alleged that a police inspector had come to his house in Patiala had recorded his phone calls as well as his personal assistant.

"The police Inspector even showed me the call recordings he made after a confrontation with him over some issue," Singh said on Thursday.

"I told him (Inspector) that he had committed a blunder by recording my phone calls and it was against my privacy," said Congress MLA adding that he has even brought this matter to the notice of Patiala Senior Superintendent of Police two months back.

Singh said when no action was taken against the police inspector, he raised this issue in a grievance redressal committee meeting on Tuesday.

The grievance committee meeting was also attended by two Congress MLAs --Madan Lal Jalalpur from Ghanaur and Virpal Singh Kamboj from Rajpura.

After Congress MLA Rajinder Singh flagged this issue, Patiala SSP shifted the police inspector from Samana to Nabha on Wednesday, officials said.

Meanwhile, Aam Aadmi Party MLA Aman Arora while dubbing phone tapping as a "serious issue", on Thursday sought a probe by a sitting judge of Punjab and Haryana High court into the incident.

"It is a breach of privilege of MLAs," he said.

"If the phones of ruling party MLAs are being recorded, then you can't imagine about phones of leaders of opposition parties," said Arora.

Shiromani Akali Dal has also charged the Congress led government with committing "breach of privilege" against its own legislators by "tapping" their phones.

SAD spokesman Daljit Singh Chahal urged Punjab Vidhan Sabha Speaker Rana K P Singh to initiate action against the concerned officials and also demanded a separate criminal case be registered.

Thema said it was shocking that Congress legislators had accused his own government of "tapping" phone during a meeting of the district grievance redressal committee.

COMPENSATION TO MARTYRS' FAMILIES

AAP seeks replication of Delhi Govt model

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday demanded that governments of Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and the Centre should implement the Delhi model of compensation to the families of the martyrs, as being paid by the Arvind Kejriwal Government in Delhi.

AAP's Punjab unit chief spokesperson and MLA Prof Bajinder Kaur and MLA Meet

Hayer also sympathized with the aggrieved families of the soldiers, who attained martyrdom in the line of duty in the inhospitable Siachen glacier.

"While the sacrifices of martyrs could not be repaid in terms of money, the government needs to be more sensitized to protect the families of the martyrs against financial hardships," they said.

Citing the example of Kejriwal-led Delhi Government,

AAP leaders said that it had been offering spot compensation worth Rs one crore in the event any personnel of the army, paramilitary forces and the police, who attained martyrdom in the line of duty. They said that the government should be more sensitized to protect the families of the martyrs against financial hardships," they said.

AAP MLAs demanded

from the Capt Amarinder Singh government and Himachal Pradesh Government to provide all facilities to the families of the martyred soldiers, including government job to the next of the kin of the martyrs, and pay of Rs one crore to the bereaved families.

They lamented that the family of Sukhwinder Singh of Chak Bhai Ke village under Bathinda parliamentary constituency, who attained mar-

tyrdom on March 10, 2018, had been running from pillar, for compensation and government job. "The job applications of the martyr's widow, Karamjit Kaur, seemed to have been consigned to the dustbin," he said adding that the family of AAP MLA, Principal Budh Ram had brought the issue to the notice of Chief Minister's office and local administration, but no action had been taken so far.

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SAD dubs killing of Sarpanch as a political murder

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Demanding immediate dismissal of Punjab Cabinet Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Thursday minced no words to alleged that the former Akali Sarpanch Dalbir Dhillwan's killing in Dera Baba Nanak was a "political murder executed as a part of Minister-gangster-police nexus" to take revenge for a 2004 incident.

"It is a political murder to take revenge for an incident in 2004 when the Jails Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa's turban was toppled," alleged

the former Minister Bikram Singh Majithia while questioning the Congress national president Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi for their silence when such atrocities were being committed by their workers and leaders.

Majithia said that there were complaints of booth capturing in Dhillwan village during 2004 parliamentary elections during Randhawa's visit to the village and in the ensuing scuffle with Dhillwan's family members, the then chief parliamentary secretary's turban had been toppled. "Randhawa held Dalbir and his father Sant Singh responsible for this act and threatened Sant that he had lost two sons and would lose another one," he said.

"Subsequently, in 2004, during the SGPC election, 10 members of Dalbir's family, 10 members of Dalbir's family, were arrested on trumped up charges and Dalbir was not tortured. Nothing happened for the next 10 years during the SAD-BJP government, but now in Congress rule, Dalbir was again attacked to take revenge and suffering a horrible death after being shot 12 times and even having his legs cut off," said Majithia.

Substantiating his claims with the documentary evidence, Majithia asserted that notorious gangster Jaggu Bhagwanpura, whose mother had the support of the Jails Minister as Dera Baba Nanak was flourishing in Congress rule.

Majithia also cited media reports of senior police officials disclosing how Bhagwanpura was using phones in jail and also running an extortion racket from jail with the support of 33 associates. He also cited how the District police was taking great pains to announce that Dhillwan's murder was not a political murder.

"Gurdaspur SSP Opinderjit Ghuman is acting like a Congress spokesman by announcing within 15 minutes of the murder that there is no political motive behind the killing. The SSP is even trying to mislead the people by stating that the murder is due to a land dispute," said Majithia.

Showing revenue records to prove that the killers and Dhillwan did not share common boundaries, Majithia said that it was unfortunate that even a day before, the SSP had claimed that a political tinge was being given to the incident even though he had not met the family nor affect-

ed an arrest even 72 hours after the incident.

"The truth is that the SSP and the local police are not even ready to record the statement of the victim family. Dhillwan's son Sandeep had now written to the DGP stating that his father had been murdered by Congressmen under political patronage of Sukhjinder Randhawa and that the local police were not

recording the statement of the family," he said.

Majithia declared that the SAD would not remain silent and would pursue all avenues, including approaching the High Court to ensure justice to Dhillwan's family.

"We will expose attempts to cover up the political murder of Dalbir besides going to the people and exposing the other such murders including

that of Jagmel Singh in Sangrur, Neha Storey in Mohali and Gurbachan Singh in Gurdaspur besides others," he said.

Former Finance Minister Parminder Singh Dhillnda said that all recent killings had witnessed set pattern under which Congress workers had committed a crime and the police had indulged in a cover up exercise.

"Even in the case of dalit Jagme Singh's killing, the police did not take any action when he was first beaten up by the same persons and even forced him to enter into a compromise with his oppressors," he said adding that even after Jagmel's murder, the police sheltered political persons who were behind it and indulged in a cover up exercise by stating that the victim was mentally unstable besides falsely asserting that it was a Dalit-Zamindar issue.

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NORTHERN RAILWAY
Corrigendum
Tender Notice 170-DRM-MB-18-19 dt. 07.11.2019. Date of Opening 10.12.2019
In NIT header of Tender invited vide Tender notice No. 170-DRM-MB-18-19 dt. 07.11.2019 to be open on 10.12.2019, for the work of Repair to road surface & speed breaker/Level crossing in BLM-SGMU section of SSE/Warabulim under ADE/NHR-I, published in Anar Ujais news paper on 09.11.2019 vide advertisement No. 3959/19. Due to change in general condition of contract the tender notice No. 170-DRM-MB-18-19 dt. 07.11.2019 should be read as Rates are Excluding of GST and GST at the rate as applicable will be paid extra. The other terms & conditions of the tender will remain same. 3745/2019

NORTHERN RAILWAY
CORRIGENDUM
Tender Notice 172-DRM-MB-18-19 dt. 18.11.2019 Date of Opening 17.12.2019
In NIT header of Tender invited vide Tender notice No. 172-DRM-MB-18-19 dt. 18.11.2019 to be open on 18.12.2019, for the work of Name of work: Through Rail Renewal (P) 20.00 Km in the section of Sr DEN/UMB, published in Anar Ujais news paper on 20.11.2019 vide advertisement No. 3693/19. Due to change in general condition of contract the tender notice No. 172-DRM-MB-18-19 dt. 18.11.2019 should be read as Rates are Excluding of GST in all SR items. Tenderer to quote his/her rate keeping in mind that rates are exclusive of GST and his offered rates should also be exclusive of GST and GST at the rate as applicable will be paid extra. The other terms & conditions of the tender will remain same. 3744/2019

NORTHERN RAILWAY
CORRIGENDUM
Tender Notice 177-DRM-MB-18-19 dt. 18.11.2019 Date of Opening 17.12.2019
In NIT header of Tender invited vide Tender notice No. 177-DRM-MB-18-19 dt. 18.11.2019 to be open on 18.12.2019, for the work of Name of work: Through Rail Renewal (P) 30Km in the section of Sr DEN/UMB (T) 700m, published in Anar Ujais news paper on 20.11.2019 vide advertisement No. 3693/19. Due to change in general condition of contract the tender notice No. 177-DRM-MB-18-19 dt. 18.11.2019 should be read as Rates are Excluding of GST in all SR items. Tenderer to quote his/her rate keeping in mind that rates are exclusive of GST and his offered rates should also be exclusive of GST and GST at the rate as applicable will be paid extra. The other terms & conditions of the tender will remain same. 3743/19

NORTHERN RAILWAY
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Tender Notice 172-DRM-MB-18-19 dt. 08.11.2019. Date of Opening 10.12.2019
In NIT header of Tender invited vide Tender notice No. 172-DRM-MB-18-19 dt. 08.11.2019 to be open on 10.12.2019, for the work of Raising of standard high level and extension of PF No. 4 & 5 to 24 coach train length at HRI station in the section of SSE/WHR under ADE/NHR-I, published in Anar Ujais news paper on 12.11.2019 vide advertisement No. 3617/19. Due to change in general condition of contract the tender notice No. 172-DRM-MB-18-19 dt. 08.11.2019 should be read as Rates are Excluding of GST in all SR items. Tenderer to quote his/her rate keeping in mind that rates are exclusive of GST and his offered rates should also be exclusive of GST and GST at the rate as applicable will be paid extra. The other terms & conditions of the tender will remain same. 3740/2019

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Some students of Class XII in Saint Ann's senior secondary school had been remaining

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DELHI WATER WAR

Paswan asks Delhi CM for joint inspection

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The water war in Delhi continues unabated with Union Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan on Thursday coming out with a team of 32 technical experts and asking Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to name his own team of experts (non-political person) to conduct a joint inspection to test Delhi's quality of water which the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has termed as undrinkable.



announced that it will also set up 32 teams to collect drinking water samples from across the city and the test results will be put in public domain within a month even as the issue reached the Parliament with Vijay Goel displaying a bottle of water in the Rajya Sabha leading to sharp exchanges with opposition.

Rejecting the nomination of Dinesh Mohaniya, MLA, vice chairman of DJB, Paswan said the nominee should be a "non-political" individual and the water samples should be tested at a Govt accredited laboratory and that the reports should also be made public.

to make BIS standard mandatory if water supplied in the national capital is 100 per cent pure. "Kejriwal is committing more mistakes to hide one mistake. He is making baseless allegations against me," Paswan said. He also criticised Kejriwal for raising questions about the credibility of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), an autonomous body that has developed around 25,000 quality standards for various products and services.

Both Houses witness political slugfest on pollution

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Both Houses of Parliament on Thursday witnessed MPs cutting across party lines raising the issue of air and water pollution in the Capital. In the Rajya Sabha, the issue turned into a political slugfest between BJP and AAP, with BJP MP Vijay Goel flashing clippings of newspapers with advertisements of air purifiers and also displaying mini oxygen cylinder. In the Lok Sabha which devoted afternoon for on the debate on the matter, many MPs demanded a stringent law to prevent for air pollution. They also accused "Delhi-centric" people to blame only farmers for stubble burning while ignoring the "much bigger" pollution created by the city's industrial units and construction waste and large number of diesel vehicles.

Members from the BJP and the opposition led by the AAP and supported by Congress, SP and others were involved in heated exchanges for around 10 minutes, when Rajya Sabha assembled after lunch to discuss about rising pollution levels. After Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar read his statement informing about the steps taken by the Centre on the issue, BJP member Vijay Goel alleged that the Delhi Government is not taking proper action to tackle pollution. He also alleged corruption by the Delhi Government in distributing 50 lakh masks among the people and said the residents of the national capital are also forced to drink bottled water as tap water was not safe.

Goel displayed clippings of newspapers with advertisements of air purifiers and also displayed mini oxygen cylinder. This was opposed by AAP members Sanjay Singh and Sushil Gupta. They were supported by other opposition parties including Congress, SP and others. During the second day of debate in Lok Sabha, Union minister Babul Supriyo belted out a few lines of the popular Bollywood song 'Hawa ke sath sath, ghata ke sang sang' in Lok Sabha to drive home the point that the Government is taking steps for "cleaner" air. Congress MP Shashi Tharoor suggested that a legislative framework be adopted to implement the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), which proposes multiple measures to combat air pollution. He said political differences should be kept aside as there was a need to work together to address this "toxicity". A legislative approach needs to be adopted to implement the NCAP, he said.

BJP MP Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Bhagwant Mann (AAP) and Anurag Pathak (AAP) said that farmers should alone not be blamed for stubble burning, considered as one of the main reasons for air pollution in the national capital region, and demanded that they should be encouraged to grow crops which do not leave stubble. Rudy pointed out that there many reasons for the increased pollution in Delhi because of uncontrolled industrial waste, existence of toxic existing units and more vehicles in affluent families. "It is unfair to blame farmers alone. They should be helped to change the pattern of growing and find financial models on stubble etc," he said. Rudy said that he had cancelled many of his foreign pilot friends have already cancelled trip to Delhi in December and narrated how US Government implemented strict laws to prevent air pollution in metros.

Jamiat-Ulema-e-Hind rejects 5 acre for Babri

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Jamiat-Ulema-e-Hind, the largest body of Muslim clerics, has backed filing of a review petition in the Supreme Court against its verdict on the Ayodhya issue and has rejected the offer of the government to accept five acre plot as an alternative land for the mosque. The Jamiat's articulation comes after the outfit's National Working Committee on Thursday passed resolutions to the effect.

was held under the chairmanship of Maulana Qari Mohammad Usman Mansoorpuri, the President Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, to deliberate upon whether to file a review petition against the Supreme Court verdict on Babri mosque and whether to accept five acre plot as an alternative land for the mosque. The meeting also discussed other issues concerning the country and community including followers' entry into ASI-managed mosques and wakf properties.

of Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind (JUH) holds the recent Supreme Court verdict on Babri mosque unjust and overwhelmingly one-sided. It has confirmed that the mosque was not built after demolishing any temple but there existed a mosque for several hundred years which was demolished and now the court has paved the way for construction of a temple over its site. As such the judgment is the darkest spot in the history of free India," the Committee stated.

from the concerned judges. Rather, the possibility of further damage. Therefore, the Working Committee considers that filing a review petition will not be fruitful. Nevertheless since several Muslim organizations availing their constitutional rights have decided to file a review petition, Jamiat does not oppose them and hopes that it does not produce any negative effect," according to the Jamiat resolution. The Working Committee of Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind also seeks to clarify that nothing can

Over 3L CSCs to now enroll marginal farmers under PM Kisan scheme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To ensure pan-India, wider coverage of farmers income support scheme -- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan), the Centre has now roped in Common Service Centre (CSC) to speed up the enrolment process. The Ministry of Agriculture has tied up with CSC, a special purpose vehicle (SPV) under the Ministry of IT and Electronics, to fill the target of enrolling 14 crore mar-

ginal farmers across India. PM-Kisan is 100 per cent income support scheme funded by the Centre which was launched in December 2018. Under the scheme an income support of ₹6,000 per year is provided to all farmer families across the country in three equal installments of ₹2,000 each every four months. "CSC has been roped in by the Ministry of Agriculture to expedite the coverage of the scheme. Over 3-lakh CSCs spread across length and

breadth of the country will now start enrolling farmers eligible for PM-Kisan scheme. Farmers can now visit nearby CSCs to get enrolled and avail the scheme's benefit. The Centre has also given the mandate to make any changes in previous enrolment. Any farmer who is already a beneficiary and wants to make changes in his enrolment form like address or nominee can visit CSCs to get it done," said CSC CEO Dr Dinesh Tyagi.

FROM THE PARLIAMENT

Gavit demands 'Bharat Ratna' for Savarkar and Birsra Munda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Without offering any time-frame for cleaning river 'Ganga' the Government in the Lok Sabha on Thursday said the drive is a continuous process and it has sanctioned 305 projects at an estimated cost of over ₹28,600 crore under the plan as the House on Thursday witnessed members raising questions on economy and Citizenship Bill with Shiv Sena seeking 'Bharat Ratna' for Hindutva ideologue Veer Savarkar.



Members questioned government's decision to award 'Bharat Ratna' to Mahatma Gandhi and Shri B. R. Ambedkar. Gavit said the highest civilian honour bestowed by the Union Government, for Savarkar and tribal icon Birsra Munda. Rajendra Gavit made the demand during the Zero Hour. His short speech was mostly confined to contributions of Munda as he sought the honour for him and then made a mention of Savarkar as well. "Freedom fighters like Veer Savarkar be also given Bharat

The central government launched the Namami Gange Programme with a total budgetary outlay of Rs 20,000 crore for five years till 31 December 2020 to accomplish the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution, conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga and its tributaries. He also said Ganga in 2019 has shown improved water quality trends as compared to 2014. The minister did not offer any time-frame for cleaning of the river. Among other issues, Saugata Roy of the Trinamool Congress spoke about the 'womens' economic situation, citing reports to say that unemployment is at 8.5 per cent and household consumption has hit a new low. Real estate sector is also in a 'crisis', he added. He alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was showing 'cavalier attitude' and raising jingoistic and communal issues instead of focusing on improving the economy. BJP's Tapir Gao asked the

government to take measures to end apprehensions among people in northeastern states about the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill. TDP's Jayadev Galla said the new political map issued by the government does not show Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Thursday cautioned a Congress member against questioning the Chair's impartiality. The incident happened during the Zero Hour after Ravneet Singh Bittu, a Congress MP from Punjab, raised the issue of the Union government's decision to withdraw 3G security cover given to the Gandhi family. Birla cut him short saying the issue has been raised repeatedly in the house. "You have also joined hands with Bittu told the Speaker while pointing to BJP members. Birla then stopped the member, who had stood up to speak, and cautioned the Congress member against questioning the Chair in such a manner.

Hema raises man-monkey conflict

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Humans forcing monkeys to move away from their forest habitats and compelling them to migrate to cities like 'Vrindavan', 'Mathura' and Delhi for food and shelter figured in the Lok Sabha on Thursday when Union Minister Hema Malini in a fringe Government to find a permanent solution to the 'man-monkey conflict'. The issue of monkey's 'intruding' presence at religious places and in Lutyens Zone in the national capital was raised in the lower house by BJP MP Hema Malini who said deforestation has led to monkeys moving to the cities. She suggested that the Government could develop a monkey safari in 'Vrindavan' and 'Mathura'. TMC MP Sudip Bandyopadhyay recounted that during his visit to Mathura a monkey deftly lifted his spectacles without the MP even noticing. "But returned it to me and let me have a fruit juice. He said monkeys were drinking and eating food available to them in the cities which is not good for their health. RLJP leader Chirag Pathan also joined her in raising the



issue saying that in Delhi monkeys do not allow children to play outside their houses. Paswan, however, went on to add that monkeys have been forced out of their natural habitats by humans. "People in Vrindavan and Mathura in my constituency have been hit by the menace with monkeys snatching items from pilgrims," she said. The actor-turned-politician also said sterilization attempts have made monkeys "violent". Raising the issue during

Zero Hour, the MP from Mathura, said large-scale presence of monkeys at religious places was a matter of concern and the government should do something about it. "People in Vrindavan and Mathura in my constituency have been hit by the menace with monkeys snatching items from pilgrims," she said. The actor-turned-politician also said sterilization attempts have made monkeys "violent". Raising the issue during

INSHORT

CENTRE FINALISING NEW IT RULES New Delhi: The Centre is finalising new IT rules for social media companies that would mandate traceability of originator of information on such platforms and removal of malicious content within 24 hours of notice, Parliament was informed on Thursday. **JUDGES WILLING TO WORK LONGER, SAYS BOBBE** New Delhi: Amid debate on increasing the retirement age of judges of higher judiciary, Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad Arvind Bobde said Thursday that they are 'willing to work' longer (Chhattisgarh). Scrap collection project, Kakinada (Andhra Pradesh) and Vegetable and rice cultivation project, Champa (Chhattisgarh), all run by the leprosy cured people, received 'Rising To Dignity Awards' from Sankar-India Leprosy Foundation(S-ILF). Leprosy organisation working for empowerment of the sector at an event here. **SURROGACY BILL NOW WITH RS SELECT PANEL** New Delhi: The Govt on Thursday referred the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019, to a select committee of the Rajya Sabha following demand from the members seeking amendments in some provisions of the legislation. Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan moved a resolution in the upper house of Parliament referring the bill to a select committee. **'KHILTA BACHPAN-KHILTA' ORGANISED BY CCRT** New Delhi: To celebrate Indian Art and Culture, and promote Art Education for our children's overall development, "Khilta Bachpan-Khilta", a cultural programme was organised by Centre for Cultural Resource and Training (CCRT) in collaboration with Child Fund India on Thursday.

₹577cr challans issued so far since rollout of new Motor Vehicles Act: Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 38 lakh challans involving a total amount of ₹577.5 crore have been issued since the implementation of the new motor vehicles law, Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Thursday. However, in a reply to the Lok Sabha, Gadkari said the "challans are being referred to courts. Actual revenue is not available". "As per information available in the database of NIC (Vahan, Sarathi)", 38,39,406 traffic challans in 18 states and union territories were issued," according to the reply. The challans involved a

total amount of Rs 5,77,51,79,895, Gadkari said. The data is available for Chandigarh, Pondicherry, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Delhi, Rajasthan, Bihar, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Punjab, Goa, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, and Haryana. Tamil Nadu saw the highest number of challans at 14,13,996. While the least number of challans were recorded in Goa at 58. The Government recently said it has no information about any State not implementing the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019.

566 NH projects delayed for various reasons: Gadkari

PIANS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 566 national highway projects are running behind schedule owing to issues ranging from land acquisition, forest and wildlife clearances to poor performance of contractors, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari told Parliament on Thursday. "Construction work on Golden Quadrilateral has already been completed, however 566 projects are behind their completion schedule. These projects are delayed mainly due to land acquisition, utility shifting, non-availability of soil or aggregate, poor performance of contractors," Gadkari told the

Lok Sabha in a written reply to a question. The Minister's revelation to Parliament is a big setback to the highway development programme in the country that has thrown shining example of performance despite sluggish performance by several other sectors of the economy. In the past, success of the road development projects had provided opportunity for chest-thumping by Ministers in the ruling party. Gadkari said that on their part, action was routinely been taken against contractors that reported delays under the provisions of the contract. The Minister also said that in order to fast-track these projects, various steps such as

streamlining of land acquisition and environment clearances, premium rescheduling, close coordination with other ministries, among others have been taken. "Some of the ongoing National Highways Projects have been delayed due to various reasons such as delays in land acquisition, pre construction activities, law and order issues, contractors' cash flow problems, poor performance of contractors," Gadkari added. Regular meetings are held with project developers, State governments and contractors to expedite the delayed projects and various steps have been taken in this regard, he said.

'Double toll from Dec 1 for passing via FASTag lanes'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Twice the toll amount will be charged from December 1 for passing through FASTag lanes without tags on 537 toll plazas on national highways, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Thursday. From December 1, toll payments will be made only through FASTags under the National Electronic Toll Collection (NETC) programme, the flagship initiative of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. However, there will be one hybrid lane, where usual toll will be charged from non-FASTag vehicles.

"Double the toll amount will be charged from December 1 for travelling through FASTag lanes without tags on 537 toll plazas on national highways across India," Road Transport and Highways Minister Gadkari said here. He said 537 toll plazas have become 100 per cent electronic toll collection compliant including 17 where FASTags will be read through hand-held devices. The Government had already decided that from December 1, toll payments will be made only via FASTag under the National Electronic Toll Collection (NETC) programme, the flagship initiative of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

Didi slams PSU divestment, calls meet

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

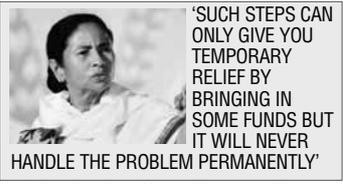
Hours after Narendra Modi Government gave its in-principle approval to the strategic divestment of five public sector units, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said the step was a prelude to "disinvestment of India" and called for an all-party meeting to discuss the economic crisis that India was currently in.

Speaking to reporters at Behrampur, Banerjee on Thursday said that such knee-jerk strategies will at best provide for a temporary pain relief and not complete resolution of the financial crisis that India was in.

She said "such steps can only give you temporary relief by bringing in some funds but it will never handle the problem permanently" and said she will meet Narendra Modi to call an all-party meeting to get over the crisis.

"Instead of such hasty steps to sell Government units which is nothing but a temporary measure the Prime Minister should call an all-party meeting so as to devise a permanent solution to the ongoing crisis that India is facing... I hope the Prime Minister will consult the experts during this hour of crisis," Banerjee said adding "if the Government continues to take such reactive measures then one day they will end up selling all the PSUs... they will finally sell the whole country... they will divest the whole India."

Earlier the Union Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs had given in-principle approval to the strategic divestment in five State-run companies, including a sale of the Government's entire stake in Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), while retaining its ownership of Numaligarh Refinery Ltd



HANDLE THE PROBLEM PERMANENTLY'

(NRL) through another public sector company.

The Chief Minister also attacked the Centre for trying to digitise India. "I am not against digitisation but the way they are trying to make India a cashless society it will not augur well for the economy in future," she said reminding the "horrible experience of demonetization."

She said demonetisation is still haunting India as "a large number of people are left with very little cash. They are facing

'SUCH STEPS CAN ONLY GIVE YOU TEMPORARY RELIEF BY BRINGING IN SOME FUNDS BUT IT WILL NEVER HANDLE THE PROBLEM PERMANENTLY'

no company. Rather than facing that situation, the Government may consider going for the people public partnership model in business."

Saying that Trinamool Congress never approved of divestment and merger of companies she said some companies by rationalisation of employees "employment has come to a halt in several sectors. People are not spending because they don't have any savings," Banerjee said the way the Union Government was taking merging banks and transferring quarters like it did in the case of United Bank of India "it is creating huge problem for State run schemes."

"A whole lot of state schemes run through UBI. If the headquarter doesn't remain in this state what will be the future of those schemes?" she asked.

Opp stages walkouts over PSU disinvestment, electoral bonds

PNB ■ NEW DELHI

Questioning 'legitimation' of anonymous donations to political parties by way of electoral bonds and the privatisation of State-owned firms, the Opposition Congress on Thursday staged walkouts from both the Houses saying Government has made corrupt official."

The Rajya Sabha was adjourned till noon as the Congress protested after the Chair did not allow discussion on the issues. In the Lok Sabha, the Congress members returned to their seats after Speaker Om Birla assured them that they will be allowed to raise issues during Zero Hour.

Soon after laying of listed papers by Ministers on the table of the House, Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu

said he has received notices from several members to suspend business and take up discussions on the RBI's objection to electoral bonds, and disinvestment of PSUs. "They (the notices) do not warrant suspension of other business and (notices) taken upon priority," he said.

However, Congress members were on their feet and held protests. Naidu said it was the prerogative of the Chair to decide which discussions should be taken or not. This did not pacify the protesting Congress and other opposition party members. The House was adjourned till noon.

In the Lok Sabha, Congress MP Manish Tewari raised the issue during zero hour. He said, "despite reservations expressed by the Reserve Bank of India and the Election Commission, the Government

went ahead with the scheme". Congress members later walked out of proceedings.

Tewari said anonymity rendered to the donors was not acceptable. Speaker Om Birla did not allow Tewari to go further with his comment when he mentioned PMO while raising the issue. Tewari was referring to some documents in his possession.

Under the electoral bonds scheme, the Government has offered complete anonymity for the mentioned donors. A donor could now anonymously buy a bond, and deposit it with the political party of his or her choice. eom "This is a big scam."

The country is being looted, he mentioned us to speak. Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said.

BJP expels rebels Sharath Bachegowda, Kaviraj Urs

Bengaluru: Ruling BJP in Karnataka on Thursday expelled from its primary membership rebels Sharath Bachegowda and Kaviraj Urs, contesting the coming Assembly bypolls as independent candidates, for anti-party activity.

In separate letters to both Sharath Bachegowda fighting from Hoskote Assembly constituency and Urs from Vijayanagara, BJP said, their contest against the party's official candidates would be considered as anti-party activity.

BJP on Wednesday had asked the party rebels to withdraw their candidature by Thursday, the last day for the process.

As the two did not withdraw their candidature, the party sent the letters, a copy of which has been released to the media.

After the BJP gave the Hoskote



Sharath Bachegowda and Kaviraj Urs, expelled from BJP.

ticket to disqualified Congress legislator M T B Nagar, Sharath Bachegowda has jumped into the fray as an independent.

JD(S) has decided to support him and has not fielded a candidate.

JD(S) of BJP MP from Chikkaballapura B N Bachegowda, he had remained adamant on contesting with repeated attempts

by the party leadership to persuade him to back out in vain.

Sharath Bachegowda, who was also secretary of BJP Yuva Morcha, had earlier been appointed Chairman of Karnataka Housing Board by Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa in an attempt to 'pacify' him.

Yediyurappa had recently indicated the party has even decided to expel him, if he doesn't withdraw from the contest.

Nagaraj as Congress candidate had defeated Sharath Bachegowda in 2018 assembly polls by over 7,000 votes.

Nagaraj has filed his nomination as independent candidate from Vijayanagara, rebelling against the BJP's decision to field Anand

JD(S) aim to defeat disqualified MLAs, says Kumaraswamy

Bengaluru: leader H D Kumaraswamy

Thursday indicated his party would take a call on its role, in case the ruling BJP in Karnataka loses majority after the results of December 5 by-elections to 15 Assembly constituencies in the State.

He also said the 'main target' of his party was to defeat the disqualified legislators, whose rebellion had led to the collapse of the Congress-JDS coalition Government.

"In a democratic setup a Government should have clear majority. In December 5 bypolls, if BJP doesn't win the required number of seats and get limited to two or three seats, they will lose majority, they will have to resign and the Government will have to go," Kumaraswamy told reporters in

Mysuru.

Responding to a question about his party's role if BJP fails to win enough number of seats to retain its majority, he said, "What will happen then, we will see later, why should I say now? How should I know about the developments that will happen later?..."

"Whether this government will have majority or lose it will depend on the bypoll results, let the results come out, we will discuss it later," he said adding "let's discuss it on December 9 (bypoll results date)."

The BJP needs to win at least six seats in the bypolls to 15 constituencies to remain in a majority in the 224-member assembly, which would still have two vacant seats-- Maski and R R Nagar.

BJP accuses Opp of 'emotional exploitation' of people on Kashmir

Jammu: The Jammu & Kashmir unit of BJP on Wednesday targeted the Opposition for questioning the Centre's claim of 'total normalcy' in Kashmir post abrogation of Article 370 provisions and said it's back to its usual mode of emotional exploitation of people.

It also recommended a 'high level inquiry' into the alleged lack of facilities at MLA hostel following complaints by the relatives of politicians detained there after it was turned into a sub-jail.

"The return to normalcy in Kashmir does not suit their (opposition's) narrative of opposing the Government's decision of August 5 and hence they continue in usual

mode of denial and victimhood unmindful of their role in the past," BJP spokesperson Brig (ret'd) Anil Gupta said in a statement here.

Reacting to the discussion on the Kashmir situation in Parliament and the statements of the National Conference and the PDP casting doubt over the Government's claim of 'total normalcy' in Kashmir, Gupta said, "The opposition is back to its usual trick of emotional exploitation of people based on false propaganda instead of factual data and with statements laced with superlative adjectives to create an impression that hell has been let loose in Kashmir."

Responding to media reports about some members of the board favouring the review petition, Farooqi, who

Shutdown in Valley continues after warning posters for shopkeepers

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

Shops and businesses were shut and public transport remained largely off the roads in most parts of Kashmir on the second consecutive day on Thursday, after posters warning shopkeepers against opening their establishments appeared in some areas.

The posters calling for shutdown also appeared a day before Union Home Minister Amit Shah said in Parliament that normalcy had returned to the Valley.

Officials said the shutdown was observed in Srinagar and Ganderbal districts in central Kashmir, Anantnag, Kulgam, Pulwama and Shopian districts in south Kashmir and in some areas in the north.

Shop owners did not open their establishments during the morning hours they did over the past few weeks, they said. Public transport remained largely off the roads in the city and elsewhere in the valley. However, a few auto-rickshaws and inter-district cabs were plying, the officials said.

Members can discuss review petition in Nov 26 meet: Sunni board chief

Lucknow: Amid reports of differences in the UP Sunni Central Waqf Board over the filing of a review petition in the Ayodhya case, Muslim body chairman Zafar Farooqi said members can discuss the issue in their November 26 meeting.

"I have been authorised to take a decision on behalf of the board but if any member has objection to it, he can raise it in the meeting scheduled for November 26 here," Farooqi said.

The Sunni Central Waqf Board will take a decision on whether to accept land for building a mosque in Ayodhya at its meeting on November 26. Earlier, Farooqi had said that

AYODHYA CASE



Members of the Sunni Central Waqf Board discussing the review petition.

they would abide by the apex court decision and would not file a review petition.

Responding to media reports about some members of the board favouring the review petition, Farooqi, who

ity view and if there is any member who has any objection, he can raise in the meeting," Farooqi said.

Meanwhile, the All-India Shia Personal Law Board has supported the AIMPLB stand of filing a review petition and declining the offer of five acres for the construction of a mosque.

Their spokesman Maulana Yasooq Abbas said the Shia board was with the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board in every manner. "If there is any doubt or complaint on the verdict, we have the legal right to file a review petition and we should not abstain from it," Abbas said.

10-yr-old girl dies of snakebite in class, teacher suspended

Wayanad (Ker): A 10-year-old girl died after being bitten by a snake inside her classroom, as the State Government suspended a teacher for alleged lapse in rushing her to hospital, officials said on Thursday.

The fifth standard student Shehala Sherin was taken to hospital over an hour after the incident at around 3 pm on Wednesday, students of the Government vocational higher secondary school at Sulthan Bathery in Wayanad district alleged.

Her parents rushed her to four hospitals where no antivenom was administered and they were told to take the child to the Kozhikode Medical col-



The snake that bit the girl.

lege hospital, which is about 90 km from Sulthan Bathery, officials said.

Shehala's father said she died before reaching the medical college.

Kerala Govt bans single use plastic from Jan 1

Thiruvananthapuram: The Kerala Government on Thursday decided to ban single use plastic products from January one. A decision in this regard was taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

"After considering the environmental and health issues related to mounting plastic waste, the Government decided to ban the single-use-plastic products in the state from January 1, 2020," a Government press release said.

Plastic carry bags and sheets, cooling films, plastic plates, cups, thermocol and Styrofoam-based fancy items

and others have been banned. Single-use plastic can be used only once before it is either thrown away or recycled and is mainly used by the food processing and food delivery, retailers for packaging and selling finished goods like pharmaceuticals and agriculture.

"Single-use plastic cups, plates, spoons, forks, straws, stirrers, bowls, plastic flags, water pouches, juice packs, pet bottles (under 300 ml), plastic garbage bags, PVC film, materials, plastic packets, among others have been banned," Vijayan said.

UP law panel suggests new law to check forcible conversions

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh State Law Commission

on Thursday submitted a report to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, suggesting a new law to check forcible religious conversions.

The report was submitted along with a draft legislation. Uttar Pradesh Freedom of Religion Bill, 2019, law commission secretary Sapna Tripathi told PTI.

The report was prepared after going through pre and post-independence laws in the country and neighbouring countries like Nepal, Myanmar, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Pakistan

besides keeping in mind court judgments.

"The commission is of the view that existing legal provisions are not enough to check religious conversions and on this serious matter, a new law is needed like in 10 other states," the report said.

The 268-page report included recent newspaper clippings regarding forcible conversions, international covenants on the right to religion, anti-conversion laws in neighbouring countries and India.

It also deals with the constitutional framework of the

CELEBRATIONS OF WORLD FISHERIES DAY BEGIN

New Delhi: Union Minister Giriraj Singh on Thursday inaugurated the celebrations of World Fisheries Day. Ministers of State Dr Sanjeev Balyan and Pratap Chandra Sarangi were also present and facilitated outgoing fish farmers, aquaculturists and fish folks.

23% H1-B VISA DENIED IN 2019 FISCAL YEAR
New Delhi: About 23 per cent of H1-B visas (699 persons) may be denied in the 2019 fiscal year, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said in the Rajya Sabha.

RAGA WRITES TO VIJAYAN ON SNAKEBITE CASE
New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday wrote to Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on the death of a schoolgirl bitten by a snake inside her classroom, asking that the school's crumbling infrastructure needed urgent attention of the State Government.

Tripura to accommodate up to 500 Bru families if Centre gives adequate funds: CM Deb

Agartala: With the final Bru repatriation process hitting a deadlock, the Tripura Government has written to the Centre, saying it could accommodate up to 500 families in the State if adequate funds were sanctioned for the cause.

In a letter to the Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Chief Minister Biplab Deb said the final repatriation process was scheduled to end on November 30, as per the agreement signed between the Centre, Governments of Mizoram and Tripura, and the representatives of Bru migrants, but only 144 of 4,447 families have returned to their home

state so far.

Thousands of Bru families fled Mamit, Kokash and Lamlet districts of Mizoram in 1997 and moved to Tripura in the wake of an ethnic conflict.

The Centre, along with the governments of Tripura and Mizoram, had been trying to repatriate them to their home State over the past one decade, with little success. Several Bru families have refused to return to Mizoram, citing security concerns and inadequate rehabilitation package. Some have also sought a separate autonomous council for the community. "Strong reluctance has been noticed on the part of Bru migrants to return to Mizoram.

The repatriation process has not been successful. So far, only 144 families (699 persons) have shifted to Mizoram in the current phase of repatriation.

"The State Government is of the view that Bru refugees who wish to stay in Tripura may be allowed to do so. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) may give them a suitable package in par with what is being offered to those returning to Mizoram," Deb wrote to Shah on Sunday. The chief minister, however, pointed out that availability of land is likely to be a major constraint in Tripura and requested the MHA to think of a suitable solution.

Original petitioner hails Centre's NRC move

Cong objects to move

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

The Assam Public Works (APW), the original petitioner in the Supreme Court on updating the National Register of Citizens (NRC), on Thursday welcomed Union Home Minister Amit Shah's announcement that the NRC would be updated again in the State along with the rest of the country.

The Congress, however, opposed the move claiming that the BJP wants a fresh NRC update without the supervision of the Supreme Court, as it wants to exclude a section of genuine Indian citizens from the religious minority community and include illegal migrants from a linguistic minority group.

Shah had announced in Rajya Sabha on Wednesday that the NRC update process will be carried out afresh in Assam concurrently with the rest of India. On the same day, Sena MP Himanta Biswa Sarma said the State Government has requested Shah to dismiss the NRC in the current form.

"The Union Home Minister's announcement has



come as a ray of hope to the indigenous population of Assam. We are definitely hopeful but not excited about it. We will express our happiness only when the Home Minister's announcement fulfils the genuine aspirations of the people," APW president Abhijeet Sarma said here.

The updated final NRC which validates bonafide Indian citizens of Assam, was released on August 31 excluding names of over 19 lakh applicants in the state.

In 2009, the APW — a non-governmental organisation — had filed a petition in the Supreme Court that led to the start of the updation exercise of the NRC in 2015.

Assam, which had faced an influx of people from Bangladesh since the early 20th century, is the only state having an NRC, which was first prepared in 1951.

"An official's bias and vested interests led to the publication of a flawed NRC. Names of genuine Indian citizens were left out while those of illegal immigrants were included in the final NRC," the APW chief claimed.

The APW has submitted a petition in the apex court highlighting the alleged discrepancies in the final NRC.

"We will file another petition in the Supreme Court soon demanding an IT audit of the software used for preparing

the NRC data," Sarma added.

After the final NRC was published on August 31, the APW had wondered whether the software used in the updation exercise was capable of handling so much data and if it was examined by any third party. Information Technology expert.

Opposing the idea of a fresh NRC updation exercise in Assam, senior Congress leader Debrastra Saikia alleged that the BJP wants to keep the NRC issue simmering to further its agenda of polarization along religious lines.

The final NRC was published under the supervision of the Supreme Court and, significantly, the apex court has accepted the validity of the final NRC," Saikia said.

"Shah's announcement about a fresh NRC update in Assam in the presence of (Narendra) Modi Government is unwilling to accept the decision of the Supreme Court," Saikia, the leader of the opposition in Assam Assembly, claimed.

The NRC was updated by engaging over 50,000 employees of the Assam Government and spending over ₹ 1,200 crore of tax-payers' money, he said adding that about 3.29 crore people of the State went through a great deal of trouble to collect documents and participate in the exercise.

"I would like to appeal to the Supreme Court not to allow the Modi Government to carry out another NRC updation exercise in Assam" so that people do not have to face renewed harassment, Saikia said.

The All Assam Students' Union (AASU), the signatory to the Assam Accord, has also filed a petition in the Supreme Court alleging flaws in the final NRC and its hearing will be held on November 26.

The AASU is a signatory to the Assam Accord, a 1985 document that provided for "detection, deletion and deportation" of illegal foreigners from Assam.

AASU Advisor Samujjal Bhattacharya said they were not satisfied with the final NRC but have full faith in the Supreme Court and "we have approached the highest court to redress the grievances of people of Assam".

Owaisi: Country-wide NRC will only put people through hardship

Hyderabad: AIMIM

president Asaduddin Owaisi on Thursday hit out at the NDA Governments plan to conduct NRC across the country, alleging that the exercise is only going to cause hardship to people, especially minorities and "the weak".

Khoda pahaad, nikla chhodon it, but find one all over India, the All India Majlis-e-Ltehadul Muslimen (AIMIM) chief tweeted.

The proverb suggests a big effort for little gain.

Literally, it means finding a mouse after digging a mountain.

"Modi wants all Indians to yet again stand in line, detaining undocumented Indians & leaving minorities & the weak at the mercy of the law. Nowhere in the world are people put through such hardship, he said.

He was referring to reports over the Assam Government urging the Centre to scrap the

'NRC failed in Assam, now BJP wants to avoid embarrassment'

Jaipur: Rajasthan

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on

Thursday attacked Union Home Minister Amit Shah over the issue of National Register of Citizens (NRC), saying he is now stressing on implementing it across the country to avoid embarrassment following failure of the exercise in Assam.

"The NRC has failed in Assam. Even the state unit of the BJP has opposed it. Every party is criticising the implementation of NRC in Assam. The NDA spent crores on it and the result has been a failure," he told reporters here.

Responding to a question that Shah has announced in Lok Sabha that the NRC will be implemented across the country, Gehlot said, "The Congress, the BJP and all other parties are saying that it has happened in Assam. The result which has come out after spending crores of rupees is in front of everyone. Amit Shah is talking like this to avoid embarrassment." PTI



An illuminated view of Panjim Church during the 50th edition of International Film Festival of India (IFFI), in Panaji on Thursday

Will break heads of those trying to poach Sena MLAs: Sattar

Mumbai: Shiv Sena MLA Abdul Sattar on Thursday warned that heads of those who try to poach his party's legislators will be broken.

Sattar, who represents Sillod constituency in Aurangabad, said poaching or buying out legislators was not legal in a democratic set up. The legislator made the remarks even as the Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress are working out a coalition in Maharashtra, which is placed under the President's rule since November 12.

"BJP will not be able to poach any MLA. But those who try to poach MLAs will have their heads broken, and as a special case, we will make arrangements to treat them at a hospital," Sattar said.

"Poaching or buying out legislators was not legal in a democratic set up. It is not some retail shop to (buy MLAs out)," he added. The BJP and Shiv Sena contested the October 21 Assembly elections together and won 105 and 56 seats respectively. The two parties, however, fell out after the Shiv Sena persisted with its demand of sharing the Chief Ministerial post for two-and-a-half years on a rotational basis.

Cong should not back Maha Govt sans shot at CM post: Athawale

Mumbai: The Congress should not back the Shiv Sena and the NCP in Government formation in Maharashtra if it is not going to get the chief minister's post on a rotational basis, Union Minister Ramdas Athawale said on Thursday.

Athawale's comments came amid reports the Shiv Sena and the NCP may share the Chief Ministerial post for two-and-a-half years in the Government that the Congress is likely to join as the third player and may get the deputy Chief Minister's post.

The Congress and the NCP are at present in the process of forging ties with the Shiv Sena to form the Government in the state, which is under President's rule since November 12. The Shiv Sena, which contested the October 21 Maharashtra Assembly polls with the BJP, walked away from its ally over the issue of sharing the Chief Ministerial post on a rotational basis for two-and-a-half years. The BJP had rejected the Shiv Sena's demand for rotational Chief Ministerships.

Complaint against Uddhav for 'cheating' voters in Aurangabad

Mumbai: A complaint of "cheating" has been filed against Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray and two other leaders in Aurangabad district for seeking votes in the name of Hindutva, but not forming Government with pre-poll ally BJP, an official said on Thursday.

A written application in this regard against Thackeray and two other party leaders was submitted at the Begumpura Police Station in Aurangabad district, around 325km from here, by a BJP supporter, Ramdas Khairi, on Wednesday night, the official said.

"We received the application for the same and have forwarded it to Special Branch," he said.

According to the complainant, during the campaign for the October 21 Assembly election, Thackeray, newly-elected Sena MLA Pradeep Jaiswal (Aurangabad Central) and the party's former MP Chandrakant Khairi sought votes for the Sena-BJP alliance



in the name of protecting Hindutva.

On their appeal, the complainant said he and his family members, voters in the of Aurangabad Central constituency, cast their voters in favour of BJP, the Sena-BJP alliance candidate from the seat.

With an aim to bring the Sena-BJP alliance to power in the state, BJP supporters of the constituency also voted for Jaiswal, following which he won, Choure said.

After the results, the Sena snapped ties with the BJP following differences over power-sharing formula and did not form Government with its pre-poll ally, he said in the application. PTI

New political front starring Rajini & Kamal on anvil

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The movies in which they starred together were some of the all time hits in Tamil. Even when both of them were in their political domains in 2018, nobody in Tamil Nadu had thought that they would join hands to forge an alliance to fight the election.

Rajinikanth and Kamal Haassan were two different poles of Tamil films as well as cultural sphere. While Rajinikanth was known for his mannerisms and style, Kamal Haassan projected himself as a total actor of global standards, though he was no different from the former in style and substance.

When Kamal Haassan as the early bird in launching his political outfit Makkal Neethi Meiam, Rajinikanth choose to play the wait and watch game. Jaiswal went to the extent of taunting and ridiculing Rajinikanth from all available platforms for the latter's soft approach towards Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. Kamal Haassan went to the extent of lambasting the Hindutva party and declared himself as a sec-



ularist to the core.

Though the candidates fielded by him finished poor fourth and fifth in the 2019 Lok Sabha election, Kamal Haassan did not lose heart and declared that he would stage a come back by taking up public issues. But when six of his top rung leaders deserted him and joined the BJP, the actor saw the writing on the wall that politics was a different game and that he would have to take his rivals head on.

When Kamal Haassan as the early bird in launching his political outfit Makkal Neethi Meiam, Rajinikanth choose to play the wait and watch game. Jaiswal went to the extent of taunting and ridiculing Rajinikanth from all available platforms for the latter's soft approach towards Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. Kamal Haassan went to the extent of lambasting the Hindutva party and declared himself as a sec-

Centre will take steps to get justice for striking TSRTC staff: Kishan reddy

Hyderabad: Union Minister G Kishan Reddy on Thursday said the Centre would take steps to ensure that the striking TSRTC employees get justice.

"Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari has assured that he will speak to the Chief Minister and do justice to the Chandrakant Khairi sought votes for the Sena-BJP alliance in their problems in Delhi. Reddy, Lok Sabha member

from Secunderabad here, and other BJP MPs from Telangana met Gadkari in the national capital.

The RTC employees' unions was confident that justice would be done when the matter was referred to the labour court, employees union leader Aswathama Reddy told reporters on Wednesday.

The Telangana High Court had directed the Commissioner of Labour to take a call on whether the ongoing strike

the unions of TSRTC were referred to the Labour Court or not, in two weeks to decide the legality of the strike.

Aswathama Reddy hoped that the state government would take steps to refer the employees problem to the labour court.

A formal response had not come till Thursday evening from either the RTC management or the State Government on the employees' unions stance to resume duties. PTI

ICICI Bank advertisement with logo and contact information.

Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation advertisement for recruitment.

Delhi Jal Board advertisement for recruitment of Executive Engineer.

Delhi Jal Board advertisement for recruitment of Executive Engineer.

South Delhi Municipal Corporation advertisement for recruitment.

Noida advertisement for recruitment of Executive Engineer.

Fresh row over NRC

Clearly lessons haven't been learnt from the Assam exercise and a pan-India push is rather brazen



This Modi Government, and we need to make the distinction from the 2014 version, is feverishly on a manifesto-fulfillment spree for its supporters rather than wish-fulfillment of voters who empowered it with an unprecedented Lok Sabha verdict. Either that or it believes that real governance issues and a halting economy are too tough to tackle at the moment and, therefore, the nation needs an "otherisation" of focus and a new enemy. In this case, "alien feeders" robbing our resources. Or it believes in creating such a disruption in the political economy that it can justify its role as a changemaker attempting to rewrite a nation's destiny, which apparently seems to have not found its identity and legitimacy at the ripe old age of 72. What else could explain Home Minister Amit Shah's pledge to pursue the tabulation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) across all States despite burning fingers in Assam and his own State unit seeking a review of the process? Ostensibly meant to isolate infiltrators, who have settled here and may well have even featured in the Aadhaar directory, it is a fig leaf for flushing out not just Bangladeshi migrants but scaring the minority community in general. If we do not make the cut in this blatantly exclusionary document, either because of a lack of documents, some from our grandparents' times, or some perceived inconsistency, a vast majority of Indians could be Stateless and without rights. Rather the intent is to demolish the social plurality of India and impose majoritarian consent by creating a national electoral college of cheer-leading dogmatists on all matters of national consequence. The final NRC list for Assam, which was meant to segregate those born of the soil from settlers who came into the State after 1971, has found 19 lakh citizenship claims illegal. And while the party may have thought this number would be of Muslim migrants from Bangladesh, turns out a huge number of those left out are Bengali-speaking Hindus, a core constituency. Rights activists have been claiming for a long time that most Muslim migrants were beaten back anyway before 1971.

Till date, there has been no express reason cited for undertaking a costly logistical exercise in stressed times. Does the NRC list mean that all our past attempts at census were flawed and discriminatory? There is no specific policy in the cut-off date as cross-border migrations have happened before Partition and even between 1950 and 1971, at different times and in different States. Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that no person can be arbitrarily deprived of his/her nationality. By that yardstick, the cut-off set at 1971 amounts to arbitrary deprivation, since many refugees have been settled and even naturalised over varying timelines. How can we then have a national consensus on a cutoff date? Besides, the NRC is a razor's edge walk as at the moment it reeks of racial and religious discrimination. And what of the status of the Stateless, assuming all of them won't get redress from a tribunal? Bangladesh has already disowned its share in the infiltration issue and has extracted a promise from India that it won't be deporting people across the borders. How can we prove their Bangladeshi origins, if any? We cannot file up Bangladesh, the more friendly of our neighbours given the Chinese ring of diplomacy in the region, and expect it cushion our push-back drive. Besides, previous experiences have shown that those deported have again returned to the country. What the BJP badly miscalculated was that the Assamese demand for restoring the State's demographic pattern is more sub-cultural than religious, one which has linked the supremacy of Ahom identity to the exclusion of others. Historically, Bengalis have suffered from this identity politics, simply because they controlled the economic resources of the region during the British raj. So while the BJP is planning to amend the citizenship law to allow Hindus returning from foreign countries to become Indian citizens, Assam and the North-east will not welcome that influx either. The BJP has clearly failed to understand local pride and mistaken it as national identity. Besides, it must realise that migration has changed geopolitics everywhere and here we are talking of 50 years of settler families, who, for whatever wrong reason of votebank politics by various parties, have not only been naturalised but have established valid credentials and permeated the system. What the BJP should have done is concentrated on stopping illegal immigration here on and codified new border protocols.

Breathing new life

One hopes that the management transfer resulting from divestment of PSUs will result in better performance



Haunted by the economic slowdown and a failed fiscal policy, the Narendra Modi Government has decided to sell the family silver. With crucial sectors crying for urgent attention, the Government has bet on what has become a prerequisite for any democracy aiming to achieve development — the strategic sale of public sector enterprises (PSUs) to encourage investment from the private sector when options have plateaued out. As Margaret Thatcher had once said, "privatisation must be at the centre of any programme of reclaiming territory for freedom." The decision of the Government to sell the five PSUs, including the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), is one such move. And in a first, it won't allow other profitable PSUs to buy in, usually done to keep its shadow presence. Money thus gained from the transaction could spur revenue amid uncertainty over tax collections while at the same time also help the Government keep its fiscal deficit in check and meet its investment targets — against a target of ₹1.05 lakh crore for 2019-20, only ₹17,364.26 crore has been realised till date. But why did the once cash-rich enterprises, and even some of our prized Navratnas, which were conceived with a potential to become global giants, come to the brink? The reasons are many, prominent among them being excessive Government control, which led to the clasp of the decision-making power of the PSUs. This also hampered their competitive abilities in a fast-growing market as they had to face bureaucratic lethargy and tardy approvals. They couldn't escape the burden of policy paralysis with no say in fixing prices for their own products. For long, the need for functional autonomy and freedom from political interference was felt but ignored by successive Governments.

Though management transfer of PSUs will result in better performance, the absence of an anti-trust law can lead to the emergence of monopolies and mis-allocated resources. What about the crucial issue of workers' retrenchment? There are already tremors being felt as BPCL employees have called for a nationwide strike on November 28 amid fears of job losses and recruitment freeze. With unemployment at a four-decade high of 6.1 per cent, can the Government afford retrenchment? While there may be bailout with the buyouts, the fund infusion should be used rationally by the Government and not be frittered away or even end up as huge kickbacks. Also, it must initiate big structural reforms instead of selling just ill-maintained properties that could well have been its assets.

'Tricky Mush' at it again

The Pakistani military has been cursed by Generals who have been overtly political. Military men have contributed to the atrophy in the current narrative



BHOPINDER SINGH

The 1980s were the infamous years of Gen Zia-ul-Haq's murky cold war machinations in Afghanistan and the "sharisation" of Pakistan that marked the culture-war doctrine. Pakistani military for posterity. After Gen Zia's mysterious death in an air crash, his *bête noire*, Gen Mirza Aslam Beg, took over the Pakistani Army and was dutifully accused by Gen Zia's son, Ijaz-ul-Haq, of being complicit in the conspiracy to kill his father. It was only after this successively to the Chief of Army Staff, the Pakistani military got a rare professional at the helm of affairs in the form of Gen Asif Nawaz Janjua.

The thoroughbred and third generation soldier from fifth Punjab Regiment (Sherdils), Gen Janjua was trained at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, the UK. He was a no-nonsense combatant, who had earned his stripes as the "soldier's soldier" for his vast experiences in the field. He stayed away from the political intrigues of the Islamabad-Rawalpindi axis and could not tolerate overtly political, Machiavellian and bigoted colleagues like Lt Gen Hamid Gul (also known as the "father of Taliban"). The hardcore soldiering instincts of Gen Janjua militated against the wheeling and dealing style of some Pakistani military staff, who partook shady political initiatives. Prominent among them was a mediocre though ambitious Brigadier, Pervez Musharraf, whom Gen Janjua aptly and prophetically labelled "Tricky Mush".

The patent Pakistani saga of the long night of the Generals soon consumed the upright Gen Janjua as he died a mysterious death. Slamming it as "murder", his family members suspected certain disgruntled colleagues, who could not match up to his exacting Presidential standards. "Tricky Mush" was to become more famous later as he deposed his one-time mentor, Nawaz Sharif, and ensconced himself as the Chief Executive and then the President of Pakistan.

The incorrigibility, recklessness and ruthless ambitions of "Tricky Mush" were soon to emerge in his misadventures in Kargil where he apparently kept even his own Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in the dark. This deviously planned military operation happened in the backdrop of reconciliatory moves between India and Pakistan, which included the Lahore Bus initiative, where democratically elected leaders on both sides were seemingly thawing the freeze. The shame of the Kargil result notwithstanding for Gen Musharraf, he was soon to manipulate what he himself called a "counter coup." He banished the man, namely Sharif, who had superseded two other senior officers to make "Tricky Mush" the Pakistani Military Chief as he had postured himself as the most apolitical bet. He punished a senior general in the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) after coming under intense pressure to admit a presidential referendum which he won was heavily rigged.

Almost immediately, Musharraf set about



re-scripting the official narrative pertaining to his Kargil debacle and was forced into officially reneging his past alliances with the Taliban and supposedly joined the global "war on terror." However, "Tricky Mush" had unprecedented standards of duplicity, which were inevitable in his blow-hot-blow-cold belligerence at the Agra summit, as indeed, his continued patronage of terror outfits was either India or Afghanistan-facing.

Musharraf's continued deceitfulness in luring terror organisations frustrated and riled the Americans to start taking unilateral and direct strikes *via* drones. The US got increasingly concerned about Musharraf's commitment to nail the most wanted terrorist, Osama bin Laden. Former US President Barack Obama had forewarned of expecting any change in the Pakistani fate with Musharraf's patent grandstanding and megalomania as the only leader capable of doing the needful by saying, "I argued for years that we need to move from a 'Musharraf policy' to a 'Pakistan policy'."

In 2011, Osama bin Laden was found just half a mile away from the Kukul Military Academy in the garrison town of Abbottabad when the American journalist David Ignatius even alluded to the said "safe house" to be arranged by the Pakistani Intelligence, on the orders of Gen Musharraf. Former White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta, who

TODAY, MUSHARRAF IS DESPERATE TO REMAIN RELEVANT AND MAKES OUTLANDISH (THOUGH OFTEN TRUE) STATEMENTS THAT MAY EARN HIM A FOLLOWING AMONG EXTREMIST ELEMENTS IN PAKISTAN. BUT THAT DOES NOT BEHAVE A FORMER LEADER OF A NATION, LET ALONE A PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER

was aware of the Pakistani involvement, unambiguously stated the reason to keep the mission a secret as, "It was decided that any effort to work with the Pakistanis could jeopardise the mission. They might alert the targets." A former CIA official, Bruce Riedel, had quoted former Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief, Gen Ziauddin Khawaja, as saying that Musharraf "knew bin Laden was in Abbottabad." Osama bin Laden had moved into the Abbottabad compound when Musharraf was in power and had lived there ever since.

Brazenly, Musharraf was left lamenting that the US had "violated" Pakistan's sovereignty by conducting the Osama bin Laden raid, while meekly washing his hands of any complicity. However, by then, Musharraf had lost all credibility inside and outside of Pakistan. Had it not been for the timely intervention of the Pakistani military, "Tricky Mush" would have been convicted for various wrongs after having been dislodged by all political parties, including Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (N), Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP), which questioned his role in her murder, or even Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), which spurned his attempts to coopt him as his Prime Minister.

Today, Musharraf is desperate to remain relevant and makes outlandish (though often true) statements that may earn him a

following among extremist elements in Pakistan. But that does not behave a former leader of a nation, let alone a professional soldier. Recently, he belligerently stated the obvious and the worst kept Pakistani secrets by admitting that they had trained Kashmiri militants and that terrorists like Osama bin Laden and Jhaluddin Haqqani were "Pakistani heroes."

Recent video clips released by a Pakistani politician, Farhatullah Babar, where Musharraf is seen stating the obvious — the distinguishedness of Pakistani double-speak on terrorism — confirms it yet again. While civilian politicians have not exactly covered themselves with glory, military men in Pakistan like Gen Zia and Gen Musharraf have done far more systemic and institutional damage with the ISI directly under their charge.

The Chairman of the US Joint Chief of Staff, Gen Joseph Dunford, had told the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations during a Congressional hearing in 2017, "I think it's clear to me that the ISI has connections with terrorist groups." Till date, the likes of "Tricky Mush" are responsible for the sort of infamy that they afford on the institution of the Pakistani military, and by that extension, Pakistan as a nation.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry)

SOUNDBITE

The Modi-Amit Shah duo continue to play the game of scaring people. The BJP is creating an environment of fear and intimidation through the NRC process.



CPI(M) general secretary —Sitaram Yechury

I've always felt that cinema is a universal medium, one that is beyond language and beyond all kinds of other factors that keep coming into our social and modern lives.



Megastar —Amitabh Bachchan

India's ancient traditions of non-violence and compassion are needed in today's world where people are fighting on the basis of religion and countries over territorial disputes.



Tibetan spiritual leader —Dalai Lama

BJP will not be able to poach any MLA. Those who try to poach will have their seats broken. As a special case, we will make arrangements to treat them at a hospital.



Shiv Sena leader —Abdu Sattar

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Developments in Lanka

Sir — This refers to the article, "Power shift in Colombo" (November 20) by Ashok K Mehta. Gotabaya Rajapaksa's victory wasn't surprising. As one who has lived in Sri Lanka for more than 10 years as an expatriate banker during the real problem days, Sri Lanka's path over the years has been interesting. The Easter Sunday bombings did play a major role in a return of fear and, perhaps, resulted in the desire for a stronger leader. Perhaps, in these circumstances, people chose to have a strongman rather than backing a sober, people-oriented democrat.

Tharcus S Fernando Chennai

Absurd protest

Sir — The brouhaha over the appointment of Firoz Khan as Assistant Professor of Sanskrit at the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) is unacceptable. Like in any other university, Khan was appointed as per the guidelines set by the University Grants Commission (UGC). He holds a

A rethink on fee hike is needed

The proposal to hike the hostel fees at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), if implemented, will make education unaffordable for students from economically poor backgrounds. Over 40 per cent of the students at JNU hail from families that have an income of less than ₹10,000 per month. It is sad that some of them might have to drop out of this prestigious institute if the fee hike comes into force. The protests by the students thus have to be understood from their perspective as they are the ones who will be affected. We must extend moral support to them. The Vice-Chancellor of JNU, M Jagadeesh Kumar, should sympathise with the students. It is unfortunate that he allegedly showed reluctance to meet the protesters or work out a stab system. The crucial question here is whether education should be subsidised and made affordable for the impoverished or should it be the exclusive preserve of the affluent? The Government cannot shirk the responsibility of providing quality education to those without the wherewithal to pay for it themselves. It is hard to reconcile that the Government is strapped for cash when it comes

Opposite poles

Sir — The recent war of words between actor Rajinikanth and the ruling party leaders in Tamil Nadu and the unexpected turn of events — actor-turned politician Kamal Haasan expressed his intention to join hands with

Why hide the truth?

Sir — It is unfortunate that key mainstream political leaders in Jammu & Kashmir remain silent since the abrogation of Article 370. Does the Government fear that they will speak the truth? India is a democratic nation. The ruling Government must maintain the spirit of federalism.

G David Milton Maruthanode

Kashiji Via email

unlike Haasan, one thought the actor had no interest in politics. Haasan has his own ideology and if Rajinikanth joins him, won't there be a clash between ideology and principles? It would be better if Rajinikanth came out with his own plan to mitigate the sufferings of the poor and the down-trodden and then step into the political arena alone like actors-turned-mass leaders MGR and Jayalalitha, who worked with the help of grassroots supporters and created a niche for themselves.

M Pradyu Kannur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Stop creating urban slums

PPPs can be instrumental in attracting capital for viable and affordable housing projects in major cities and maintaining them too



AVNEESH SOOD

India is a rapidly urbanising country facing development challenges connected with speedy growth. One of its key challenges is urban migration, which is further exacerbated by restricted resources to meet intensifying housing demands. The high percentage of labour migration from rural areas to cities has contributed to urban congestion, pressure on basic amenities such as water, sanitation and most of all a housing crisis in cities. The country's total urban housing deficiency is anticipated to touch about 30 million by 2022. This constantly-increasing gap between demand and supply in the affordable housing (AH) segment is forcing people to live in slums and informal settlements. The subject, if not dealt with capably, can have a negative impact on the country's financial growth and poverty-reduction efforts.

Real estate developers and private players are focussing mainly on Middle Income Group (MIG) and High Income Group (HIG) segments due to the higher returns from these projects. On the other hand, high land costs, interruption in project approvals, rising raw material costs and low-profit margins have made low-cost housing projects less attractive to them. Also, AH being a State subject, creates complexities in implementation because of unstable financial conditions of development authorities, State/city-level agencies and their restricted capacities in supervision of these projects. To overcome these obstacles, a partnership between the Centre, States, urban local bodies (ULBs), civil society, the private sector and financial organisations is essential. To mainstream AH, the Government needs to act as an enabler for growth and facilitate investments, both public and private. It must also shake-up processes across the value chain. Housing for all by 2022, is the dream of the Government and before taking any action, it is significant to re-examine the current state, recognise bottlenecks and build an efficient execution strategy. Though housing deficit is much wider in rural areas compared to urban areas, it requires only a small portion of total investment foreseen till 2022. The Centre, with parting from States, drafting a plan to deliver three crore houses in rural areas with an outlay of ₹3.45 lakh crore, is a good start.

At the beginning of the 21st century, a shift of supervisory alterations such as agreeing to foreign direct investments (FDI), refining access to credit by trust households, giving tax incentives on housing loans, establishing special economic zones (SEZs) and infrastructure development, attached with high economic growth, have driven private sector participation in urban housing development. However, it has largely resulted in the development of MIG and HIG houses, leading to a significant shortage of AH. Boosting private sector participation in urban AH development would need a synchronised effort from both Central and State Governments. It has been the key role of the Central Government to create an enabling environment through statutory and supervisory alterations in land acquisition, real estate management, analysing archaic regulations governing the real estate sector, streamlining clearances and approval procedures required from Central Government agencies such as the Ministry of Environment and Forest, and the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

Mobilisation of such huge resources (funding, construction capacity, labour, technology, and so on) for mass-scale AH development may be difficult without the participation of the private sector. Hence, the private sector, which is often better in terms of managing construction risks and project delivery, should be encouraged to participate by the Governments by addressing several structural issues.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) can play an important role in bridging the gap between housing demand and supply as it can be instrumental in attracting private capital for financially-viable AH projects. The PPP framework can be effectively used to address some issues in housing development such as land availability, approval delays, funding and affordability by the economically weaker sections (EWS).

The housing sector has great potential as it is the main enabler of the economy in terms of contributions to the exchequer and employment generation. The sector also supports 250 ancillary industries and has a huge multiplier effect on the economy. Proper nurturing could help increase its share to 10-12 per cent by 2022. The Centre could explore forming a nodal agency under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation to facilitate fast-track development of AH projects. This nodal body could be a synchronising agency between the private sector, consumers, lending institutions, regulators, various housing regulatory agencies, State Governments and ULBs.

Another key aspect that is widely neglected while planning an AH project is maintenance, post hand over of units, which creates new urban slums. It is of extreme importance to report this aspect to generate sustainable benefits of the creation of these assets. As per a report by Deloitte on Affordable Housing, the Government has taken many steps to boost the sector, but challenges still remain. For instance, while Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) envisaged a fund for the maintenance of assets created under the scheme with a one-time contribution from the Centre, it could not be implemented at a wider level.

(The writer is Director of a major real estate group.)

NRC WILL BE CARRIED OUT ACROSS THE COUNTRY, WILL BE DONE IN ASSAM AGAIN, NO ONE FROM ANY RELIGION SHOULD BE WORRIED.

—UNION HOME MINISTER

AMIT SHAH

POINT COUNTERPOINT



SOME PEOPLE ARE CRYING HOARSE ABOUT NRC BUT LET ME TELL YOU THAT THERE WILL BE NO NRC IN BENGAL.

—WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

MAMATA BANERJEE

Don't muzzle their voices

Women journalists are reporting fewer stories on gender violence. In 2010, women journalists reported 41 per cent stories as compared to 30 per cent in 2015, a fall of 11 per cent in five years



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

Seema was just 14 when she left her home in West Bengal in the hope of a better life. But all her dreams of becoming economically independent and pulling her family out of poverty were shattered when she found herself in a brothel in Mumbai. Luckily for the teenager, she was rescued two years after being trafficked. But even after Seema returned home, her ordeal didn't end. Stigma and the fear of about traffickers, who threatened her with sexual violence if she dared identify them to the police, impacted her deeply and she never resumed her studies.

Among all States of India, West Bengal has the dubious distinction of topping the list in child trafficking as 34 per cent of all victims are from here. According to recent National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) numbers, of these, 86 per cent were girls who were trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation. In fact, the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) found that every third woman, since the age of 15, has faced gender-based violence of some form in the country.

Studies show that women and girls, who survive rape and other sexual violence, face significant barriers to obtaining justice and critical support services. Besides stigma, one of the biggest obstacles is lack of information and awareness. A recent report on sex trafficking in West Bengal found that about 59 per cent adolescents did not know how to protect themselves from trafficking, and 72 per cent did not know about traffickers, who could help them. Even when they do seek justice and other medical services, they often suffer humiliation at police stations and hospitals, especially if they belong to socially and economically marginalised communities.

What can the media do in such a scenario? Does it have a role to play? Can it use its influence to shift the discourse on violence against women, human rights and empowerment? Can it help survivors like Seema? How can the media be leveraged to change perceptions and end gender-based violence?

These are some of the questions that came up at the International Gender-based Violence and Development (IGVD-25) Summit held in Nairobi recently. Hosted by Centre for Women's Global Leadership under its Journalism Initiative on Gender-Based Violence (JIG), in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Regional Syria Response Hub and the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma, the session focussed on the importance of the media in either shifting or perpetuating attitudes toward gender-based violence in the context of the ICPD.

"Violence against women is a human rights violation. Violence is about silencing us and the media is about breaking the silence. The media has a critical role to play in this silence is broken and women's voices are amplified," said Ing Kantha Phavi, Minister of Women's Affairs of Cambodia.

Phavi pointed out that the Government of Cambodia was committed to the ICPD+25 goal of sexual and gender-based violence by ensuring prevention and care services for all women and girls. However, the persistence of social stereotyping and social attitudes towards women prevented them from seeking help and services. This is where the media can help as it continues to play a crucial role globally in key conversations. The

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 LAST YEAR, A SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FOUNDATION AND TROLL BUSTERS FOUND WOMEN JOURNALISTS EXPERIENCED ONLINE ABUSE, REPORTED SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS. ABOUT 40 PER CENT HAD AVOIDED REPORTING CERTAIN STORIES AS A RESULT OF THESE INCIDENTS



gender-based violence (GBV) is covered and reported in the news media can influence the way our communities perceive the issue," she said.

Lagipoiva Cherelle Jackson, an award-winning journalist from Samoa, said, "The media is a powerful tool in fighting GBV because they not only report on society but help shape public opinion and perceptions," she continued. The Chief Editor of JIG, Jackson said that the language used by the media was critical and it had to be careful not to normalise sexual harassment, objectify women or blame survivors.

Studies have shown that gender inequalities tend to get reinforced by media content that contributes to the normalisation of sexual assault and other forms of sexual violence. There is a tendency to reproduce stereotypes that associate gender-based violence with the masculinity and power. Many news reports of violence against women tend to represent women as victims and as responsible for the violence.

Unfortunately, this is what has happened in Syria, according to Jafar Ishaidat, communications specialist, UNFPA, Syria. "We found that the media could play a harmful role in generating stereotyping and perpetuating certain myths about GBV. Our news reports also harmed survivors directly by disclosing their identities and shifting the blame away from the perpetrators. So we are working with the media on how they can change the narrative," he said. This is where women journalists are making the difference. In India, one of the important examples of how the media used its influence to impact positive change was seen by the reporting of women journalists in particular, around the Delhi gang-rape in December 2012. This led to public mobilisation and the enactment of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013. This mandated the compulsory filing of

First Information Reports (FIRs) in police stations, something that was neglected earlier. It also criminalised various kinds of attacks on women, including stalking, acid attacks and stripping.

"Women journalists have made significant contribution to changing the narrative and defending human rights through their reporting on gender-based violence," stated Krishanti Dharmaraj, Executive Director, Centre for Women in Global Leadership (CWGL). The CWGL, a global women's rights organisation based out of Rutgers University is the founder and coordinator of the '16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence', an international campaign used by activists around the world to eliminate of all forms of GBV.

Women journalists who cover stories about gender-based violence are human rights defenders in their own right. They often face challenges, including misogynistic attacks online and offline, as a result of their work.

"They also face the challenge of dealing with their own trauma as they help another girl or woman secure justice," says Sarah Macharia, Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMMP). The GMMMP is the largest and longest-running research and advocacy initiative on gender equality in the world's news media.

Implemented collaboratively with grassroots and national-level women's rights groups, other civil society organisations, associations and unions of media professionals, university students and researchers around the world, the GMMMP aims to advance gender equality in and through the media by gathering evidence on disparities in portrayal, representation and voice of women compared to men.

The latest GMMMP study showed a decline in stories that focussed on gender violence, including issues such as

rape, sexual assault, family violence, female genital mutilation and trafficking. At the same time, there were progressively higher proportions of women as sources in GBV stories.

In 2005, women were 38 per cent of the people seen, heard or spoken about in the stories, compared to 46 per cent in 2015, a rise of almost 10 points in 10 years. At least three quarters of those who experience gender-based violence are women and yet, they constitute less than one half of people interviewed or the subject of these stories," said Sarah Macharia, GMMMP coordinator.

However, even women journalists are reporting fewer of the stories. Macharia pointed out that in 2010, women journalists reported 41 per cent of the stories, compared to 30 per cent in 2015, a fall of 11 per cent in five years. Last year, a survey conducted by the International Women's Foundation and Troll Busters found women journalists, who experienced online abuse, reported short-term and long-term emotional and psychological effects. About 40 per cent had avoided reporting certain stories as a result of these incidents.

In India, the #MeToo movement has been a catalyst to tackle GBV violence in the media with many women journalists coming out to share their stories of sexual assault and harassment. However, hardly any media organisation has provided physical security, legal advice and psychological support to women journalists affected by sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Women journalists face a triple risk: Risk as every other woman; the same risks as their male colleagues; and certain risks that impact them specifically because they are women journalists. Unless impunity for attacks on women journalists ends, these risks will continue to impact their work.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

Child marriage: Nothing to celebrate

According to the 2011 census, 7.4 million people in the country were married before the age of 18 years, 88 per cent of whom were girls. UP, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Bihar, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, together amounted to 70 per cent of child marriages in India



ANUPMA MEHTA

We celebrated the fifth anniversary of the historic UN resolution on ending child marriage yesterday. Hence, the time is ripe to assess how far India has succeeded in its goal of reducing the number of child brides. The UN resolution, which came into effect in 2015, is fundamental to building strong international standards that recognise child marriage for what it is: a violation of fundamental human rights. According to a UNICEF report released in 2014, titled *Ending Child Marriage: Progress and Prospects*, child marriage is most common in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, with South Asia accounting for 42 per cent of all child brides

worldwide. Of these, one in three is found in India, yet the nation was not among the countries that supported the UN Resolution. In fact, barring Afghanistan and the Maldives, other South Asian nations, too, ostensibly failed to ratify the resolution, despite persistently battling the challenge of child marriage and its concomitant adverse impacts. A peek into history throws up another ironical picture.

The Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, spanning the mid-16th to early 17th centuries in England, were some of the most conservative periods in history, replete with tales of docile women and chauvinistic men. Yet early marriages were rare. Although the minimum legal marriage age was 12 years for girls and 14 for boys, records reveal that the mean marriage age ranged from 25 for women to 27 for men.

Historians assert that in medieval England, the primary reason for late marriage among labourers and the middle class was financial. Young

couples could barely afford a roof over their heads and had to keep their romantic impulses in check till their earnings reached subsistence level, well into their mid-20s.

In 20th and 21st century India, poverty is again the overarching reason for the anomaly in conjugal well-being, but its outcome is the exact opposite. In a 2011 research paper titled *Delaying Marriage for Girls in India: A Formative Research to Design Interventions for Changing Norms*, UNICEF found that poverty in Rajasthan was the biggest reason for fathers pushing their daughters into an early marriage.

These data are ratified by the India Human Development Survey (IHDS), conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) in collaboration with the University of Maryland, USA, in 2004-05 and 2011-12. The IHDS includes a household module as well as a module administered to 33,510 married women aged 15-49 years. A ray of hope offered by data

from the UN and other agencies points to the declining rate of child marriages in India between 1991 and 2011. The IHDS, too, found that an increasing proportion of women were delaying marriage, but the mean age of marriage for women in the country continues to remain low. As of the second wave of IHDS assessed in 2011-12, almost 41 per cent of the women in the age group of 15-32 years were married between 16 and 18 years of age.

An analysis of data from the National Family Health Survey, (NFHS-3) along with IHDS-II, indicates that the percentage of women in the 20-24 age group, who were married before 18, declined from 56.8 per cent in 1992-93 (NFHS-1) to 36.2 per cent in 2011-12 (IHDS II).

However, the number of child marriages and its prevalence among girls remains very high even in recent times. According to the 2011 census, 7.4 million people were married before the age of 18 years, 88 per cent of whom were girls. Uttar

Pradesh (UP), Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand together contributed to 70 per cent of child marriages in the country, with four districts of Rajasthan — Bhilwara, Chittorgarh, Tonk, and Ajmer — and Lalitpur from UP, being "hotspots" for the occurrence of child marriages in India.

Says an elderly resident of Tonk, himself married at the age of five, "There are a lot of child marriages in our community due to poverty and poor literacy. My wife came to stay with me when I was 15 and she was just 12." Citing his personal experience, he avers that child marriage is antithetical to marital happiness and health, as it puts a major burden of responsibilities on the boy and entails numerous health problems for the girl. Child marriage has been found to have negative consequences on the young bride's health, economic opportunities and her children's health. Early marriage negatively affects the bride's autonomy over con-

traceptive use, resulting in a higher likelihood of early and high-risk pregnancies. It also puts her at risk of sexually transmitted infections and intimate partner violence. Child marriage also makes young girls more vulnerable because it leads to lower education attainment and diminished opportunities to develop social networks. Another UNICEF report of 2005, *Early Marriage: A Harmful Traditional Practice*, points out that at 67 per cent, India has the highest levels of domestic violence among women married by the age of 18. What does the future hold for these girls-women in a society confronted with unprecedented social and economic challenges and a rapidly transforming anthropological and demographic landscape?

According to Heather Hamilton, Global Coordinator of Girls Not Brides, a global partnership of more than 1,300 civil society organisations from over 100 countries, committed to ending child marriage, "The UN resolution situates child marriage

firmly within the post-2015 development agenda, recognising the need to end child, early and forced marriage." Alex George, Senior Consultant for Child Rights, at Child Rights Focus advocates effective policy enforcement and stronger legal actions. The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, which makes it illegal for girls to marry before the age of 18 and for boys under 21 years, also must be implemented stringently.

Actions, however, speak louder than words. A small village in Tonk has been taking the lead in monitoring child marriage and leading discussions with other community members on its damaging effects.

Last year, the village was declared child bride-free under the UNICEF's *Laadli Samman* (Honour your daughters) campaign. A small step but with a gigantic portent for girls to thrive and live their dreams before being shackled in premature matrimony.

(The writer is Editor at NCAER. Views expressed are personal.)

India Inc hails decision to defer spectrum dues

Says it will provide headroom to telcos

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India Inc on Thursday welcomed the Government's decision to defer receipt of spectrum auction installments due from telecom service providers, saying the move will provide headroom to the sector currently facing stress, generate job opportunities and drive consumer demand.

The Government on Wednesday doled out a ₹42,000 crore relief to debt-laden telecom companies after it agreed not to take any payments for spectrum they use for the next two years.

The Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved giving Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea Ltd and Reliance Jio an option to avail a two-year moratorium on payments they were supposed to make in yearly installments

for the spectrum bought in auctions.

This is a great breakthrough in the economic reform system and will have a positive impact on the growth and development of telecom sector and the economy as a whole, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry President DK Aggarwal said. Deferment of spectrum auction installments will provide a pronounced relief to stressed telecom service providers leading to their continuous operations, ease their cash outflow and give them window to make payments for statutory liabilities and interest on bank loans, Aggarwal said.

As the telecom sector is one of the major growth driver of economy, this move is welcome for banks as it creates employment opportunities for the potential workforce, drive consumer demand sentiments in the economy, provide further impetus and pave way to achieve USD 5 trillion economy going forward, he added.

Merger of PSU banks hard but necessary step

Sethurathnam Ravi (S Ravi) is the former BSE Limited Chairman and Founder and Managing Partner of Chartered Accountants firm Ravi Rajan & Co., an advisory and accountancy firm, headquartered in New Delhi, India. In his tenure spanning more than three decades, S Ravi has gained extensive experience in the field of banking and finance, financial and management consulting including mergers and acquisitions, valuations, rehabilitation & restructuring of companies and turnaround strategies, auditing of companies and banks among others.

He spoke to *The Pioneer's* Kushan Mitra on the recent decision by the Finance Ministry to merge several Public Sector Banks.

What according to you is the biggest challenge of the merger of PSUs announced by the Finance Ministry?
There are some challenges that come across, the biggest of course is the emotional uncertainty that will play on the part of the bankers, even as borrowers, the smaller, weaker banks were not extending credit and now that situation should change. At the same time, the powers will be realigned. Hypothetically, a General Manager in United

Bank had authority over just ₹50 crore, now as part of Indian Bank, he or she can manage ₹200 crore. The decision making will become a lot faster and that should help the small to medium segment of businesses.

And with the reassurance of no job losses things will also be smooth?

A branch consists of 8-12 people and those jobs are going nowhere because the brick and mortar will remain the same, some banks might have branches next to each other so some realignment might happen, but people will not lose jobs. Also, the skillsets of bankers are changing, there will be a lot of demand for the younger people who are more aware of aspects like digital banking. Also, you have to remember that other than HDFC bank, most private sector banks in India have had their own challenges, so you must not think that it is only the PSU banks in trouble.

What about the subsidiaries of many of these banks? Like Can Fin Homes of Canara Bank?

Almost all these subsidiaries are either joint-ventures or already partially divested. Keep in mind when these

were set up a decade ago, the investments were made at par. Now the banks will get a good premium for them. And many of the subsidiaries were in non-banking areas like insurance, pensions, these are not your core business. In housing finance, the banks themselves were capable, so why were they set up? To access a new talent pool and new investments. It is a competitive market in sectors like housing finance, and if teh banks can unlock good value by divesting the firms, they should.

So do you also believe that bank employees have realised that a larger bank is also better for them in the long run?

See this is the single most important aspect, the emotional aspect. The bank employees have to be taken care of, how to hold their hands through the entire process. I would set up taskforces for all these major challenges. There is another huge challenge as well, in the IT space, just to collect and sanitise data, the migration itself is different for different types of borrowers in different banks, now collecting that data is important and should have a dedicated taskforce behind it and then finally take a decision.

BUSINESS CORNER

SKILL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE HALL INAUGURATED



New Delhi: On November 15, 2019, a skill development centre-multipurpose hall was inaugurated by Dipali Khanna, Independent Director & Chairperson, Corporate Social Responsibility & Skill Development Committee of HAL Board, at Vani, Taluka-Dindori of Nashik District, as a part of CSR Activity. On this occasion, VM Chamola, Director (HR), AB Gharaad, GM (AMD), UB Singh, GM (ADD), Deepak Singhal, COP (AMD), Sunita Bharsat, Sarpanch, Vani Gram Panchayat and other senior officers of HAL along with large number of villagers of Vani were present to witness the event.

NRLY PLANS OPS STRATEGY DURING FOGGY WEATHER



New Delhi: The occurrence of fog especially in North India during the winter months is a common weather phenomenon. However, it has been experienced that in recent years, the pattern and occurrence span of fog in the sub-continent has undergone changes with several pockets of Western and Eastern regions of the country now also witnessing the troublesome weather effect. Fog causes repercussions on the Rail Transport system. The movement of freight and coaching trains is severely affected majorly due to poor discernibility experienced by the train drivers and the safety protocols that are put in place that includes speed restriction in the fog affected areas. As a result the trains reach their destinations late and have to be often rescheduled for the return journey or cancelled due to abnormal late running. Keeping in account the problems faced during the previous foggy seasons, planning for the upcoming fog period has been done by the Northern Railway.

IP UNIVERSITY ORGANISES BOOK EXHIBITION



New Delhi: A three-day book exhibition was organised by the University Information and Resource Centre (UIRC) of the IP University at the main library block of the University. Vice-Chancellor of the University, Prof Mahesh Verma, inaugurated the Exhibition. Registrar Ravi Dadihich, Controller of Finance Rinku Gautam and other senior faculty members, officers and students of the University present on the occasion. According to the incharge — Library of the University Dr Savita Mittal — around one hundred prominent publishers came from across the country exhibited their publications all three days of the Exhibition.

Trai to telcos: List disconnected numbers to enable clean up of database by banks

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Trai on Thursday asked telcos to submit, on a monthly basis, lists of permanently disconnected mobile numbers on the authority's website in a bid to enable companies which use subscriber mobile numbers for identification and authentication to keep their systems updated. The latest move by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) is aimed at ensuring that banks, insurance companies and others would have a ready list (without names) of mobile numbers that are disconnected. This, in turn, will prevent service delivery systems from using those numbers for any authentication purpose, say through one time password.

"And whereas a mobile

number, when surrendered or permanently disconnected, after a certain time period gets re-allocated to some other customer, but many service delivery systems are not updated by the earlier customer, who may either not be using the service regularly and hence do not find a reason to update his mobile number, or due to lack of awareness of potential danger of banks due to mobile number reuse, thus creating huge potential of an identity/profile take over on re-allocation of a mobile number," Trai said in a statement.

There is no platform/system/platforms by which banks and other stakeholders can get the information about permanently disconnected numbers and deregister them.

"...Therefore, in order to

make available the Mobile Number Revocation List (MNRL) to the stakeholders for transparency and efficiency and to enable the interested parties to clean up their databases thereby not sending one time password etc. To someone other than their customer..." Trai added.

MNRL, the digitally-signed list of permanently disconnected mobile numbers, will be published on Trai's website every month, allowing various agencies to independently download and easily clean up their database using their own workflows, it said. For instance, under the current system, banks are required to manually check the list, check each number and if it is one of their customers, they can flag it and let the customer update with a currently-operated number.

PSU banks disburse record ₹2.5 lakh crore loans in Oct

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As part of a Government-mandated outreach programme, public sector banks disbursed a record ₹2.5 lakh crore of loans during the festive month of October, the Finance Ministry said on Thursday.

In a bid to boost consumption and revive the economy, Finance Minister Narendranath Khurana said in a statement. Banks are fully capitalised and in a position to meet any kind of credit requirement," Finance Secretary Rajiv Kumar said.

Two years of sustained efforts by the government has turned around the public sector banks, he added.

Credit to NBFCs during the month of October 2019 was ₹19,627.26 crore, the state-

ment said. As much as ₹1,05,599 crore was given towards new term loans while ₹46,800 crore was disbursed for the purchase of loans, the Department of Financial Services said in a statement.

So fresh lending, including new term loans, was 60 per cent of the total disbursement. The bulk of the disbursement, however, was in the form of term loans. Banks are fully capitalised and in a position to meet any kind of credit requirement," Finance Secretary Rajiv Kumar said.

Two years of sustained efforts by the government has turned around the public sector banks, he added.

Credit to NBFCs during the month of October 2019 was ₹19,627.26 crore, the state-

Gold slides by ₹53, silver prices fall ₹20

New Delhi: Gold prices on Thursday declined by ₹53 to ₹39,007 per 10 gram in the national capital on marginal appreciation in rupees, as per HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at ₹39,060 per 10 gram.

Silver prices also witnessed a marginal correction of ₹20 to ₹45,830 per kg as compared to ₹45,850 per kg on Wednesday. "Spot gold prices for 24 Karat in Delhi were trading down by ₹53 on marginal rupee appreciation. The wedding demand is set to cheer spot gold markets in India," HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel, said.

PM: Find methods to check frauds, improve efficiency in Govt depts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday exhorted auditors to develop technical tools to check frauds and improve efficiency in government departments. Modi will play a role in making India a USD 5-trillion economy. Modi also emphasised that the government wants to move to evidence-backed policy making by 2022 and the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) can contribute as a think tank by focusing on big data analysis.

"We must challenge the frauds. Both internal and external auditors need to find innovative methods to catch frauds. We must need to encourage the core values of auditors for the same," Modi said while addressing a conclave of the CAG on transforming audit and assurance in a digital world. He said a lot of attempts have been made in the last few years to control frauds in governmental organisations.

Stressing the need to make evidence-based policy formu-

lation an integral part of governance, the prime minister said auditors must resort to technical tools to iron out any chances of fraud in organisations and give a new identity to new India.

Modi who addressed the CAG conclave for the second time since 2016, said India is moving towards a USD 5-trillion economy target and "you (auditors) have a big role in the same. Whatever you will do directly affect our policy making, efficiency, decision-making, business, investment, ease of doing business and more".

He also asked the CAG to think from the perspective of a think tank and not just from a point of view of an auditor whose job is to find faults. Digital audit and digital governance can strengthen institutional memory for several organisations, he said adding that audit firms around the globe are moving towards crowd-based solutions.

The CAG should also adopt the best global practices and instill them into the Indian

system, while working on the country-specific tools. "CAG audits several international organisations and provides technical support to other countries as well. You can start an organisation like that which can help firms can learn their experiences and share best practices in those countries/organisations," the PM said.

In order to improve efficiency and transparency, Modi said the auditors should organise a hackathon that will help find solutions to many issues being faced.

The apex auditor should also focus on process audit for better efficiency, he said adding that the CAG must come forward as a catalyst for good governance and not restrict itself to statistics and reports.

"You are working towards converting CAG to CAG+, and this has helped the nation as well," he said while appreciating the new initiatives taken by the Government auditor.

Earlier, Modi unveiled a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in the CAG complex.

Ahmedabad-Mumbai bullet train project may hit roadblock

If Cong-NCP-Sena alliance comes to power in Maha

INANS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's highly ambitious Bullet train project of the National High Speed Railway Corp (NHSRCL) between Mumbai-Ahmedabad may hit a roadblock if the Congress-NCP-Shiv Sena combine comes to power in Maharashtra.

Modi and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had jointly laid the foundation stone for the Bullet train project in Ahmedabad in September 2017.

A senior NCP source told INANS that "during the first meeting of the three parties in Mumbai last week, discussions were held on the Ahmedabad-Mumbai Bullet train project in which we informed the leaders

that according to Central government, the Maharashtra government would be bearing ₹5,000 crore of the total ₹1.08 lakh crore cost."

"And then we came to a conclusion that once we form the Government in the state then we will inform the Central Government that the State Government will not bear the cost of the high speed train project and will spend the same money on some other pro-people schemes," he said.

The party source said that the State Government will spend the amount for farmers' welfare.

The 508-km Ahmedabad-Mumbai high speed train project is slated to be completed by 2023. The NHSRCL, which is responsible for undertaking the construction, has till date, acquired over 48 per cent of the land for the project and also floated tenders for several works.

Niti Aayog asks India Inc to assess CSR impact

New Delhi: Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar on Thursday urged India Inc to assess and review the impact of their CSR initiatives.

Speaking at the "CSR Impact Conclave" here, Kumar also said that companies should focus on nutrition and innovation as part of their CSR mandate.

"India has excellent examples of CSR. Going forward, the corporate CSR should focus more on two additional areas like nutrition and innovation as a part of their CSR mandate," he said.

Kumar added, "I think corporate must find a way to do well by doing good. "Doing good must be integrated in business practices in line with conscious capitalism by making self-interest a very small part of our way of doing business."

The gap between the social good and the corporate good is about the studies, he added. He also urged the National CSR Network to work with the Niti Aayog for an objective impact assessment of the five years of the CSR initiative. INANS

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person **Umed Singh, S/o: Raghubir Singh, R/o: Village Khandva, Tehsil Newai, P.S. Baroni, distt. Tonk, (Rajasthan)** has committed (or suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 329/15 u/s 354 IPC & POCSO Act has been registered at P.S. Mundka, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest and it is found that the said Umed Singh cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Umed Singh has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said Umed Singh accused of FIR No. 329/15 u/s 354 IPC & POCSO Act has been registered at P.S. Mundka, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 21.12.2019.

By Order

Dr. Archana Sinha, ASJ-06 (West), Special Court Under POCSO Act, Room No. 203, 2nd floor, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a man namely **Ichha Ram Sexena, S/o Raja Ram Sexena, R/o 55/13-14 Back Side, Ashok Nagar, New Delhi** has been missing since 01/11/2019 from the area of P.S. Paschim Vihar East, Delhi. In this regard D.D. No. 49-A, dated 03/11/2019 has been registered at P.S. Hari Nagar, New Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the missing man but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the missing man is as under:

Name: Ichha Ram Sexena, **Gender:** Male, **Age:** 45 years, **Height:** 5'5", **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Round, **Built:** Normal, **Wearing:** Black and blue colour t-shirt, blue jeans and orange & black colour shoes in his feet. If anyone has any information regarding this missing man, kindly inform SHO/ Hari Nagar, New Delhi. E-mail: icg@cbi.gov.in Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 Fax: 011-24368639

SHO P.S. Hari Nagar, New Delhi Ph. No.: 011-28125719

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that a man namely **Subhash, S/o Lakshmi, R/o CN-149, Sotiya Camp, Paschim Vihar, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped since 01/10/2019 from the area of P.S. Paschim Vihar East, Delhi. In this regard D.D. No. 23-A, dated 18/10/2019 has been registered at P.S. Paschim Vihar East, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the missing/kidnapped man but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the missing/kidnapped man is as under:

Name: Subhash, **Gender:** Male, **Age:** 40 years, **Height:** 5'8", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Long, **Wearing:** Green colour t-shirt, blue colour half pant and blue colour slippers in his feet. If anyone has any information regarding this missing/kidnapped man, kindly inform SHO/Paschim Vihar East. E-mail: icg@cbi.gov.in Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 Fax: 011-24368639

SHO P.S. Paschim Vihar East, Delhi Ph. No.: 011-25267286

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person namely **Raju, 40 years of age** whose residence and family is unknown had been found dead at Gali No. 6, Sat Nagar, Ravi Dass Marg, Karol Bagh, Delhi on 31.10.19. In this regard a vide has been registered with DD No. 12-A dated 31.10.19 at P.S. Prasad Nagar Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to identify the deceased person but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the UDB is as under:

Sex: Male, **Age:** 40 years, **Height:** Approx 5', **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Blue colour T-shirt and Grey colour Pant. If anyone has any information about his relatives, kindly inform the SHO/Prasad Nagar, Delhi.

SHO P.S. Prasad Nagar, Delhi Ph: 011-25751048, 25725652

ABANDONED

General public is hereby informed that one lady, **Namely: Pooja, Wife: Genda Lal, R/o: Mathura, UP, Age:** 30 years, has been found abandoned from the area P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi, in mentally disturbed condition from in front of Swarg Vidha Ashram, Nihal Vihar, Delhi on 30.09.2019. In this regard, a DD No. 88-B, dated 30.09.2019, has been lodged at P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi. Enquiry has been carried out but despite best efforts, the parents of lady could not be traced. The description of the abandoned lady is as under. Description is as under:

Complexion: Shallow, **Height:** 5'2" Feet, **Face:** Round, **Wearing:** Blue Kurta-Salwar. Anyone has any information about this parents of abandoned lady, then please inform SHO, P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi, at E-mail: icg@cbi.gov.in or website: <http://cbi.nic.in> Tele No. 011-24368638 or 24368641

SHO P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi Ph. No. 011-25946700, 25946710

Exonerated by Sondland impeachment testimony

APP ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump sought on Wednesday to distance himself from US envoy Gordon Sondland as he made an explosive appearance before an impeachment hearing...



President Donald Trump waves while holding handwritten notes after speaking to the media about the House Intelligence Committee testimony of US Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland on Wednesday, as Trump walked toward the Marine One helicopter in Washington, en route to Texas

"I don't know him very well. I have not spoken to him much," Trump testified in front of the White House, after the ambassador to the EU testified that he followed the president's orders in seeking a "quid pro quo" deal with Ukraine.

In an October 8 tweet, Trump had described his ambassador to the European Union as "a really good man and great American."

"Then he says this is the final word from the President of the United States. I want nothing," he would say that means it's

President Trump undermined national security, says Pelosi

Washington: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi says there is clear evidence that President Donald Trump has used his office for his personal gain. She says doing that "undermined the national security of the United States."

The California Democrat says lawmakers involved in the House impeachment inquiry haven't decided what charges they might bring against Trump.

She says they don't know if they'll try hearing from additional witnesses. Pelosi also says she doesn't want to hold up the inquiry to wait for federal courts to decide whether some witnesses can testify.

Trump said, "Democrats are investigating the president in being so all about shareholders whose dividends are being cut."

IAEA urges Iran to explain uranium particles at undeclared site

APP ■ VIENNA

The UN nuclear watchdog on Thursday urged Iran to explain the presence of uranium particles at an undeclared site, as a landmark deal aimed at curbing Tehran's atomic activities threatens to collapse.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said in a report made public last week that it inspected and detected natural uranium particles of anthropogenic origin at a location in Iran not declared to the agency.

The agency's acting head Cornel Ferruta said IAEA and Iranian officials would meet in Tehran next week to discuss the matter, adding that the UN body had not received any additional information.

"The matter remains unresolved... It is essential that Iran works with the agency to resolve this matter promptly," he told IAEA member states at a meeting of the agency's board of governors.

A diplomatic source told AFP that the IAEA would send a high-ranking technical delegation to Iran next week.

spring and that Iran has been slow in providing answers to explain the test results.

The 2015 deal between Iran and world powers has been faltering since last year when the United States pulled out and started to reinstate economic sanctions on Tehran, leaving the other signatories struggling to salvage the agreement.

Over the past few months, Iran has breached several parts of the deal it signed with the US as well as Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia, in which it committed to scaling back its nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief.

Enrichment is the process that produces fuel for nuclear power plants but also, in highly extended form, the fissile core for a warhead.

On Monday, the IAEA confirmed Iran's stock of heavy water, which has surpassed the 130-tonne limit set under the agreement.

Heavy water is not itself radioactive but is used in nuclear reactors to absorb neutrons from nuclear fission.

Heavy water reactors can be used to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons as an alternative to enriched uranium.

The IAEA has also said one of its inspectors was briefly prevented from leaving Iran, calling her treatment "not acceptable."

US warships flex muscles in Gulf to reassure allies

APP ■ DUBAI

A US aircraft carrier's passage through the Gulf is the latest demonstration of the superpower's enduring military presence in the West Asia aimed at reassuring allies, experts and officials say.

In a potent symbol of military might, the Abraham Lincoln carrier and its attendant warships cruised through the Strait of Hormuz this week.

The voyage came ahead of a meeting between the United States President Donald Trump and his Iranian counterpart.

But since then, the US military has taken action to emphasise its long-standing presence in a region where the US has deep strategic interests.

It conducted massive trainings, announced the deployment of more troops and created a new command and control structure in Bahrain to protect shipping in the troubled Gulf waters.

The Abraham Lincoln's transit through the strait, which started this year was rocked by a string of crises that Washington and its allies blame on Iran - accusations Tehran firmly denies - was the first for a US carrier since April.

"This show of force is part of a 'say-do' gap that is emerging between verbal US security assurances and actual American inaction," said Andrea Krieg, a professor at King's College London.

"It is a desperate attempt to reassure allies in the Arabian Gulf. For more than seven decades, the United States has

played an important role in the conflict-ridden region, serving in particular as a defender of Gulf monarchies against external threats, most notably Iran.

But Trump's tweet and his calls for Gulf leaders to pay for their security suggest a move to redefine the relationship - born on an American battleship in 1945 when Saudi King Abdul Aziz bin Saud and US President Franklin D. Roosevelt first held talks.

There was further dismay last month when the US walked away from its Kurdish allies in Syria, opening a door for Turkey to launch a military campaign against the Kurds that was divisive even in Washington.

The apparent shift in US policy comes at a time of rising hostility with Iran.

Since May, tensions in the Gulf have increased with attacks against tankers, followed by drone and missile strikes on key Saudi oil facilities.

Iran was blamed, but denied involvement. Despite the attacks on its ally and having one of its own drones shot down, the US has avoided equivalent retaliation.

Sending the carrier through Hormuz "is certainly supposed to send a message of defiance and strength after months of being humiliated by Iranian escalation," said Krieg.

The strait, which separates Iran and the United Arab Emirates, is a chokepoint for a third of the world's seaborne oil. The shallow waterway is just 50 metres (30 miles) deep, making it a vulnerable shipping lane.

3 IRAQI PROTESTERS KILLED IN CLASHES

Baghdad: Iraqi officials say three protesters have been killed as heavy clashes erupt in central Baghdad, bringing the total death toll for the day to 7 following fighting earlier in the day.

BENNY GANTZ UNABLE TO FORM COALITION

Jerusalem: Benjamin Netanyahu's chief rival failed to form a new government by a Wednesday deadline, dashing his hopes of toppling the long-time Israeli prime minister and pushing the country closer toward an unprecedented third election in less than a year.

NETANYAHU CHARGED IN CORRUPTION CASES

Jerusalem: Israel's attorney general on Thursday formally charged Prime Minister Netanyahu in a series of corruption cases, throwing the country's paralyzed political system into further disarray and threatening the long-time leader's grip on power.

SERBIAN FINANCE MIN PLAGIARISED PHD THESIS

Belgrade: A university in Serbia has determined that the government's finance minister has plagiarised parts of his Ph.D. Thesis, in a blow to President Aleksandar Vucic's populists.

ISIS SAYS IT IS BEHIND MALI ARMY ATTACK

Johannesburg: The ISIS group has claimed responsibility for an attack that killed 30 soldiers in Mali earlier this week.

POPE MEETS THAILAND BUDDHIST PATRIARCH

Bangkok: Pope Francis met with Thailand's supreme Buddhist patriarch on Thursday in a goodwill gesture on the first full day of his Asia tour aimed at promoting religious harmony.

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British Sikhs award Iran to mark Guru Nanak anniversary

PTI ■ LONDON

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has been conferred with a Lifetime Achievement Award at an awards ceremony in the UK to coincide with the 550th birth anniversary celebrations for Guru Nanak.

The awards, hosted at the Mayor of London's headquarters by the UK's All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for British Sikhs and London Assembly Member Onkar Sahota alongside British Sikh groups, honoured achievements across different fields.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan, Deputy Mayor for the City of London and Chair of the UK's All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for British Sikhs, Labour Party politician Preet Kaur Gill, were among some of the speakers at the event, co-hosted by the Sikh Network and the UK's Federation of British Sikh groups known for pro-Khalistan affiliations.

"I invite Sikhs from all around the world to come to Pakistan," said Sahibzada Jahangir, Imran Khan's spokesperson for trade and investment in UK and Europe, as he accepted the Lifetime Achievement Award on behalf of the Pakistani Prime Minister.

Southern Africa's drought leaving millions hungry

AP ■ VOSSBURG (SOUTH AFRICA)

Residents call this drought a "forgotten crisis" as the flat, dusty roads to Vossburg are surrounded by withered fields. The streams feeding the community of a few thousand people have gone dry.

Signs warn drivers of wandering cattle and sheep but there are none in sight. The months-long drought is affecting most of southern Africa. The United Nations estimates that more than 11 million people now face crisis levels of food insecurity in the region.

Among the hardest hit areas is South Africa's Northern Cape province, where many farmers are struggling to keep their families and animals alive while revenue falls and debt piles up.

Commercial sheep farmer Louis van der Merwe, 64, broke down as he described losing more than 400 sheep and 450 springboks in the past two years because of the worst drought he has seen in 45

years of farming. Some animals died of hunger. Others were sent prematurely to the slaughterhouse to reduce the number to feed.

"We have to have hope and faith. There are a couple of times when we have felt it is not worth it," Two of his fellow farmers have killed themselves due to the stress, Van der Merwe said.

Some hope to have help. Northern Cape province will need USD 28 million in drought relief over the next three months to assist 15,500 affected farms, according to farmers' organization Agri-SA.

So far, South Africa's government has pledged USD 2 million. The World Food Program says southern Africa has received normal rainfall in just one of the past five growing seasons, with small-scale farmers feeling most.

Some like 55-year-old Gertruida Buffel, have resorted to sharing their own food with their animals.

'Time for real change': UK Labour makes election pitch

Birmingham: British opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn on Thursday sets out his party's manifesto for next month's election, promising the most radical plan for change for decades.

With some running a programme of pledges includes nationalisations, a huge investment in public services and corporate reform, which Corbyn insists are "fully costed" and deliverable.

On Brexit, the key issue of the December 12 election, he has promised to strike a new exit deal with the European Union and hold a second referendum on Britain's membership.

Opinion polls show Labour trailing Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative but the opposition is still holding its ground in the latest vote in 2017.

Ahead of the manifesto launch in Birmingham, central England, Corbyn claimed the programme was "full of popular policies that the political establishment has blocked for a generation."

He repeated the attacks on the rich and powerful that will have a feature of Labour's campaign so far, arguing that after nine years of "lory austerity measures, it was 'time for real change.'" AFP

President Gotabaya swears in brother Mahinda as PM



Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, right, greets his brother Mahinda Rajapaksa, left, after appointing him as PM in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Thursday. AFP

Colombo: Sri Lanka's controversial Rajapaksa clan on Thursday tightened its grip on political power with President Gotabaya Rajapaksa swearing-in his elder brother Mahinda as the prime minister, amidst apprehensions among the minority Tamil and Muslim groups over the new dispensation's policies.

Mahinda Rajapaksa assumed duty in his new capacity on Thursday itself. The 74-year-old leader will function as the prime minister of the caretaker cabinet until the general election in August 2020.

"I'm honoured to have taken oath as Sri Lanka's new Prime Minister. I look forward to serving all Sri Lankans as the prime minister. He will have a new vision to further develop and protect it for future generations," the new prime

minister tweeted, reaching out to all Sri Lankans.

Mahinda Rajapaksa took the oath as the new prime minister at the Presidential Secretariat, three days after Gotabaya Rajapaksa was sworn in as the president. Former prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, former president Maithripala Sirisena and other political leaders were present on the occasion.

"I wish to congratulate and extend my warmest wishes to the prime minister. He will have a new vision to further develop and protect it for future generations," the new prime

This is Mahinda Rajapaksa's second innings as the prime minister. He was premier for a brief period in 2018 amidst a major political turmoil in the country. PTI

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NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE (Through e-tendering) Name of work with its location, Comprehensive AMC of Corral IRIS Exchange installed at Delhi Division for three years. App. cost of the work (in Rs.) 1,55,00,000/- only. Tender Document Fee (in Rs.): Rs. 2,300/- only. Earnest Money deposited (in Rs.): Rs. 28,000/- only. Address of the office: Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annex - 1, DMR Office, New Delhi-110055.

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Trend Blazer

'Cinema can bring people together'

Actor AMITABH BACHCHAN made a strong pitch for cinema as a unifying medium in order to disintegrate the system that divides people on the lines of colour, caste and religion.

Bachchan, who was speaking at the inaugural session of Indian Panorama section at the ongoing 50th edition of the International Film Festival of India, said that the darkened cinema hall is home to diverse sets of people drawn by the magic of cinema.

"I hope we continue to make films which can disintegrate this odd system of keeping sides due to colour, caste and religion, bringing us all into one community," he said.



'I am keen on taking up roles that will give me the space and opportunity to really invest, get my teeth

into the character and explore it. I want to take up roles that will allow me the kind of level of performance which I was able to experience in Bharat and Zero. I need to now make sure that I only connect with films and characters that challenge and inspire me to bring out a new aspect.'

—Katrina Kaif

EKTA KAPOOR will co-produce the forthcoming film Pagglaait with Guneet Monga. The film stars Sanya Malhotra.



Monga, who won an Oscar in the Best Documentary (Short Subject) category for producing Period. End of Sentence last year, is among "the most relevant voices" in Indian cinema, said Ekta.

"When I heard the film's concept, I knew we had to do this," said Ekta, making the announcement on Guneet's birthday.

Guneet added, "We are glad to bring a concept as quirky as Pagglaait on screen."

'Possibility of Jumanji 3'

Hollywood actor-producer DWAYNE JOHNSON says that the prospect of coming out with a third film in the Jumanji franchise totally depends on the audience reaction to forthcoming second part, Jumanji: The Next Level.

When asked about the plans for the third part, Johnson said, "That depends on the audience. When we made the first one, we thought that the concept was unique and we will see what happens. We never thought of making part two. So, same thing applies here too. We will keep our eyes open and heads to the ground and see how the second part fares."

The world of Chris Van Allsburg's book Jumanji, found its way to the silver screen in 1995. Robin Williams was its main lead.

Time machine

One would have thought that technology would have spelt the end of classic watches as we knew them but there is a resurgence and how, says AYUSHI SHARMA

They say it right. Wearing a watch will never go out of style. With rapid development, almost all products that people used have changed but this doesn't seem to be applicable to wristwatches. However, it is no longer a piece of machinery to tell the time but has become more of a style statement. So the oft-repeated phrase that development of technology is a threat to the classical and traditional watches can be debunked straight away.

Watch designers strongly believe that the classical wristwatches will always be about individuality. As for the trends, the market seems to be literally exploding with a variety of options, whether it comes to colours, surface textures and the interplay of case and strap materials, which have rarely been used as boldly since the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, many brands and their designers are recalling the styles from those eras, reworked in new ways by adding a bit of digital touch.

VINTAGE

Retro is the new cool. Archival designs have seen a resurgence since last year, a trend which sees no signs of abating. Designs have the imprint of the time when watchmakers were keen on making a statement.

William Besse, International Sales Director, Frederique Constant, observes the same trend. He feels that youngsters are opting for their grandpa's old watches. "This generation wants to bring the golden era back. They consider them to be more classic and elegant and that is why the straps are back. They have a very clear dial. I feel, youngsters understand that sometimes it's important to know where you are headed without reflecting on where you

come from. Understanding your heritage, your roots and your ancestry is an important part of carving out your future," says he. The brand has recently launched its latest collection of Ladies Classics Quartz timepieces.

But it is not the only one in the game. There is Carl F Bucherer's Manero Flyback with its rose gold case and vintage racing silhouette which almost has an heirloom quality. However, those who would prefer a classical racing style without going over the top, there is the TAG Heuer Autavia with the bright brown dial.

The micro-trend of the 90s has become prominent. Hero products from 40s-70s, the golden age of wristwatches, are being reimagined and recreated for a new generation smitten by great design with a vintage touch.

For the purest example of old is the new new, there is Patek Philippe with a 1955-vintage 'triple' calendar watch with Calatrava model featuring no less than five hands running off its centre post.

MATERIAL

It is not just enough to display time or look good, brands are putting their minds to the material that goes into making a watch. So there are military-grade alloys, ultra-hard composites, near-magnetic metals and even silicon.

Zenith Defy LAB saw a production of silicon balance. The brand also uses its Aerolith case material — essentially aluminium foams — that is far from the oddest case material out there. Carbon and ceramic has often



been used in watches but Girard Perregaux's hybrid carbon fibre and fibreglass which is light, tough and colourful is what makes it special.

SMARTWATCHES

Whereas Johnson Verghese, VP, MD, Fossil India, feels smartwatches have really picked up and is something that will keep growing in the years to come.

"The market has witnessed tremendous changes in the way watches have been designed, marketed and bought.

From traditional watch pieces to smartwatches that offer the world on the wrist to hybrid watches that were designed for consumers who wanted the best of both worlds, the market now has timepieces for every user's varied requirements and preferences," says he and adds that watches are not designed just with the purpose of telling time but also to complement the look of a fashion conscious consumer. As fashion accessories,



they add to the style quotient of one's outfit and have created a notable space for themselves in the market. A shift has been registered from the usual gold and silver bracelets to newer additions like rose gold and other colours which are getting popular as it is possible to create an entire spectrum of colours with metal with new technology.

"The trend can be attributed to two main factors — shift in global fashion trends which is reflected in watches and an increased consumer demand for variety," he feels. Well, even the classics have been converted into smartwatches today, Michael Kors being the most chosen example.

CATCH THE COLOURS

Adding to the blue and green mix that the year kicked off with, watches are now available in a practical rainbow of colours. The standard collections are going beyond black, blue and white. There are some seriously cool salmon dials while Tutima has maroon brown ones. Rolex has added some light blue marble in the mix.

STRAPS

Johnson Verghese shares that metal and leather straps have

always been the key options in the wristwatch category. Depending on the look and comfort level that a consumer aims to achieve — formal, casual or sporty, the aforementioned cater to either of the requirements. "However, utility-driven designs are on the rise, silicone straps and mesh straps with easy-to-do magnetic buckles make their way to the market space. Interchangeable straps have also emerged as one of the latest trends where consumers like to switch between metal and leather or between different colour straps," says he.

BACK TO THE FUTURE



Audi's latest A6 sedan is literally, technology on wheels

Early to mid 1990s were a strange time to grow up. No matter how much we might complain about the state of the economy nowadays, India was pretty much bankrupt back then. There were very few cars on the road but for those of us who lived in leafy South Delhi colonies and were exposed to an extent to Western influences, which became more pronounced after cable TV landed on our shores and older shows by Hanna-Barbera, the American animation studio filled many of our screens. One of the shows was called The Jetsons and even though it depicted a 1960s version of what we expected the future to be, there were these concepts of flying cars and three-day workweeks, neither of which came true.

And as 2020, a year where we thought, as children at least, that space travel would be a normal thing, the future has turned out to be rather different. I am not making a value judgement here, the future is just not what I expected it to be when I was in Class 6.

That brings me to cars. Back in 1991, there weren't too many of them. And while we can rave about classic designs and the good old days, make no mistakes, the cars of today are a million times better and safer than the cars we drove during that time. Cars those days were extremely mechan-



ical. There were no processors anywhere. The steering and throttle controls were linked directly to the wheels and the engine. As for safety, well, the Maruti Suzuki Omni still survives from that era. If you look at the 'A-Pillars' on that car (those are the pillars that hold the windshield in place), you'd see that compared to any other modern car, they're barely there.

When I started driving in the mid-1990s, sneaking out in my mother's Maruti-800, entertainment was a cheap, off-brand tape player where retrieving magnetic tape from inside by using a pencil became a bonafide skillset. The steering didn't even have

a horn in the middle. There were two buttons on the side and that was a major upgrade from the older Hindustan Ambassadors, which my grandfathers owned with a metal ring between the hub and the steering.

This brings us in a nice segue to the new Audi A6. This car, once called the Audi 100, has always been the company's large executive sedan and is now in its eighth iteration. The old A6, which did fairly well, initially suffered in sales compared to the Mercedes-Benz E-Class and BMW 5-series because it really got a bit old compared to those two models. Which makes the quantum leap in the latest model quite dramatic, though not from the overall profile front. Audis

designers have retained the A6 signature straight window line and from the front, Audi's design language is clear. The dramatic change is inside, which is one heck of a car to play around with.

I was only in the A6 for half a day but I would love to spend more time exploring the features of what this car can do. The touchscreens, for example, have tactile feedback. While they're touchscreens, you feel like you're pressing something solid. The screens are not reflective and even though Audi's 'Virtual Cockpit' has been around for a few years, it seems better laid out in this new car. Sure, the car has not gone down Volvo's minimalist route, but the screens, those dedicated to the ventilation controls, feel just right. Everything about this new Audi feels like you are controlling a spaceship from a sci-fi but you're not in a film because you have Johnny Jhaaka cutting across in his motorcycle in front of you. Yet sitting inside this car, you genuinely feel like you have been transported into the future. Sure, we are not flying

missions into space every second day and we have not been back to the moon since 1972 but this just feels right. The steering wheel, for example, has one of the coolest designs and a positively nice layout with everything being where it is supposed to be, including the horn.

How does it drive? Well, Audi, burned heavily by the dieselgate fiasco, is only introducing the A6 in India in the 45TFSI garb. It means that it has a 240-horsepower two litre petrol engine, which isn't a bad thing given that carmakers expect an impending war on diesel. And while the throttle pedal now has a computer between the engine and your right foot, when you press it, this car can move very fast and back to high speeds since 1972. There were times I felt that the traction control kicked in a bit too hard, especially around tight turns, but I was driving in urban conditions. This makes the nose to nine kilometres a litre real-world fuel economy figures I got quite impressive indeed. Ride and handling were excellent, although I must add the caveat that I only sat in front while on the move, because this car really feels better behind the wheel. I repeat, very nice steering wheel. That said, when I did sit at the back, you realise that the eighth-generation A6 feels almost as large inside as a slightly older A8.

So would I buy one? If I was driving myself, almost certainly even though the fully-loaded 'Technology Edition' I was driving costs five lakhs more than the standard one. But the technology is worth it if it are not being driven around. Sure, some features like the lane-assist have to be disabled in city conditions, although it is useful on the highway and you miss a heads-up display which would have really been icing on the cake, but this package is a really nice one and the latest A6 is a car I can imagine driving for days on end.



Jaipur National University conferred an honorary doctorate to Soka Gakkai International (SGI) President, Daisaku Ikeda at Dr Ambedkar International Centre. This was in recognition of President Ikeda's profound contribution to the progress of human society and academic research.

Amid a well-attended gathering including educationists and other prominent citizens, Hiromasa Ikeda, Senior Vice President of Soka Gakkai, received the honorary doctorate on behalf of Daisaku Ikeda from Dr Preeti Bakshi, Executive Director, Jaipur National University (JNU) and Professor HN Verma, its Vice Chancellor.

Professor Verma introduced the message of the Chancellor, JNU, Dr Sandeep Bakshi, in which he talked about Ikeda's path-breaking peace initiatives. He said, "Ikeda's vision encompasses borderless Buddhist humanism that emphasises free thinking and personal development based on respect for all forms of life. He has spoken extensively on subjects like environment, economics, women's rights, inter-faith dialogue, nuclear disarmament, Buddhism and Science. I am someone who believes that until your mission becomes your obsession, your gifts will not become your glory. It is a reminder of the potential to do such extraordinary work that the world can't take its eyes off you."

President Ikeda expressed his appreciation and gratitude to Jaipur National University and said, "JNU embraces the ideal of student-centered learning and upholds the highest standards of scholarly rigour and commitment as well as the passion to pursue learning over the course of a lifetime."



FOOD OF THE EARTH

The water and soil of a place are said to impart a special taste to the dishes that are prepared there. PUSHPESH PANT dives into the flavours to find out why these can't be replicated elsewhere

A few years back, I was on my way home from Delhi to Bageshwar in Uttarakhand. We had started early without breakfast, determined to hit Almora by lunch, but we lost time steadily and pangs of hunger became unbearable just after we crossed Haldwani. This is when my son suggested that we take a detour and have lunch at Naukuchiayat, where he said he had once tasted *dal*, which was out of this world. To cut a long story, we reached this *dhaba* and were fortunate to savour the sublime lentils. The shop owner, who doubled as the cook, modestly deflected all praise by informing us that the magic was worked by the soil where the lentils grew and the water from the spring used to boil them. Of course, the freshly ground turmeric, coriander seeds too had contributed their bit. Ever since I have been intrigued by the query what role do soil and water actually play in shaping the flavour profile of any dish — an internationally renowned signature delicacy like Hyderabadi *Dum ki Biryani*, *Galauti Kebab* in Lucknow or street-side snacks like Banarasi *chaat* and local sweets lesser known than Bengali *chena-based* ones?



Geographical indicators are usually exclusive tags for produce unique to a region, be it vines, whiskies, tea or coffee. In the Indian context, fruit and betel leaves, too, qualify for this distinction. *Terroir* is the French word that defines the micro climatic region where the soil and water combine to impart a distinct personality to the produce — grapes, aromatic rice and more. While most of us are ready to concede this, when it comes to cooked food, the answer is not easy. So much depends on the recipe — traditional or improvised — skill of the person cooking, vessels used and the supporting cast of sweetening and souring agents, aromatic substances and spices common or exotic. Indian cuisines create a symphony, combining different notes and micro notes, that draw a hard to pierce veil over soil and water.

Take for instance the Bikaneri *bhujia* or Jodhpuri *mirchi bada* or *kachauri*. Can one be certain that their allure is engendered solely by soil and water? Deep frying skills handed down generationally are an integral part of producing the irresistible *sev*. The recipe for *namkeen* resembling Bikaneri *bhujia* changes in Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh and Bhavnagar in Gujarat. It is more than the change of place that transforms the taste. The master craftsmen have played around with cloves, pepper, coriander, tomatoes or a blend of spices to carve out a separate niche for their products. Of course, no one from Indore will admit that the deep fried *Girode* and oh so sweet *Makke ki kees* can be enjoyed anywhere else where the climate is different from their beloved Malwa. Down South

similar claims are made on behalf of lighter than air *idli* in Udipi or *karimeen polichattu* in Kumarakom harpooned as per demand in the Vembad Lake. The seduction of myriad Hyderabadi *biryanis* is overpowering primarily due to slow cooking in tightly sealed utensils over charcoal-fired stoves and using choicest cuts of well-marinated meat — kid not lamb. Long-grained rice and aromatic spices are all imported not locally grown. It's the same story with the melt-in-the-mouth Awadhi *kebab*. The finely minced meat is smoked, tenderised and cooked on a *lagan* aka *mahi tawa*. Not to forget the trade secret proprietary spice mix used both to flavour the patties and sprinkled over to enhance the experience. Sweets are no different. Surely it's the quality of the full fat milk or curds that exert the decisive influence on how the *peda*, *barfi* or *kalakand* is going to taste. Almora in Uttarakhand boasts of a *singori* that essentially is *kalkand* wrapped in a delicately fragrant leaf of a tree that grows on the hillside nearby. Old timers also claim that the 'original' *singori* owed all its fame to unadorned *khoya* supplied by the villagers in Lodhiana. One may argue that the fragrance

of the leaf and the granular texture of the *khoya* were gifts imparted by the local soil and water but that we think would be like stretching the rubber band to breaking point. Food has a complex relationship with memory. Personal nostalgia of a time and place as well as delicious delights shared with agreeable companions many moons ago impart unique qualities that are not necessarily based on fact. We allow ourselves to be mesmerised by the spells cast by legend and lore about the extraordinary properties of special soil irrigated by special water to return to that fabulous *dal* from Naukuchiayat. It was cooked in a brass pot with a narrow mouth and the spices were lovingly ground by hand on a slab of stone. Water undeniably contributed a lot to the lentils as it does in other locations to Scotch and Darjeeling being brewed but let's not forget the oak Sherry casks and the quality of the first or the second flush hand picked "two leaves and a bud" by experts. Doesn't Milton remind us so aptly that "They also serve who stand and wait," remaining invisible most of the time. Courtesy: *Exotica*, the lifestyle and wellness magazine of The Pioneer group

The meat revolution

Increasingly, people are embracing plant-based meat products



By 2050, many scientists estimate that the world food supply will increase sharply from today's level to meet anticipated demand from a global population of nine to 10 billion people. Meanwhile, the coming decades are expected to bring higher and more variable temperatures, increasingly severe droughts, floods, storms, and conditions that will make achieving food security more complicated and uncertain than ever before. Emerging biotechnologies are opening new niches in the food landscape that can help feed the world's burgeoning population with fewer resources in more extreme and unpredictable environments. With debate over the impacts of meat production intensifying, we have been tracking US attitudes related to plant-based alternatives, and conditions that will make achieving food security more complicated and uncertain than ever before. Emerging biotechnologies are opening new niches in the food landscape that can help feed the world's burgeoning population with fewer resources in more extreme and unpredictable environments. With debate over the impacts of meat production intensifying, we have been tracking US attitudes related to plant-based alternatives, and conditions that will make achieving food security more complicated and uncertain than ever before.



MEAT-LOVERS

Many scientists and advocates recommend eating less meat as a way to make modern lifestyles healthier and more sustainable. Most recently, the widely publicised EAT-Lancet Report, produced by an international team of health, agriculture and sustainability experts, recommended consuming less than half an ounce of red meat per day.

Americans are among the world's top meat consumers. The World Economic Forum estimates that in 2016 Americans ate an average of 214 pounds of meat per person. By contrast, Argentinians averaged 190 pounds and Europeans averaged 152.5 pounds per person.

Rising concern about climate change has spurred a flurry of Silicon Valley biotech startups focused on plant-based alternative meats. Although veggie burgers and vegetarian "meats" frequently comprised of soy, beans and lentils have been around for decades, this new generation of products has the sustainability benefits of being made entirely of veggies, but taste ever more convincingly like meat.

In 2018, the US Food and Drug Administration approved the plant-based "Impossible Burger," which relies on an ingredient from genetically modified yeast to incorporate "haem," an iron-containing molecule into the product, allowing its meats to "bleed." In an endorsement of

sorts, vegetarian CNET reporter Jean E. Solmsman found it to be so close to real beef that it "grossed her out."

Fast-food chain White Castle's "Impossible Slider" won several awards at the 2019 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. In 2019, Burger King introduced the "Impossible Whopper" to rave reviews, and on September 20 the Impossible Burger became available for purchase in California grocery stores, competing with Beyond Burgers and other plant-based offerings from Beyond Meat.

CURIOUS CONSUMERS

With these products gaining wide media coverage, it's no surprise that the latest results of our biannual, nationally representative survey of over 2,100 people suggest perspectives on meat alternatives are shifting rapidly. In February 2018, 48 per cent of respondents said they were unlikely to "purchase foods that look and taste identical to meat, but are based on ingredients that are produced artificially." By September 2019, that number had fallen to 40 per cent.

Our survey found that during the previous 12 months, 35 per cent of respondents had consumed plant-based meat alternatives. Of that group, 90 per cent said they would do so again. Among those who had not yet eaten plant-based meat alternatives, 42 per cent were willing to try them, while 30 per cent of that group remained unwilling.

We also identified very significant generational differences in attitudes. Nearly half (48 per cent) of respondents under 40 were already eating plant-based meats, while just 27 per cent of those aged 40 and over had tried these products.

These results closely paralleled a 2019 survey commissioned by Impossible Foods, which found that over half of millennial and Generation Z respondents consumed plant-based meat at least once a month, compared to just one-fifth of US adults ages 55 and up.

More companies are introducing meat alternatives across the country. Food giants Kellogg and Hormel will soon launch their own new plant-based product lines, called "IncoMeat" and "Happy Little Pans" respectively.

The new generation of plant-based meats aren't intended to substitute for other vegetarian products already on the market or target a specific set of health-conscious consumers. They have been designed to reduce the global impact of beef while appealing to everyone.

With millennials are expected to become America's largest living adult generation, their willingness to embrace plant-based meat products suggests continued success for this emerging biotechnology. It also has implications for agriculture, the food industry, food security and environmental sustainability around the world. —AP/The Conversation

gorge us



Radisson Blu introduces *Tambala* Sunday Brunch, which will serve dishes specially curated by a team of chefs. It will feature a multi-cuisine buffet with live cooking stations and desserts. **Date:** November 24 **Time:** 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm **Price:** 1900 plus taxes (non-alcoholic), 2300 plus taxes (alcoholic) **Venue:** Radisson Blu Hotel Faridabad.

Maachis presents *Tapas-style* menu, which will bring Indian cuisine with a twist. It has Gun powder potatoes from coastal belt, Irani samosa, Upma fingers from South, *Methi* sticks from North. Flavoured prawns served with *achari* dip and *kasundi* mayo. **Date:** Till November **Price:** ₹1,200 for two (plus taxes) **Time:** 12 noon to 12 am **Venue:** Ardee mall, Sector 52, Gurugram.



SodaBottleOpenerWala launches an all new menu by chef Irfan Pabaney. It goes beyond the classic Bombay and Parisi flavours, encompassing dishes inspired by communities living in Bombay. Some of the new additions include Kundapuri prawn, Staff pickle *achari murg*, Bombay *raasta* sandwich, the classic egg sandwich and many more. **Time:** 8:30 am to 12:30 am **Price:** ₹1,200 (for two) **Venue:** All 3 outlets (CyberHub, DLF Mall and Khan Market).



Fat Tiger, a modern tea shop and dim sum parlour, brings internationally acclaimed tea and dumplings to the city. The brand brings some much-loved and familiar flavours with a twist and QSR format. **Price:** ₹500 (for two) **Time:** 11 am to 11 pm **Venue:** DLF Promenade mall, Vasant Kunj.

RECIPES



CHICKPEA AND QUINOA POP

- WHAT YOU NEED**
- Chickpeas: 100 gm
 - Three coloured quinoa: 100 gm
 - Chopped parsley: 1 tbsp
 - Chopped mint: 1 tbsp
 - Chopped garlic: 1/2 tsp
 - Paprika: 1/2 tsp
 - Sumac powder: 3/4 tsp
 - Salt to taste
 - Crushed black pepper to taste
 - Olive oil
 - *Tahina*: 1 tbsp

- METHOD**
- Boil the chick peas.
 - Steam or boil the three-coloured quinoa.
 - Blitz the chickpea in a grinder (semi-dry).
 - Add the quinoa, chopped parsley, mint, garlic, salt, pepper, paprika, sumac to the chickpea.
 - Add a little water or oil if required.
 - Make equal-sized round balls and let it rest in the refrigerator for 15 minutes.
 - Now fry it until it turns golden brown.
- Courtesy: Chef Tarun Sibbal at The Street Storys.

BADAMI KESARIYA SABUDANA KHEER

- WHAT YOU NEED**
- Boiled soaked *sabudana*: 100 gm
 - Low fat sweetened milk: 220 ml
 - Saffron
 - Australian almond flakes: 10 gm
 - Desiccated coconut: 5 gm
 - Fresh mint leaves



METHOD

- Boil low fat sweetened milk in a small stock pot and add *sabudana* until it softens and becomes starchy.
- Add saffron for flavour and mix. Then add Australian almond flakes, desiccated fresh coconut, silver balls and fresh mint on top for garnishing.
- Serve it in a glass jar as it keeps the flavours intact.
- Serve hot or chilled *kheer* as per your preference.

Courtesy: Chef Anshu Raj, Caterspoint.

FINGER MILLET FLAKES PUTTU

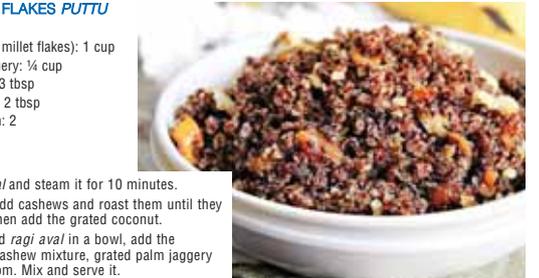
WHAT YOU NEED

- *Ragi aval* (finger millet flakes): 1 cup
- Grated palm jaggery: 1/4 cup
- Grated coconut: 3 tsp
- Broken cashews: 2 tsp
- Green cardamom: 2
- Ghee: 30 gm

METHOD

- Wash the *ragi aval* and steam it for 10 minutes.
- Heat the ghee, add cashews and roast them until they turn golden. And then add the grated coconut.
- Take the steamed *ragi aval* in a bowl, add the sautéed coconut, cashew mixture, grated palm jaggery and green cardamom. Mix and serve it.

Courtesy: Chef Arun Kumar, Elixir India.





Indian football team coach Igor Stimac along with 11 team members pose for a group photograph during the 13th edition of the Hero I-League official launch in New Delhi on Thursday. Pioneer Photo

HARSHIT BISHT ■ NEW DELHI

Blue Tigers head coach Igor Stimac was left disappointed after his team failed to win any of the two 2022 World Cup qualifiers away games against Afghanistan (1-1 draw in Dushanbe) on November 14 and Oman (0-1 defeat in Muscat) on November 19 to virtually get out of reckoning a berth and the Croatian tactician on Thursday cited injury to key players like Pronay (Halder), Adil (Khan) and Rahul Bheke as the main reason behind the country's early exit.

FAULT IN OUR STARS

Disappointed Stimac cites injury to players as the main reason for India going out of WC reckoning

Speaking at the sidelines of the launch of the 13th edition of the Hero I-League which starts from November 30 and will be telecasted on *DSPort*, Stimac said, "In regards to the last two games we played, we came back home bit disappointed with the results. But that didn't undermine our fate and believe in what we do. We faced big difficulties in regards to opponents, climate differences which was something we are trying to make an excuse. But the injury problems were something we find it most difficult at the moment. Losing the most important players in regards to stamina, to character, not having Sandesh (Jhingan) and Borges (Rowlin) then, missing Pronay (Halder) in first couple of games, also having early injury during the game against Oman were the obstacles, big time, to stop us from gaining better results."

Constantine, who resigned after five games we were with the Asian Cup earlier this year. "When we look back at the results we need to be positive and the simple reason is the facts are there — in the last World Cup qualifiers, there were five consecutive defeats, now we have two defeats and three draws."

"In the last qualifiers after five games we were with two points now we have three points. And we have more games to come and we are on our way to achieve what we promise we are going to lurk on, that is competing at the 2023 Asian Cup doing better than before once we get there and preparing teams for the future and going into next World Cup (2026) qualifiers with much better and higher expectations. That's the work we are providing at the moment, building up for the future and giving opportunities to young and new players who are many in this team in regards to Asian Cup to gain experience and become our future stars," he said.

Discussing about the injuries to Pronay, Adil and Rahul during Oman tie which affected India's game plan the coach said, "Pronay had suffered shoulder relocation after one

happiness at the clubs for not playing Indian players as striker-up in the domestic leagues. "Can you mention to me one player with Indian passport playing as striker and scoring goals in the leagues? Why are you expecting that we are going to score goals in the international games if we don't have a single striker in the league?"

"I don't do work with the players on a daily basis. I work with them five days before the game, but the good and important thing is that we are creating chances."

"India is not anymore team who is going somewhere and fighting someone. No way, India wherever it goes, it goes without fear, it goes to play football and face its opponent, never mind who that is. And we are going to win the games to try to do that, we are not holding back inside of our mind and fighting for our lives, we are here trying to play football whoever it is, on the opposite side. This is what we building upon. New Brave India — India with a heart, with the courage to play football, never mind facing problems with defeat because that's the only way upgrading your game, bringing and developing new quality into your team."

unhappiness at the clubs for not playing Indian players as striker-up in the domestic leagues. "Can you mention to me one player with Indian passport playing as striker and scoring goals in the leagues? Why are you expecting that we are going to score goals in the international games if we don't have a single striker in the league?"

The team is at fourth spot in Group E table with three points from five matches. They haven't won a single match out of the five played so far in this second round of the qualifiers.

But the coach said his team has done better than the previous one which was coached by Englishman Stephen

Constance, who resigned after five games we were with the Asian Cup earlier this year. "When we look back at the results we need to be positive and the simple reason is the facts are there — in the last World Cup qualifiers, there were five consecutive defeats, now we have two defeats and three draws."

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Golden Trio: Manu, Elavenil, Divyansh claim top honours in shooting World Cup Finals

PTI ■ PUTIAN (CHINA)

India's young shooters touched another sensational high with Manu Bhaker, Elavenil Valarivan and Divyansh Panwar winning Gold medals in their respective events for the country's best-ever show on the ISSF World Cup Finals here on Thursday.



Elavenil Valarivan in a file picture. NRAI/Twitter

The 17-year-old Manu fired her way to the Gold with a junior world record in the women's 10m air pistol event, while the 20-year-old Elavenil claimed the top honours in the women's 10m air rifle competition. Later, another teen sensation Divyansh, who is all of 17, finished second in the men's 10m air rifle competition with a final score of 250.1. India are currently top of the table with three Gold medals, followed by China (two Gold, one Silver, one Bronze).

Yashaswini Singh Deswal, finished sixth in the final.

Serbia's Zorana Arunovic won Silver with 241.9, while Quian Wang of China bagged the Bronze with a score of 221.8.

Manu shot 244.7 to notch up the top prize in the prestigious season-ending tournament of International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF). The Haryana girl beat a classy field for her maiden WCF gold. In the same event Manu's compatriot,

Elavenil shot a score of 250.8 to edge past Taiwan's Lin Ying-Shin (250.7). Romania's Laura Georgeta Coman finished third with a score of 229.

Elavenil had qualified second for the finals with a score of 631.1 behind Ying-Shin (632.3).

Mehuli Ghosh also qualified for the same event's final but ended sixth with a score of 163.8.

Divyansh then ensured that women didn't hog the limelight completely with his stellar performance. He qualified third for the final with a score of 627.1.

In the men's 10m air rifle event, Hungary's Istvan Peni (250) and Slovakia's Patrik Jany (228.4) to clinch the top prize. In the men's 10m air pistol event, Abhishek Verma and Saurabh Chaudhary qualified for the final but couldn't claim medals.

Verma topped the qualifications with 588 but ended fifth in the final with a score of 179.4, while Chaudhary was seventh in the qualification with 581 before signing off sixth in the last-eight stage with 159.8.

Manu had a tight qualification round and was behind at the start of the finals as well. She took the lead after the 11th attempt of the 24-shot final and then kept getting stronger to finish a massive 2.8 points ahead of two-time former world champion Arunovic.

Paes ever ready to play for India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Worrying about the venue is never an option when it comes to playing for India, asserted Leander Paes, days after several of his colleagues expressed reservations about travelling to Islamabad for their Davis Cup tie.



Leander Paes in a file picture. AP

All three are now part of India's Davis Cup squad which will travel to Nur-Sultan for the November 29-30 tie, the winner of which will compete in

the location of the opponent, my job is to put my best foot forward. Given the circumstance, part of my job was to motivate the youngsters," Paes told PTI after a practice session.

"We did not want India to arrive default or forfeit this tie. When it comes to playing for India, I don't ask where and who my opponents," he added firmly.

"Does it mean that Paes was not worried about his safety in Pakistan?"

"Regardless of where we play, we do due diligence to make sure safety of the team is there. That being said, I knew that once venue was decided, players were picked, homework was being done and right

features were taken for us to play."

It was widely believed that Paes had played his last Davis Cup tie for India when he got the record-shattering 43rd doubles win while playing against China in April 2018.

He was not considered for selection after that. However, the AITA had to fall back on the iconic player when the country's top doubles player Rohan Bopanna refused to travel to Islamabad and Divij Sharan was unavailable due to his wedding reception.

a strong belief and faith in what we do and that's the only way we can come to the successful path. That's the way and the approach we are having and that's how we work and operate."

He also had a word of encouragement for the I-League players and said that he will be keeping close tabs on Indian players in the league and their good performance can earn them national team call up.

"I am here to show that the Hero I League is for us as much important as Indian Super League (ISL). I am here to give my support to all the players that are going to participate in the upcoming season and to send them the message that all those who are having Indian passport are the possible candidates for senior Indian national team. I am here to tell them that while Indian football will rise to the next level and will be able to rub shoulders with the best in Asia and the world."

"I am a very realistic person, in regards to expectations mines are not different to yours. And I said in the beginning that if we all stick together and positive it will be easier for all of us to gain better results. There are always some negative comments because of higher expectations but we got what we got, we cannot go beyond that. It's a long process, it will take time, you know all the problems we are facing, we need to be patient and need to be altogether with

'There's no replacement for Chhetri'

HARSHIT BISHT ■ NEW DELHI

Indian record goal scorer Sunil Chhetri remains an irreplaceable part for the team. Head coach Igor Stimac as the former Croatian defender referred Indian captain as 'valuable' to his side.

Currently the second highest international goal scorers among active players, only behind Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo (99), Chhetri is the most-capped player and also the all-time top scorer for the Indian national team, with 72 goals in 115 appearances.

The 35-year-old forward has been in prolific form in 2019 as well scoring seven goals in 11 games but since netting India's only goal in the 1-2 loss to Oman in September, he has not found the target in the last three matches of the 2022 World Cup qualifying campaign.

And on Thursday when asked if Chhetri has found any player in India who can replace Chhetri in the future, he said, "I am trying to do everything possible so that Sunil keeps scoring goals. You are all mentioning replacing Sunil, I don't know why you are saying that. He is not going anywhere. He is there, alive and fit and doing his best in to keep scoring goals."

"He had some great chances if you remember one in the game against Afghanistan, which normally he does not miss. It didn't happen that day but that doesn't mean something has changed in his game."

"He is very valuable to us, his body is like 29-year old, so as long

as he is training like he is, behaving like he is and giving his best to the national team he will be with us. I can assure you about that," Stimac said of his team's captain.

However, the coach said that the current team also has players who can score goals and he is hopeful of them stepping up and getting the job done for India.

"But I hope at the same time that I will have chance to find out few more like Sunil Chhetri. I hope that once Jobby Justin starts playing games, he will start scoring goals, so I can have him in the national team. I hope a few other players like Seiminlen Doungel from FC Goa will start playing in the position of a forward in the league games and Manvir Singh start scoring goals. So we have different options because they are a different kind of players. I am very excited about all that," he added.

Novak sends Serbia through

AFP ■ MADRID

Novak Djokovic booked Serbia's place in the quarter-finals of the Davis Cup on Thursday as he eased past Benoit Paire to send France crashing out.

Djokovic beat Paire 6-3 6-3 in Madrid after Filip Krajinovic after a 1-1 tie ended 7-5 7-6 (7/5) against Jo-Wilfried Tsonga to give Serbia a 2-0 advantage to only the doubles rubber to play.

It means France cannot advance as one of the best two runners-up by virtue of their record on sets, even if they win the doubles.

France's early exit is a major surprise given they were the top seeds in the competition, which they have won on 10 previous occasions and were only denied by a 3-2 defeat by Croatia in last year's final.

Serbia will now meet Russia on Friday and were joined in the last eight by Germany, who secured the one rubber they needed against Chile as Philipp Kohlschreiber and Nicolas Pietrangeli defeated Nicolas Pietrangeli and Filip Krajinovic 6-4, 6-3 in the singles.

Germany await the winner of Group E, where Britain were due to play a dramatic doubles clash against Kazakhstan, with the victors going through and the losers out.

Andy Murray could be called upon after being rested from the singles following his close match against the Netherlands' Tallon Griekspoor on Wednesday.

Britain made a strong start after a 1-1 tie ended 6-3 6-3 6-3 6-3 but Dan Evans was beaten 5-7 6-4 6-1 by Alexander Bublik to leave the tie in the balance.

Spain are already safely through as Rafael Nadal led them to a 3-0 victory over defending champions Croatia on Wednesday.

They will face Argentina, who are guaranteed to progress as a runner-up with Russia. And in what will be the opening first quarter-final later on Thursday.

The Davis Cup has a new format but Andy Murray's love of a comeback remains intact after the Scot battled from behind to beat Tallon Griekspoor as Great Britain edged past Holland.

Murray came from a set down and then trailed 4-1 in the decider in Madrid before beating the spirited Griekspoor, ranked 179 in the world, 6-7 (7/9), 6-4, 7-6 (7/5).

"I found a way to win matches many times in my career when I've not been playing well," Murray said.

"You can draw on that a little bit."

A scrappy victory gave Great Britain the lead in their opening match later on Wednesday as Spain booked their place in the quarter-finals with a 3-0 victory over defending champions Croatia.

Murray had given short shrift on Thursday to those he believed have been too quick to criticise the revamped Davis Cup, which for the first time is featuring all 18 World Group countries competing for the trophy across a single week in one venue.

"That was the one concern I had about the event, about it being on neutral ground, but it was great."

Kangaroos seize control at the Gabba

AFP ■ BRISBANE

Australia seized the advantage on the opening day of the first Test when they bowled Pakistan out for 240 just before stumps at the Gabba in Brisbane on Thursday.

After the visitors resisted stubbornly in the first session, reaching 57 for no wicket at lunch, pace trio Mitchell Starc (4-52), Josh Hazlewood (2-46) and Pat Cummins (3-60) tore through the Pakistan batting order to put the home side in charge at the close of play.

Australia seized the initiative after lunch when they reduced Pakistan from 75 for one to 78 for four, then 94 for five.

Pakistan were rescued from disaster by Asad Shafiq, who played a lone hand, scoring 76 well-made runs.

Shafiq came to the crease with his 75 for two, then saw Harris Sohail (1) and Babar Azeem (1) fall for the addition of only two runs.

But good partnerships of 49 between Shafiq and Mohammad Rizwan, who made 37, and then 84 with Yasir Shah (26) enabled the visitors to



Josh Hazlewood celebrates after taking wicket of Babar Azeem. AP

achieve a respectable score.

Rizwan, who was counter-attacking fearlessly, fell controversially with Cummins appearing to have just overstepped the mark, only for TV umpire Michael Gough to give the benefit of the doubt to the bowler. The visitors had frustrated the Australian pace attack in the first session, going into lunch at 57-0 with openers Azhar Ali and Shan Masood unbeaten on 28 and 21 respectively.

after the break with some sparkling attacking shots, but Hazlewood and Cummins at last found their length and began to turn the screws. The pressure began to tell and with the score on 75 Masood waded at a Cummins delivery outside off stump and edged to Steve Smith at second slip. Azhar went the next ball, but the edged Hazlewood to Joe Burns at first slip, before Sohail and Azeem both fell to poor shots.

Stokes of genius



Ben Stokes plays a short during his innings against New Zealand on Day 1. AP

AFP ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI

New Zealand targeted the 11 wicket of "freak" Ben Stokes on Thursday as they battled to get back into the first Test against England at Mount Maunganui.

The honours were even when the New Zealand-born Stokes went to the middle just before tea on day one with England 120 for three.

But by stumps, with Stokes in imperious form, the score had doubled and England will resume on Friday on 241 for four, with the 28-year-old all-rounder unbeaten on 67.

clubbed his bouncers four times to the boundary.

"Everyone wants to get him out because you know what an important wicket it is... But that's my thing, we always try and strive to get the good players out."

As well as dispatching Wagner's short stuff, he also showed a liking for the fuller delivery when he took four boundaries off successive balls from Trent Boult, including one that burst through the hands of the usually reliable Ross Taylor at first slip.

It was a drop that frustrated the New Zealanders who had earlier seen opener Rory Burns survive three chances including a waist-high edge that went between Taylor and

Tom Latham in the slip cordon.

However, Wagner believed that despite England going to lift England after they had slowly accumulated runs through the first two sessions against New Zealand bowling tight lines.

"They haven't got away from us. If we can come in the morning and get a couple of early wickets and put it back on them, we'll be in a really good position. It's a really happy with where we are."

FASCINATING BATTLE

Stokes and Joe Denly (74) put on 83 for the fourth wicket to lift England after they had slowly accumulated runs through the first two sessions against New Zealand bowling tight lines.

Denly had been locked in a fascinating battle with Wagner where the edges fell short, but Denly was the one that did beat the bat then missed the stumps.

But Denly refused to be intimidated by the onslaught and smacked five rising deliveries to the fence.

England's top three played their part in getting a safe start with Surrey pair Rory Burns (52) and Dom Sibley (22) putting on 52 for the first wicket before Burns and Denly added 61 for the second.

Denly, however, took 21 balls to get off the mark with a two and then waded at a wide net delivery from Wagner and was caught behind.

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Burns might also have been engaged cheaply but a caught behind appeal when he was on 10, and the total 14, was turned down when replays showed he edged the ball.

Pink Revolution in City of Joy

'Pink ball feels like heavy hockey ball'

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Indian cricket will finally embrace the pink revolution after initial reluctance when Virat Kohli's seemingly infallible galacticos lock horns with a delatated Bangladesh in their maiden Day/Night Test starting here today.

It took India a new BCCI regime under maverick former captain Sourav Ganguly to take the pink ball plunge, a good seven years after the International Cricket Council approved the format to revive interest in Tests.

Ganguly convinced the Bangladesh Cricket Board to agree to a Day/Night Test just a few days before their team was to land in India.

The bone of contention was the SG pink ball, which many still believe is difficult to sight after sunset. Add to it the dew factor, which players believe aggravates the bowlers' problems.

But Ganguly found Kohli on the same page and the current Indian captain took just "three seconds" to agree to the Board President's idea.

So far, the build-up to the Test has been smooth. A sell-out crowd for the first four days has been managed, something that has been the primary goal of playing the traditional format under lights.

Amid all the hype, there is also the small matter of India bracing up for a 12th successive home series victory.

The challenge for the players would be when the dew comes in to play after the sun sets early and it remains to be seen how both the teams and the groundsmen cope with the pink ball.

The Cricket Association of Bengal has made all efforts to turn the match into a carnival for fans with several gimmicks. So, there are pink-ball mascots, Army paratroopers to deliver the match ball and a galaxy of sports and political dignitaries, including Bangladesh Prime Minister



Rohit Sharma bats at nets during India's practice session on the eve of team's first Day Night Test against Bangladesh. BCCI/Twitter

Sheikh Hasina, are also expected at the venue.

The menacing pace attack of Mohammed Shami, Ishant Sharma and Umesh Yadav wrapped up the Indore Test

inside three days with an innings and 130 runs victory — the 10th innings win for India.

Sharma and Mayank Agarwal — has been the story of the season in Indian cricket.

DAY/NIGHT TEST MATCHES

PLAYING RECORD OF EACH TEAM				
Team	P	W	L	Success%
Australia	5	5	-	100.00
Sri Lanka	3	2	1	66.66
New Zealand	2	1	1	50.00
South Africa	2	1	1	50.00
Pakistan	3	1	2	33.33
England	3	1	2	33.33
West Indies	3	-	3	00.00
Zimbabwe	1	-	1	00.00

HIGHEST INNINGS TOTALS			
579-3 dec	Pakistan v West Indies at Dubai	2016-17	
514-8 dec	England v West Indies at Birmingham	2017	
482	Sri Lanka v Pakistan at Dubai	2017-18	

LOWEST INNINGS TOTALS			
58	England v New Zealand at Auckland	2017-18	
68	Zimbabwe v South Africa at Port Elizabeth	2017-18	
93	West Indies v Sri Lanka at Bridgetown	2018	

HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SCORES			
302*	Azhar Ali (Pakistan) v West Indies at Dubai	2016-17	
243	Alastair Cook (England) v West Indies at Birmingham	2017	

BEST BOWLING IN AN INNINGS			
8-49	Devendra Bishoo (West Indies) v Pakistan at Dubai	2016-17	
6-23	Pat Cummins (Australia) v Sri Lanka at Brisbane	2018-19	

India vs Bangladesh
Live from 1:00pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1 & 3

In such a gloomy scenario, the skipper may find some inspiration from his pacers, especially Abu Jayed, who impressed in the Indore Test.

consolidate their position after another series victory.

While a handful of Indian players have pink-ball experience, having played three domestic seasons of Duleep Trophy under lights, the Bangladesh squad would be facing the challenge for the first time.

Bangladesh have struggled in batting and only Mushfiqur Rahim posted a 50-plus score in the Indore Test.

Having been handed the captaincy after Shakhb Al Hasan's suspension for failure to report corrupt approaches, Mominul Haque is struggling to handle the pressure, made worse by his batsmen's continuing flop-show.

SQUADS
India: Virat Kohli (c), Rohit Sharma, Mayank Agarwal, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Wriddiman Saha (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Rishabh Pant, Mohammed Shami, Ishant Sharma, Umesh Yadav, Hanuma Vihari, Kuldeep Yadav and Shubman Gill.

Bangladesh: Mominul Haque (c), Liton Das (wk), Mehidy Hasan, Nayeem Hasan, Al-Amin Hossain, Ebadot Hossain, Mossadek Hossain, Shadman Islam, Tajjul Islam, Abu Jayed, Imrul Kayes, Mahmudullah, Mohammad Mithun, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mustafizur Rahman.

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The pink ball feels like a "heavy hockey ball" to Virat Kohli, who is extremely wary of the challenges its weight, hardness and colour could pose while fielding.

"One thing that surprised me was the fielding sessions. In the slips balls hit so hard it almost felt like a heavy hockey ball, all those synthetic ball that we're used to play with in the younger days," Kohli said on the eve of the match.

"It's purely because of the extra glaze on the ball, it is definitely much more difficult. For some reason it felt heavy and even the throws took a lot more effort than the red colour to reach the wicketkeeper."

India had their first brush with the SG pink ball after they wrapped up the opening Test inside three days in Indore.

India had a session under lights at the Eden Gardens on Wednesday.

"I think during the day, high catches will be very difficult. With the red or white ball you have the idea of when the ball reaches you but with the pink ball if you don't look at it your palms are gone."

Fielding session for me was far more challenging. People are going to be surprised how challenging pink ball can be.

Visibility in twilight has also been cited as one of the biggest challenges the historic match could pose.

"Not having a great

If I don't like Test cricket, you can't push me into liking it. If someone gets excitement or boost from watching the battle between bat and ball and great session of Test cricket, in my opinion those are the people that should come and watch Test cricket because they understand what's going on."

visibility and the ability to pick that colour makes it even more difficult. The decision making has to be very precise like the idea of off spins. Even when we practised yesterday we felt as if the ball is far but it hits you very quickly.

The extra glaze of the ball is making it travel faster. It hits the hand hard. It should excite everyone. Sometime you have to change the template. I think we have to be very precise and our skills will be tested in this Test."



BCCI president Sourav Ganguly, Indian captain Virat Kohli and chief selector MSK Prasad and other selection committee members pose for photo after team selection meeting for the upcoming limited over series against West Indies. BCCI/Twitter

Bhuvni, Kuldeep return for West Indies series

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Fit-again Bhuvneshwar Kumar on Thursday returned to the Indian team for next month's T20 and ODI series against West Indies, while all-rounder Shivam Dube was rewarded with a maiden call-up in the 50-over format.

India is scheduled to play three Twenty20 Internationals against the West Indies with the series-opener in Mumbai on December 6 followed by matches in Thiruvananthapuram (December 8) and Hyderabad (December 11).

The three ODIs will be played in Chennai (December 15), Visakhapatnam (December 18) and Cuttack (December 22).

A side strain and a hamstring injury forced seamer Bhuvneshwar to come back midway from the tour of West Indies in August.

The Indian squad bears a full-strength look with skipper Virat Kohli back at the helm and his deputy Rohit Sharma also not opting for a break.

Kohli coming back meant that Sanju Samson, who was included in the last series as specialist batsman had to go out without getting a match. It is learnt that Samson wasn't seen as a back-up keeper.

on his ODI place despite the presence of Shreyas Iyer and Manish Pandey in both squads.

Seamer Deepak Chahar, who recently had a brilliant T20 series against Bangladesh was recalled in the ODI squad after he played in last year's Asia Cup in the UAE.

His younger cousin brother Rahul was, however, dropped from the squad with the seasoned Kuldeep back in the mix with his partner in crime, Yuzvendra Chahal, who made his shortest format comeback in the last series.

Krunal Pandya, who had been a regular feature in the T20 setup for a year has been dropped, with Ravindra Jadeja back after a break.

The pace bowling departments in both squads bear a familiar look with Bhuvneshwar and Shami leading the way. It is expected that Jasprit Bumrah will join the duo soon and, along with Deepak, could be the main four pacers in white ball format.

India's squad for 3 T20s: Virat Kohli (capt), Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant (WK), Shivam Dube, Kedar Jadhav, Ravindra Jadeja, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Deepak Chahar, Mohammed Shami, Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

Practice match would have been helpful: Mominul

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Bangladesh captain Mominul Haque on Thursday rued that his team didn't get a practice game to prepare before taking on India in their first-ever Day/Night Test.

"We did not get any opportunity to play a practice match and at that moment (when it was decided) we could not do anything. The only way to prepare for us was by preparing mentally. But definitely, if you play any Test match with the pink ball, you have to play practice matches," Mominul said on the eve of the Test.

The current Bangladesh team have no pink ball experience even at the domestic level and they only had four sessions, including two in Indore, before their first ever D/N Test.

"It's new for everyone. We had very good preparation we hope we



Mushfiqur Rahim bats during nets session. AP

can capitalise on that. We will look for the opportunities and we are excited to play the first ever pink ball Test for the country," the skipper said.

The skipper urged his batsmen to be more careful while facing the pink ball, which is likely to have more lateral movement on a green wicket.

"It's about being strong mentally and have to be more patient. The idea is to play session by session. It's about learning from the past."

Mushfiqur Rahim was the lone half-century in Bangladesh innings as they crashed to an innings and 130-run defeat inside three days in Indore.

"We made some mistakes in the first innings. There was no partnership in the top order. We did not have proper shot up forward. We hope to rectify our mistakes," the skipper said.

Indian Eves thrash Windies 5-0 in T20 series sweep

PTI ■ PROVIDENCE (GUYANA)

The Indian women's cricket team completed a 5-0 series whitewash over the West Indies after half-century runs from Veda Krishnamurthy and Jemimah Rodrigues, complemented by the bowlers clinical show, steered the side to a 61-run triumph in the fifth and final T20 International here.

Rodrigues (50) and Krishnamurthy (57 not out) shared 117 runs for the third wicket as India Women scored 134 for 3 after electing to bat.

The decision seemed to have backfired when India were reduced to 17 for 2 in the fourth over and they never recovered from that. Half of their batters were out for 53 runs in the 14th over.

Opener Kysihona Knight was the top-scorer with 22 while Shemaine Campbell remained not out on 19.

For India Women, off-spinner Anuja Patil grabbed two wickets for just three runs while Radha Yadav, Poonam Yadav, Pooja Vastrakar and Harleen Deol took a wicket each.



Indian women's team poses with the winners trophy after beating West Indies in the final T20 match by 61 runs to win series 5-0. BCCI/Twitter

bowlers produced a disciplined performance to restrict the hosts to 73 for 7 in their allotted 20 overs.

The West Indies were 13 for 2 in the fourth over and they never recovered from that. Half of their batters were out for 53 runs in the 14th over.

Opener Kysihona Knight was the top-scorer with 22 while Shemaine Campbell remained not out on 19.

Rodrigues, Rekha top Indians in Women's T20 rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

India's Jemimah Rodrigues on Thursday jumped to the fourth position in the batting chart, while slow left-arm spinner Radha Yadav is placed second among bowlers in the latest ICC Women's T20I Player Rankings.

Besides Rodrigues, young Shafali Verma also made significant progress in the just-released T20I Player

Rankings, after playing stellar roles in a stunning 5-0 series sweep over the West Indies.

Rodrigues moved up three places to fourth position and ten sensation Verma gained 57 slots to reach 30th position as India leapfrogged the West Indies to fourth position in the ICC Women's T20I Team Rankings after the 5-0 victory over the former T20 World champions.

Another India batter to advance is Veda, who scored 77 runs including a match-winning 57 in the final match to move from 61st to 49th.

There are now three Indian bowlers in the top five as left-arm spinner Radha Yadav has moved up from fifth to second spot.

Deepthi Sharma, who took eight wickets in the series, has retained her fourth position while Poonam Yadav is fifth.

'Pacers will be more effective under lights'

NEW DELHI: Former opener Gautam Gambhir feels the India and Bangladesh captains need to be innovative while handling their pacers with the pink ball, including using them frequently under lights for more effectiveness.

"Captains will now need to use their fast bowlers differently," said Gambhir, who had led India Blue to the final of the Duleep Trophy tournament which was played under lights in 2016, on 'Star Sports'.

"In red ball cricket they use them early in the morning but in the day and night matches they will probably have to use them under lights as well as it will be of more help as compared to if it's a 1 pm start."

The India opener said it will be a challenge to pick the wrist spinners.

"One thing I realized was under the lights it was really difficult to pick the



wrist spinner because sometimes if you don't pick it in the hand and you pick it in the end once you watch the scene," he said.

But once, its artificial lights and has a black theme as well so I am sure wrist spinners will play a huge role under the lights." PTI

Dhawan fails but Delhi win

SURAT: Opener Shikhar Dhawan's lean patch continued but Delhi still managed to register a comfortable 77-run win over Maharashtra in their opening Super League match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament here on Thursday.

Delhi made 167 for five after being invited to bat and then produced a disciplined bowling effort to bundle out Maharashtra for 90 in 17.2 overs. Part-time off-spinner Nitish Rana stole the show with the ball with figures of four for 17.

Meanwhile in the other two matches, Punjab thrashed Jharkhand by 109 runs with skipper Mandeep Singh top-scoring with an unbeaten 81.

At the Lal Bahar Contractor Stadium, Baroda defeated Rajasthan by 15 runs. For Baroda, opener Aditya Wagmore stuck a quick-fire 88.

Brief Scores: Delhi 167/5 (Dhruv Shorey 48 not out, Himmat Singh 32; Shamshuzama Kazi 2-20) beat Maharashtra 90 all out (Ruturaj Gaikwad 42, Digvijay Deshmukh 9; Nitish Rana 4-17) by 77 runs.

At C B Patel Ground: Punjab 199/4 (Mandeep Singh 81; Abhishek Sharma 72; Shabbaz Nadeem 2-27) beat Jharkhand 90 all out (Utkarsh Singh 24, Virat Singh 15; Mayank Markande 3-13) by 109 runs.

At Lal Bahar Contractor Stadium: Baroda 201/5 (Aditya Wagmore 88, Kedar Devdhar 64; Aniket Choudhary 2-27) beat Rajasthan 186/8 (Ankit Lamba 54, Arjit Gupta 41; Atit Sheth 3-34) by 15 runs. PTI