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## CJI office within RTI ambit But independence of judiciary must be protected, adds SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The office of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) is a public authority under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, the Supreme Court held on Wednesday but said "judicial independence has to be kept in mind" while disclosing information in "public interest".

In a path-breaking verdict, a 5-judge Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi dismissed the appeal filed by the Central Public Information Officer and the Secretary General of the apex court against the Delhi High Court's 2010 judgment.

Writing the judgment on behalf of the CJI, Justice Deepak Gupta and himself, Justice Sanjiv Khanna referred to several decisions and viewpoints to highlight the contentious nature of the issue of "transparency, accountability and judicial independence", and said it was necessary that "the question of judicial independence is accounted for in the balancing exercise".

Referring to Constitutional scheme on setting up of the apex court, the verdict said, "It is undebatable that the Supreme Court of India is a 'public authority', as defined vide clause (h) to Section 2 of the RTI Act as it has been established and constituted by or under the Constitution.

"The CJI is the competent authority in the case of the

Supreme Court. Consequently, in terms of Section 28 of the RTI Act, the CJI is empowered to frame rules, which have to be notified... to carry out provisions of the RTI Act."

The top court would necessarily include the office of CJI, it said, adding, "the office of CJI or for that matter the judges is not separate from the SC, and is part and parcel of the SC as a body, authority and institution".

The bench said it was necessary that question of "judicial independence is accounted for in the balancing exercise" with RTI. It cannot be doubted and debated that independence of the judiciary is a matter of "ennobled public concern" and directly relates to public welfare and would be one of the factors to be taken into account in weighing and applying the public interest test, said the judgment, running into 108

pages.

"Thus, when public interest demands disclosure of information, judicial independence has to be kept in mind while deciding the question of exercise of discretion," Justice Khanna said.

It, however, said the verdict "should not be understood to mean that the independence of the judiciary can be achieved only by denial of access to information".

The verdict, which has been concurred by Justices NV Ramana and DY Chandrachud in separate verdicts, said that in some cases judicial independence may "demand openness and transparency by furnishing the information" and in some cases disclosure may not be needed.

Reference to the principle of judicial independence is not to undermine and avoid accountability which is an aspect "we perceive and

believe" has to be taken into account while examining the public interest in favour of disclosure of information, it said.

"Distinction must be drawn between the final opinion or resolutions passed by collegium with regard to appointment /elevation and transfer of judges with observations and indicative reasons and the inputs/data or details which the collegium had examined," the bench said while stressing on balancing between the right to information, judicial independence and confidentiality of personal information. The rigour of public interest in divulging inputs, data and particulars of a candidate (probable judge) would be different from that of divulging and furnishing details of the output that is the decision, it said.

"The public interest test would have to be applied keeping in mind the fiduciary relationship, (if it arises), and also the invasion of the right to privacy and breach of the duty of confidentiality owed to the candidate or the information provider, resulting from the furnishing of such details and particulars," it said on the collegium deliberations.

Judicial independence and accountability go hand in hand as accountability ensures, and is a facet of judicial independence.

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### Rafale, Sabarimala judgments today

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to pronounce on Thursday its verdict on petitions seeking a review of its judgment giving a clean chit to the Modi Government in the Rafale fighter jet deal with French firm Dassault Aviation.

Also, it is to give its verdict on a batch of petitions seeking re-examination of its decision to allow entry of women of all age group in Kerala's Sabarimala Temple. Political parties, right-wing outfits and devotees in Kerala are keeping their fingers crossed.

## SC verdict blessing in disguise for BSY Top court upholds disqualification but allows rebel MLAs to fight bypolls

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court's ruling on Wednesday disqualifying 17 Congress and JD(S) MLAs in Karnataka but allowing them to contest the December 5 bypolls has come as a breather for State Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa. If elected back to the Assembly, these MLAs would bolster his Government sitting on a razor thin majority.

The SC ruling may help consolidate Yediyurappa's shaky hold over the Government with 105 plus one Independent MLAs vis-à-vis the Opposition. The MLAs are to join the BJP on Thursday and are likely to be fielded on the 15 Assembly seats from which they had won and where the bypolls are to be held on December 5.

If the rebels do get BJP tickets and manage to win, it would give a numerical boost to Yediyurappa in the Assembly. The BJP needs to win at least seven seats to ensure it achieves the majority (112 seats) on its own. Candidates are required to file their nomination papers between November 11 and November 18.

A total of 17 "rebel" MLAs — 14 belonging to the Congress and three to the JD(S) — who resigned from the Karnataka Assembly and were "won over" by the BJP were disqualified in July this year by the Assembly Speaker. The long-drawn political drama



with "rebel" MLAs ferried out of the State and kept in star hotels subsequently led to the fall of the JD(S)-Congress coalition Government headed by JD(S) leader HD Kumarawamy on July 23 during a trust vote.

Though upholding the Speaker's decision to disqualify the MLAs, the Supreme Court opened a window for them to enter the Assembly by permitting them to contest the bypolls for 15 seats. The elections to the remaining two seats were withheld due to petitions related to them pending in the High Court. The SC cancelled the Speaker's decision to bar them from contesting polls.

In a strong indictment of the Speaker and political parties, the 3-member SC Bench said there is a growing trend of Speakers acting against the "constitutional duty of being neutral" in addition to political parties indulging in horse trading and corrupt practices due

to which citizens are being denied Stable Governments.

"In these circumstances, the Parliament is required to reconsider strengthening certain aspects of the Tenth Schedule, so that such undemocratic practices are discouraged," the Bench said.

The court said the Speaker was not empowered to disqualify any member till the end of the term of the Assembly. Then Karnataka Speaker KR Ramesh Kumar had said the MLAs cannot contest elections until the term of the current Assembly, ending 2023.

The disqualified 'rebel' MLAs had indirectly facilitated BJP launch itself in the seat of power by reducing the effective strength of Karnataka Assembly to 208 from 224 and winning the floor test on July 29. In a recent video gone viral, the Karnataka CM was purportedly heard saying that the Congress and JD(S) MLAs had "sacrificed" a lot to bring

BJP in power and lamented the BJP president was not doing needful for them.

Hours after the court ruling, Deputy Chief Minister CN Ashwathnarayan said the disqualified MLAs will join the BJP on Thursday in Bengaluru. Yediyurappa welcomed the verdict and said it was against the "conspiracy" of Ramesh Kumar and Congress leader. Expressing confidence that the BJP will win all the 15 seats, he said the party would decide on giving tickets to the disqualified MLAs.

The Congress, for its part, called for the dismissal of the Yediyurappa Government, saying the court's decision upholding the decision disqualifying 17 Congress and JD(S) MLAs but allowing them to contest the bypolls had exposed the BJP's 'Operation Kamal' in the State.

Reacting to the SC verdict, former Speaker Kumar said, "The Supreme Court has upheld the disqualification -- to that extent, it's a sigh of relief (for me). On the issue of tenure (of disqualification), the Supreme Court has not agreed to my interpretation I will speak on that after going through the text of the judgment."

The change of Government in Karnataka had prompted accusations that it was brought about by purchasing MLAs with "money bags" doing rounds.

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## 50:50 Sena's post-poll artifice, asserts Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Breaking his silence for the first time over the Maharashtra impasse, BJP president and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday rejected the Shiv Sena's claim that it was promised rotational chief ministership. He said the Shiv Sena had simply come up with post-electoral conditions that could not be accepted.

Seeking to puncture Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray's contentions, Shah wondered why Sena didn't object to the BJP projecting Devendra Fadnis as its Chief Minister candidate during the election campaigning. "Before the elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and I said many times in public that if our alliance wins then Devendra Fadnis will be the Chief Minister, no one objected back then," Shah told news agency ANI.

"Now they (Shiv Sena) have come up with new demands which are not acceptable to us," Shah asserted.

Uddhav had been claiming that Shah had committed to the 2.5-year-each rotational chief ministership for the BJP and Shiv Sena.

Defending the Governor's



move to recommend President's Rule in the Maharashtra on Tuesday, Shah said the State head had to take action since none of the parties had been able to prove majority since the legislative Assembly term ended on November 9. President's Rule was imposed in the State on Tuesday.

"Before this, in no State was so much time given, 18 days were given. The Governor invited parties only after Assembly tenure ended. Neither the Shiv Sena nor the Congress-NCP staked claim and neither we," Shah said adding "It's not in our party's tradition to disclose what transpires behind closed doors."

"If the Sena thinks that it can revolt and get the people's sympathy, they don't really know the public," he said taking a jibe at the Sena.

The BJP and the Shiv Sena together have 161 seats, 15 seats more than the majority mark of

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## NCP, Cong talk CMP as bids on for non-BJP Govt

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Less than 24 hours after the Limposition of President's Rule, efforts to form a non-BJP Government began in Maharashtra on Wednesday, as the Congress and the NCP initiated the process of drawing up a Common Minimum Programme (CMP) for a three-party Government and the leaders of the Sonia Gandhi-led party met Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray and initiated preliminary talks.

Both the NCP and Congress leaders nominated five leaders each to formulate a CMP for the three-party Government. "We (Congress and NCP) will sit across and formulate a CMP for the proposed three-party front. Once we are ready with the CMP and through with other issues relating to power-sharing, we will talk to the Sena leadership. We will take the Sena inputs and consent on the CMP subsequently," a senior Congress leader said.

Simultaneously, NCP president Sharad Pawar held talks with his party leaders on the CMP and the power-sharing arrangement for the proposed Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress

Government. The State Congress leaders held a similar meeting among themselves.

"We are looking at such a fool-proof CMP and power-sharing arrangement among the three parties that will help us provide a stable Government to the State for full five years. This is independent of our differing ideologies. We will work towards ensuring that our ideologies do not come in the way of running the three-party Government in the State," a senior Shiv Sena leader said.

After days of uncertainty that had delayed the process of three non-BJP parties coming together to form a Government in the State, the Congress formally shed its earlier hesitation of going with the Shiv Sena and its leaders held first-ever round of talks with Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray at a five-star hotel at Bandra-Kurla complex in north-west Mumbai.

Ahead of Wednesday's meeting, senior Congress president Ahmed Patel - who was in the city for a meeting with NCP president Sharad Pawar on issues relating to the Congress-NCP alliance's proposed tie-up with Shiv Sena -

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## SC doubts efficacy as more odd-even mulled

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As air pollution in Delhi plunged to near the emergency level on Wednesday, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said his Government is mulling extension of the odd-even scheme with the Supreme Court-mandated anti-pollution authority EPCA

ordering closure of Delhi-NCR schools till November 15.

However, the SC issued a notice to the Delhi Government on a plea challenging the odd-even. The apex court had earlier questioned the Delhi Government as to what it was achieving from the odd-even scheme by stopping plying of cars that are less pol-

luting compared to two and three-wheelers and taxis.

The SC directed the Government and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to place before it the data of pollution in Delhi from October till November 14 this year and from October 1 to December 31, 2018.

"Let the Government of

NCT of Delhi... file data in this regard in the court on the basis of the previous experience and whether three-wheelers and taxis are plying more on roads during such restrictions and relevant data be placed," the bench had said.

The overall air quality index in Delhi on Wednesday

*Continued on Page 5*

## JNU rolls back fee hike partially, students dub move eyewash

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The JNU administration's move on Wednesday to pacify protesting students by rolling back the hostel fee hike partially for BPL students has not gone down well with some students who dubbed it as an "eyewash", and decided to continue with the strike.

The decision was taken at the varsity's 283rd Executive Council (EC) meeting, HRD Secretary R Subrahmanyam announced while asking the protesting students to resume classes. The EC meeting was shifted outside the campus at the last moment fearing trouble by agitators.

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## VHP suggests Amit Shah, Yogi be included in proposed temple trust

PTI ■ AYODHYA

As the Centre has set the ball rolling for setting up a Supreme Court-mandated trust for construction of a temple at Ramjanmabhoomi site in Ayodhya, right-wing organisation Vishwa Hindu Parishad has suggested that Home Minister Amit Shah and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath be included in it.

VHP spokesperson Sharad Sharma on Wednesday here also reiterated the outfit's hope that the trust would build a grand temple as per the design prepared by the Ramjanmabhoomi Nyas (RJNI).

The Nyas has been running a sprawling workshop in Ayodhya's Karsewakupuram since 1990 and artisans and

craftsmen have fashioned out magnificently carved stones and pillars over these years, with the assumption that one day it will be used to build a temple for Ram Lalla.

"We are hopeful that the new trust that the government will constitute will not only have representation from the RJNI, but will also build the grand temple as per the architectural plan made by the Nyas," he said.

A wooden model of a 'proposed Ram Temple' in a glass encasement has been kept at the workshop site for over two decades, and many devotees stream in from various parts of India to see the model and beautifully carved stones, after visiting the Ramjanmabhoomi site.

"Decision on trust to be taken by PM"

New Delhi (PTI): Union Culture and Tourism Minister Prahlaad Patel on Wednesday said the decision on the formation of the Ayodhya Trust will be taken at the level of the prime minister.

"The decision on the trust — how will it be formed, who all will be its members — will be taken at the level of the prime minister, I cannot comment more on this," Singh told a television channel.

Settling the fractious issue that goes back more than a century, the Supreme Court backed the construction of a Ram temple by a government trust at the disputed site in Ayodhya.

"We also feel that Home Minister Amit Shah and Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi be made a part of the trust, and if needed, exceptions be made for their inclusion," Sharma told PTI, and cited Sree Somnath Trust's inception to buttress his point.

"KM Munshi, who was at that time (early post Independence) a minister in the Union cabinet, was in it (Somnath trust). The Ram temple trust should be formed on the lines of the Somnath trust," he added.

Opinions of the Ministry of Law and the attorney general will be taken on how to proceed on setting up the trust that will fix the modalities for construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya.

# Farmers' welfare top agenda: CM

## Launches e-Ganna app, web portal

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that unlike the self-concerns of other regional caste-based and family-controlled political parties, welfare of farmers was on the top of the agenda of the Bharatiya Janata Party government and it was committed to protecting their interest, particularly of the sugarcane growers.

He said the UP government was relentlessly pursuing the goals set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for doubling the income of the farmers.

"In March 2017, when the BJP government took over, there were huge arrears of farmers on sugar mills and many sugar mills were closing down. The BJP government ensured the operation of sugar mills resulting in utilisation of cane and thus helped the farmers. The UP government has so far ensured payment of over Rs 76,000 crore to the farmers," Yogi said and added, "Less than Rs 4,000 crore is still pending as cane arrears and it will be cleared soon."

Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday launched a web portal and e-Ganna app for the convenience of sugarcane farmers. The cane supply slip will now be issued to the farmers by sugar mills online.

The web portal and e-Ganna app will help in eradicating the cane mafia and middleman and strengthen the cane development societies.

The portal and the app will ensure transparency in the process and facilitate sugarcane supply by farmers to sugar mills and check irregularities in the process.



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurating the programme to launch a web portal and e-Ganna app at Lok Bhawan in Lucknow on Wednesday

The app will have entire information about the issue of cane supply slips to the farmers for the whole cane crushing season from November to May.

"Earlier, black-marketing of cane supply slips was a common practice in UP. With the launch of the new app, transparent system for the supply of sugarcane by farmers to sugar mills is being launched and within next 30 months the government will ensure that sugarcane farming becomes a profitable venture for the farmers against the present state of the sugarcane farming," the Chief Minister said.

Yogi said that sugarcane farming was an intensive industry. He said the farmers were on the top of the agenda

of the BJP government. He said there were 50 lakh sugarcane farmers in UP and the government was working for their welfare.

Yogi Adityanath said that during the last nearly three years of the BJP rule in UP, a record amount had been paid to the farmers by the sugar mills.

He said the sugarcane farmers were a satisfied community today resulting in the sharp increase in the area under cane cultivation, which had increased from 20.52 lakh hectares to 28 lakh hectares.

The Chief Minister said 119 sugar mills were running during the last cane crushing season and two more sugar mills would commence crushing from the current season.

He said that farmers' welfare schemes like soil health card and PM Kisan Samman Yojana should have been implemented right after the Independence of India in 1947.

He said if the farmers were not in the agenda of the political parties then the agenda of these parties was family and dynasty.

Sugar Industry Minister Suresh Rana said earlier the farmers were nowhere in the agenda of the government and they were compelled to commit suicide.

He said the BJP government introduced fundamental changes and farmers were now on top of the agenda of the BJP government, which was relentlessly pursuing the agenda of doubling farmers' income.

# CM Yogi to inaugurate Kanpur Metro construction

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will inaugurate the construction of Kanpur Metro Project's priority section on Friday.

After the renaming of Lucknow Metro Rail Corporation Limited as Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation Limited, the go-ahead had been given to start civil construction work on the priority section (IIT, Kanpur-Moti Jheel corridor) of the Kanpur Metro project.

LMRC officials said that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath would be accompanied by Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs (independent charge) Hardeep Singh Puri, Chief Secretary RK Tiwari, Principal Secretary (Housing), Kanpur Municipal Commissioner, and senior officials of UPMRCL for the inauguration of the civil work.

LMRC officials disclosed that the contract to build the viaduct of the 8.728 km-long elevated section of the priority section was awarded to Afcons Infrastructure Ltd on September 13 this year and the piling work would start in full swing from November 15.

The priority section includes stations at IIT-Kanpur, Kalyanpur railway station, SPM Hospital, CSJM University, Gurudev chauraha, Geeta Nagar, Rawatpur railway station, Lala Lajpat Rai Hospital and Moti Jheel.

This section will be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 200 crore and metro operation on this corridor is expected to commence within two years.

# No need for govt to set up new trust for Ram temple: VHP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad has demanded that the proposed Ram temple at Ayodhya be constructed as per the model prepared by it and the stones carved at VHP karyashala (workshop) be used for the construction of the temple.

The VHP also said there was no need for the government to set up a new trust for the Ram Temple as directed by the Supreme Court as Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas already existed and the temple should be constructed under its guidelines, though many other leaders differed. VHP managing committee member Dinesh Kumar said that the organisation had fought for the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya and had also proposed a model of the temple.

He said pillars of the proposed temple had been carved as per the design of the model and these carved stones should be used for the construction of the temple as per the VHP model.

Triloki Nath Pandey, who represented Ram Lalla Virajman in the court, also said the temple should be built as per the model proposed by the VHP using stones prepared by the organisation.

Mahant Nriyaya Gopal Das, who is president of Ram

Janmabhoomi Nyas, said there was no need of setting up a new trust.

"The trust (Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas) already exists. We can give a shape to it and new members can be added as per need," he said.

But Dinesh Kumar said that VHP was not interested in joining the trust. He said the government may make the trust but the VHP would support it from outside. "The trust should only ensure that the stones carved in these 10 years are used in construction of the temple," he added.

Kumar said the VHP had fulfilled its work after the Supreme Court gave its judgement in favour of the Ram temple.

The VHP leader also

demanded that the trust construct a temporary temple to shift Ram Lalla from the makeshift tent so that the devotees could get opportunity to worship there without any hindrance. Mahant Suresh Das, chief of the Digambar Akhara, said the apex court had clearly said that a new trust was to be formed by the government.

"It is the responsibility of the Union government to constitute a trust to oversee the construction of the Ram temple. Representatives of Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas should also be included in the trust," he said. Nirmohi Akhara chief Mahant Dinendra Das said the trust must be formed as per the directions of the apex court but expressed reservations over akhara members joining it.

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# Umesh Dwivedi join BJP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party in Uttar Pradesh received a shot in its arm when several leaders of the teachers' union, including sitting Independent MLC from Lucknow Graduate and Teachers' constituency Umesh Dwivedi, joined the party in the presence of party state president Swatantra Dev Singh and Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma here on Wednesday.

The new entrants were welcomed by the BJP leaders into the party fold and given membership cards.

Dwivedi said that he would perform his duties as a simple worker and take up whatever responsibility the party gave him. "The BJP has taken a new initiative for the non-aided teachers in the state and these teachers will support BJP in every matter," he said.

The other leaders of different teachers associations who joined the party included Secondary Teachers Federation general secretary Ajay Singh, Ad hoc Teachers Association state president Sanjay Singh and Vocational Teachers Association general secretary Alok Shukla.

MLC Umesh Dwivedi's term is expiring on May 6, 2020 and he is expected to contest from Lucknow graduates constituency with BJP support.

With Dwivedi joining the ruling party, the strength of the BJP has gone up to 23 in the Legislative Council. In the 100-member Upper House, the BJP is in minority.

# Four arrested in connection with Kushinagar blast

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the mysterious blast inside a mosque in Kushinagar pointing towards a much larger conspiracy, the Anti-Terrorists Squad (ATS) probing the incident arrested four of the seven named persons, including the caretaker of the mosque.

The ATS team from Gorakhpur along with sleuths of the local intelligence agencies and local police visited the spot and started probe to find out whether it was just an accident or part of a bigger subversive act in the wake of the recent Supreme Court verdict on Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Mosque dispute.

After preliminary investigation pointed towards conspiracy of some big subversive activity, the ATS team included sleuths of the Central intelligence agencies in the probe.

The ATS team collected samples and after finding explosive material, they grilled the caretaker of the mosque, Ajeemuddin aka Ajeem.

Sources said that during the probe, the ATS team found that explosives in large quantity were stored inside the mosque since April last. One Hazi Kutubuddin had reportedly told some youths that they would be given some big task, but what he had planned to do with the explosive, no one revealed.

The team engaged in the investigation learnt that 8-10 kg of explosives were collected in the room but as the area had no floor, the explosive became damp due to which the full impact of the blast was averted. The ATS has so far arrested Maulana Ajeemuddin aka Ajeem, along with Ijhar Ansari, Ashiq Ansari and Javed Ansari and sent them to jail.

The police also suspect the role of Ashfaq, the maternal grandson of Hazi Kutubuddin. Ashfaq's wife is working in the medical wing of the Indian Army, and is presently posted in Hyderabad. Ashfaq was present in the village when blast took place and the probe revealed that he immediately

visited the place after the blast and tried to clear the debris before the arrival of the police.

The cops suspect that the explosive may have been brought by Ashfaq so a police team has been sent to Hyderabad to confirm about it.

The bag in which the explosive was kept was hanged from the bolt of the door in which it was kept. That room was kept locked and only opened when Ajeem and Kutubuddin were present in the mosque.

Sources said that the cops learnt about the role of four local youths who kept the explosive. They have been identified as Ijhar, Ashiq, Javed, Munna aka Riyazuddin. The youths brought the bag on the direction of Kutubuddin and kept it in the room.

The mosque was built about a decade back and Hazi Kutubuddin, who retired as a clerk of Public Works Department, had called Ajeem from Dubkul Dakshin Shahpur locality of Gokpokhar, district Uttari Dinajpur in West Bengal

and kept him as caretaker on a monthly salary of Rs,6000. The police have so far named Ajeem, Kutubuddin, Ashfaq Alam, Ijhar Ansari, Ashiq Ansari, Javed Ansari, and Munna aka Salahuddin Ansari in the case.

It may be mentioned that when preparation were on to offer namaz last Monday afternoon, a powerful blast took place in the mosque situated on west side of Bairagi Patti Tola in Awarwa Sofiganj area under Turkpatti police station of Kushinagar. Though no causality was reported, the glass of windows were shattered and the terrace of the mosque developed a crack in the blast and the entire building was engulfed in thick smoke.

The caretaker of the mosque initially claimed that a battery of the inverter had exploded but on finding that the inverter was installed in another room, the local police alerted the top officials apprehending some bigger subversive activity after finding explosive.

# Blast in Anpara D turbine, four AEs suffer burns

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Four assistant engineers suffered burns following a blast in the turbine generator unit of the seventh unit of 500 MW Anpara D thermal power station in Sonbhadra district on Wednesday.

The power generation in Anpara D, having installed capacity of 1,000 MW, came to a grinding halt following the blast and the resulting fire.

The thermal power station is owned by the UP Thermal Power Generation Corporation.

The sudden outage of 1,000 MW power generation caused a power crisis in eastern UP district. Fire-tenders from Anpara A and B and

Anpara C plants run by the private Lanco Power were rushed to the accident site. The fire was brought under control after nearly four hours.

The four engineers injured in the blast are Arvind Singh, Varun Gautam, Ashok Pal and Jayant Tewari. They were rushed to hospital where their condition was said to be stable.

Chief General Manager of Anpara D thermal power station, Heeraman Prasad Singh, said he was out of station so he was unable to comment. He, however, said the blast and fire in the turbine generator was a huge loss and it could take more than six months to resume power generation. Singh said a team of engineers was on the spot and they were investigating the possible cause of the explosion.

# Ayodhya title suit defendant Tripathi dead

Lucknow (PNS): Defendant number 17 in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit, Ramesh Chandra Tripathi, died in Ayodhya on Tuesday.

He was 84. The family members said on Wednesday that Ramesh Chandra Tripathi was very excited over the apex court judgement on November 9 and died of massive heart attack on Tuesday morning at his Bhagwanpatti village residence in Bhitri police station area.

He was cremated in the evening with full state honours on the banks of Saryu river in Ayodhya.

Tripathi was a former auditor in the Defence Ministry and had written several religious books. He was also given Kabir Samman and Awadh Bhushan award by the Hindi Sansthan for his literary work.

The 17th defendant in the Ayodhya title suit jumped into the legal battle in 1965.

# UP govt to modernise madarsas

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government is working on a plan to modernise madarsas across the state and connect students with social programmes of the government.

It has now decided to impart cadet training courses like NCC and NSS to these stu-

dents. Madarsa Education Board registrar Raghavendra Singh said on Wednesday that the National Cadet Corps (NCC) and the National Service Scheme (NSS) were now working to modernise madarsas to instil a sense of discipline among their students. The UP Madarsa Education Board has sent

instructions to all madarsas in this regard. The registrar said, "The objective of the NCC is to inspire everyone for the sake of the nation. The madarsa students will also get an opportunity to make a career in the Indian Army. In addition to education and training, the students will get lessons in service of the nation."

## NOTICE

I Sarita Maurya wife of Narendra Kumar Maurya Army service No-15423732-H, Rank-L/NK declare that in my husband service record, my name is wrongly written as Sarita Devi, while my correct name is Sarita Maurya. Vide affidavit dated 30 Oct 2019. Residence-VIII-Narayanpur, Post-Sangrampur, Distt-Pratapgarh (UP)

### बैंक ऑफ बड़ोदा Bank of Baroda

**POSSESSION NOTICE**  
(Rule 8 (1))  
(For Immovable Property)

Whereas the under signed being the Authorised Officer of the Erstwhile 'Vijaya Bank', Now Bank of Baroda, Branch- Aliganj, Lucknow, under the Securitisation and Enforcement of Security Interest (Second) Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, has issued a Demand Notice calling upon the borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of Receipt of the said notice.

under the Securitisation and Enforcement of Security Interest (Second) Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, has issued a Demand Notice calling upon the borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of Receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general, that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 9 of the said Rules the Borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Erstwhile 'Vijaya Bank', Now Bank of Baroda, Branch- Aliganj, Lucknow. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Section 13 (8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

Sr. No.	Name of Account /Borrower	Details of immovable properties	Date of Demand Notice Possession Notice	Outstanding Amount
<b>Branch - Aliganj, Lucknow</b>				
1	Niraj Chauhan S/o Abhilas Chauhan, 4/717, Sector-H, Jankipuram, Lucknow-226021	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of House No. MLIG-4/717, Type-D, Sector-H, Jankipuram, Yogna, Lucknow. Bounded on the North-House No. 4/716, on the South-House No. 4/718, on the East- 4.50 Mtr Wide Road, on the West by-House No. 4/751	02-09-2019 11-11-2019	Rs. 26,88,514.18 and interest and charges thereon

Place : Lucknow, Date: 14.11.2019 Authorised Officer, Bank Of Baroda

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement**  
**Bid Identification No. SEPHSBP- 07 /2019-20 Dt. 08.11.2019**

01. Number of Work	: 1 no.
02. Type of Bid	: Two Bid system
03. Period of Completion	: 3 (Three) Calendar Month
04. Class of Contractor	: Contractors of 'B' / 'A' Class
05. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	: From 11.00 Hrs. of Dt. 19.11.2019 to 17.00 Hrs of 03.12.2019
06. Last date / time of seeking clarification	: 17.00 Hrs of 25.11.2019
07. Last date / time of receipt of bids in the portal	: 17.00 Hrs of 03.12.2019
08. Date & Time of opening of Technical bids	: At 11.00 Hrs. of 06.12.2019
09. Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Superintending Engineer, P.H. Circle, Sambalpur, Brooks' Hill, Near Stadium, At/Po- Motjihar, Dist- Sambalpur-768 001.

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal "<http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in>"

Sd/-  
Superintending Engineer,  
P.H. Circle, Sambalpur.

13018/11/0008/1920

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

सबका साथ-सबका विकास-सबका विश्वास



# मुख्यमंत्री सामूहिक विवाह योजना

के अन्तर्गत  
प्रदेश के सभी जनपदों में



14 नवम्बर, 2019 को एक ही दिन  
कुल **21,000** जोड़ों का विवाह

योजना के लिए वर्ष 2019-20 में रु. 250 करोड़ का प्रावधान।



विवाह अनुदान की धनराशि प्रति जोड़ा रु. 35,000  
से बढ़ाकर रु. 51,000 की गयी

रु. 35,000  
कन्या/महिला के खाते में

रु. 10,000 की  
वैवाहिक सामग्री

रु. 6,000 प्रति जोड़े  
के विवाह आयोजन हेतु

## योजना की विशेषताएं

- रु. 2 लाख की आय सीमा के अन्तर्गत आने वाले सभी परिवार पात्र।
- विवाह हेतु विकास खण्ड, जिला पंचायत, नगर पंचायत, नगर पालिका परिषद, नगर निगम स्तर पर पंजीकरण की सुविधा।
- विधवा, तलाकशुदा, परित्यक्ता के पुनर्विवाह की भी व्यवस्था।
- दहेज की कुप्रथा से मुक्ति।
- न्यूनतम 10 जोड़ों पर सामूहिक विवाह के आयोजन की व्यवस्था।
- सभी समुदाय एवं धर्मों के रीति-रिवाजों के अनुसार विवाह की व्यवस्था।
- सर्वधर्म समभाव तथा सामाजिक समरसता को बढ़ावा।
- विवाह-उत्सव में अनावश्यक अपव्यय एवं प्रदर्शन से मुक्ति।

- सामूहिक विवाह योजना में प्रारम्भ से अब तक **71 हजार** से अधिक जोड़ों के विवाह सम्पन्न।
- वर्तमान सरकार के गठन से अब तक सामूहिक विवाह एवं व्यक्तिगत शादी योजनान्तर्गत **3 लाख** से अधिक विवाह कराये गये।

रमापति शास्त्री  
मंत्री, समाज कल्याण, अनुसूचित जाति  
एवं जनजाति कल्याण, उत्तर प्रदेश

डॉ० जी०एस० धर्मेश  
राज्य मंत्री, समाज कल्याण, अनुसूचित जाति  
एवं जनजाति कल्याण, उत्तर प्रदेश

उच्च गुणवत्ता वाले हेलमेट का ही उपयोग करें।

समाज कल्याण विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

## Excise teams recover illicit liquor in 3 dists

Lucknow (PNS): Enforcement teams of Excise department recovered large amount of illicit liquor, equipment for brewing liquor and vehicles in Bagpat, Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ballia districts on Wednesday. The excise officials lodged FIRs against six persons under relevant sections of Excise Act. A joint team of excise and police recovered 280 cartons of illicit foreign liquor in Bagpat district. Apart from this, 35 cartons of illicit foreign liquor were recovered in Ballia district. A case was registered against three persons in this connection. A joint team of excise and police recovered 1,163 cartons of illicit liquor in Gautam Buddha Nagar district. An FIR was lodged against three persons.

**OFFICE OF THE PROJECT MANAGER (JV), CONSTRUCTION UNIT (E/M), U.P. JAL NIGAM, LUCKNOW**  
**SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTICE**  
**Letter No.: 3184 / M-18 / 202**  
**Dated: 08.11.2019**  
e-Tender for Design & SITC of Solar powered submersible water system to deliver 240 KLD discharge at 42 m head w/s scheme, Hardoi-1 Set is invited by U.P. Jal Nigam that shall be available at e-procurement website <http://etender.up.nic.in> from 18.11.2019, 12:00 Hrs. Onwards, upto 25.11.2019, 17:00 Hrs. and technical part opened on 26.11.2019.

**प्राथमिक विद्युत वितरण निगम लि. निविदा विस्तार सूचना**  
पूर्व प्रकाशित निविदा संख्या 92, 97 एवं 98 / ई-टेंडरिंग संख्या / 19-20 जो कि ई-टेंडरिंग के माध्यम से दिनांक 13.11.2019 को डाली जानी थी पर्याप्त निविदा प्राप्त न होने के कारण प्रथम उक्त निविदा पुनः ई-टेंडरिंग के माध्यम से दिनांक 20.11.2019 को 13.00 बजे तक डाली जायेगी एवं दिनांक 20.11.2019 को 16.00 बजेखोली जायेगी। (आशु कालिया) अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत कार्यशाला मण्डल, पूर्वांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि, तृतीय तल भैलपुर पावर हाउस, वाराणसी। पत्रांक- 1669 दिनांक 13.11.2019 "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचायें"

**उपरोक्त पावर प्रान्शियमन कोर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड, ई-निविदा संख्या 07 / विकास(क/ए)ल/2019-20**  
अधोस्तसहारी द्वारा अनुमती देकराज / फर्मों से निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु अलग-अलग सोलरबन्ध ई-निविदायें दो भागों में ई-टेंडरिंग वेब साईट [www.etender.up.nic.in](http://www.etender.up.nic.in) पर निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। ई-निविदा के प्रथम भाग में धरोहर धनराशि व बैता, तकनीकी एवं अनुभव सम्बन्धित प्रश्न, व्यावसायिक व अन्य शर्तें आदि एवं दूसरे भाग में पर्यवेक्षण निगम एवं शर्तें प्रदान करनी होंगी। निविदा प्रश्न मूल्य, धरोहर धनराशि आवेदन पत्र के साथ संलग्न करते हुए इनकी Scanned copy upload करना अनिवार्य है।  
**धरोहर धनराशि**, एनओएफपीडी / आरओडीजीएफपीडी के रूप (A/C Name: E.E. ETD-III, Lucknow, A/C No. 619300550000067, I.F.S.C. Code - PUNB0619300) में प्रस्तुत की जायेगी जो अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारिषद - तृतीय, लखनऊ के पक्ष में देय होंगी। प्रथम भाग में बाँधित धरोहर धनराशि एवं अन्य प्रश्न अर्पण तथा उचित / स्वीकार्य योग्य न होने पर द्वितीय भाग को नहीं खोला जायेगा। ई-निविदा का विवरण - निविदा सं. कार्य का नाम, धरोहर धनराशि, खुलने की तिथि व समय क्रमशः निम्नानुसार है -  
(1) ई-निविदा संख्या 07-वि.पा.ख(क/ए)ल/2019-20, विद्युत पारिषद - तृतीय, लखनऊ के अन्तर्गत 132 क्वीवी उपग्रन्थ बाबाबंकी पर पर जम्मर, लखीम/बनेदर आदि की नेटमीनेन्स एवं स्रे पेटिंग का कार्य, धरोहर धनराशि ₹ 2,000.00, निविदा दिनांक 28.11.2019 को 15.00 बजे तक ई-टेंडरिंग वेब साईट [www.etender.up.nic.in](http://www.etender.up.nic.in) पर अपलोड की जा सकती है। भाग-1 खुलने की तिथि 29.11.2019, समय 13.00 बजे, भाग-2 (प्रॉइस पार्स) खुलने की तिथि तदनुसार ई-वेबसाईट पर सूचिदा की जायेगी। निविदा प्रश्न मूल्य ₹ 236/- मात्र (₹ 200.00 + जी.एस.टी. @18% अतिरिक्त), ई-निविदा खुलने की तिथि को अवकाश की स्थिति में निविदा अगले कार्य दिवस पर खोली जायेगी। विस्तृत जानकारी एवं अन्य संशोधनों आदि के सम्बन्ध में सूचना एवं निविदा प्रश्न डाउनलोड करने हेतु ई-टेंडरिंग वेबसाईट [www.etender.up.nic.in](http://www.etender.up.nic.in) देखी जा सकती है। सभी निविदा प्रश्न अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारिषद - तृतीय, लखनऊ के पक्ष में एनओएफपीडी / आरओडीजीएफपीडी द्वारा मुहताम कर प्रश्न डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। कृपया विस्तृत जानकारी, डाउनलोड, अन्य संशोधनों एवं ई-निविदा प्रस्तुत करने के दिनांक तक विस्तार आदि के सम्बन्ध में ई-टेंडरिंग वेबसाईट [www.etender.up.nic.in](http://www.etender.up.nic.in) देखी जा सकती है। अधोस्तसहारकाल को बिना कोई कारण बताये किसी भी ई-निविदा को अवैधकार करने का अधिकार सुरक्षित है।  
**अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारिषद - तृतीय, लखनऊ**, एन.एल.डी.सी. परिसर, विद्युत खण्ड, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ - 226010, पत्रांक 1147, दिनांक 06.11.2019 "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचायें"

# 'Lucknow's AAQ deteriorated after Diwali'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n LUCKNOW

The IITR post-monsoon Ambient Air Quality report released on Wednesday shows that the air quality was better in the month of October because of the extended monsoon with the state capital registering a drop of 25 per cent in the PM2.5 and PM10 levels compared to last year.

However, after Diwali, the PM2.5 pollution level increased by 200 per cent in comparison to that observed before the Festival of Light.

Head of IITR environment division RC Burman said the study was carried out during October-November to assess the status of air quality by monitoring some selected air pollutants namely RSPM or PM10, FPM or PM2.5, SO2, NO2, trace elements and noise level at nine representative locations categorised as residential (four), commercial (four) and industrial (one) areas in Lucknow city.

Burman said the results of the study were presented in three phases - Phase-I (before Diwali from October first week to third week), Phase-II (during Diwali festival from October 26 to 29), and Phase-III (after Diwali during first week of November).

The results of Phase-I show the 24-hour concentration of PM10 to be in the range of 63.8-313.3 µg/m3 with an average of 159.0 µg/m3. The 24-hour concentration of PM2.5 was found to be in the range of 32.0-199.0 µg/m3 with an average of 80.1 µg/m3

The average values of PM10 and PM2.5, irrespective of locations, were found to be above the permissible limit of 100 µg/m3 for PM10 and 60 µg/m3 for PM2.5 prescribed by CPCB in 2009).

Twenty-four hour concentrations of SO2 and NO2 were found to be in the range of 3.1-22.7 µg/m3 and 17.1-85.6 µg/m3 with average concentrations of 10.2 and 35.4 µg/m3 respectively. All the mean values were below the permissible limit of 80 µg/m3 for both SO2 and NO2 prescribed by the CPCB in 2009.

The scientist said that the results

## Gomti Nagar, Aliganj most polluted areas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n LUCKNOW

The IITR Post-monsoon Air Ambient Quality Report-2019 shows Gomti Nagar and Aliganj to be the most polluted residential areas and Charbagh the most polluted commercial area in the state capital.

In terms of PM10 levels, Gomti Nagar was the most polluted residential area in Phase-I monitoring in the month of October and Charbagh the most polluted commercial areas.

In Phase-III monitoring in the month of November for PM10 levels, Aliganj was the most polluted residential area and Charbagh the most polluted commercial area.

In case of PM2.5 levels, in the first phase, Gomti Nagar was the most polluted residential areas and Charbagh the most polluted commercial area.

In the third phase monitoring of PM2.5 levels, Aliganj was the most polluted residential area and Charbagh the most polluted commercial areas.

In Phase-I, the average 24-hour concentrations of PM10 in Aliganj, Vikas Nagar, Indira Nagar and Gomti Nagar were in the range of 142.9 µg/m3 to 165.4 µg/m3 with an average of 154.0 µg/m3.

In commercial areas (Charbagh, Alambagh, Aminabad and Chowk), the average concentrations of PM10 were in the range of 138.6 µg/m3 to 197.4 µg/m3 with an average of 165.4 µg/m3.

In industrial area (Amausi), the average concentration of PM10 was 153.7 µg/m3.

The maximum 24-hour mean concentration of PM10 was observed in Gomti Nagar residential area at 165.4 µg/m3, Charbagh commercial areas at 197.4 µg/m3. All the values of PM10 were

of Phase-III monitoring showed the 24-hour concentrations of PM10 to be in the range of 367.9-579.8 µg/m3. The PM2.5 was found to be in the range of 174.1-401.8 µg/m3, whereas SO2 and NO2 values of all the locations were found to be in the range of 5.8-23.6 and 40.3-184.8 µg/m3 respectively.

After Diwali, concentrations of PM10, PM2.5, SO2 and NO2 were found to be 194.1, 257.0, 17.1 and 147.7% higher than before Diwali festival levels respectively.

Burman said there was a direct link between air pollution and human health hazards.

"Air pollution is a serious issue in

above the prescribed National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) of 100 µg/m3 (standard for industrial, residential, rural and other areas) respectively.

In Phase-III monitoring in Aliganj, Vikas Nagar, Indira Nagar and Gomti Nagar residential

**In industrial area (Amausi), the average concentration of PM10 was 153.7 µg/m3. The maximum 24-hour mean concentration of PM10 was observed in Gomti Nagar residential area at 165.4 µg/m3, Charbagh commercial areas at 197.4 µg/m3**

areas, the 24-hour average concentrations of PM10 were in the range of 386.3 µg/m3 to 496.6 µg/m3 with an average of 441.3 µg/m3. In Charbagh, Alambagh, Aminabad and Chowk commercial areas, the average concentrations of PM10 were in the range of 471.7 µg/m3 to 513.2 µg/m3 with an average of 499.8 µg/m3.

In the industrial area (Amausi), the average concentration of PM10 was 425.2 µg/m3.

The maximum 24-hour mean concentration of PM10 was 496.5 µg/m3 in Aliganj residential area and 513.2 µg/m3 in Charbagh commercial area. Overall 24-hour mean PM2.5 concentration during third phase was found to be 194.1% higher

than the first phase. Besides, tyre-road surface friction dust, brake friction dust, re-suspension of roadside soil dust etc. create major impact on human health. Once the air pollutants are released in the atmosphere they are subjected to diffusion, dilution, transport and chemical reactions. Several scientific studies suggest that the effects of air pollution on human health are largely on cardio respiratory system which includes exacerbation of asthma, reduced lung function, myocardial infarction and progression of atherosclerosis and cardio-vascular disease," he added.

The scientist pointed out that the major sources of urban air pollution were burning of fossil fuel like petrol, diesel, CNG and LNG by vehicles and generator sets, coal burning by the industries in and around the city area and burning of municipal solid waste etc.

er than the first phase.

The Phase-I report shows that the 24-hour average concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) in Aliganj, Vikas Nagar, Indira Nagar and Gomti Nagar residential areas were in the range of 71.1 µg/m3 to 93.6 µg/m3 with an average of 79.3 µg/m3. In Charbagh, Alambagh, Aminabad and Chowk commercial areas, the average concentrations of PM2.5 were in the range of 66.5 µg/m3 to 109.6 µg/m3 with an average of 80.9 µg/m3.

In industrial area (Amausi), the average concentration of PM2.5 was 80.1 µg/m3.

The maximum 24-hour mean concentration of PM2.5 was 93.6 µg/m3 in Gomti Nagar residential area and 109.6 µg/m3 in Charbagh commercial area. All the values of PM2.5 were above the prescribed NAAQS of 60 µg/m3 for industrial, residential, rural and other areas.

In Phase-III, the 24-hour average concentrations of PM2.5 in Aliganj, Vikas Nagar, Indira Nagar and Gomti Nagar in residential areas were in the range of 184.2 µg/m3 to 286.5 µg/m3 with an average of 226.1 µg/m3.

In commercial areas (Charbagh, Alambagh, Aminabad and Chowk) the average concentrations of PM2.5 were in the range of 304.3 µg/m3 to 390.8 µg/m3 with an average of 356.9 µg/m3.

In industrial area (Amausi), the average concentration of PM2.5 was 242.0 µg/m3. The maximum 24-hour mean concentration of PM2.5 was observed in Aliganj residential area (286.5 µg/m3) and Aminabad commercial area (390.8 µg/m3).

Overall 24-hour mean PM2.5 concentration during third phase was found 257.0 per cent higher than the first phase.

Lucknow had shown some positive impact on air pollution along the metro route because of lesser road traffic from Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport to Munshi Pulia. Besides, he said, the construction of flyovers and expressways in and around the city had also reduced air pollution levels of the city to some extent.

"However, recently evolved city infrastructure usage is yet to reach the benchmark as desired. Further rapid growth of population concentration and their activities and larger demand for goods and services in Lucknow city may lead to increased pollution," he added.

## Hardoi SDM injured in road mishap

PNS n LUCKNOW

Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Hardoi, Atul Prakash Srivastava, was injured in a road mishap in Malihabad police station area on Wednesday night.

He had come to Lucknow for some official work and was returning to Hardoi by his official car which overturned in Kasba locality of Malihabad.

The Malihabad SHO said an Alto car, which was ahead of SDM's car, suddenly took a turn and the SDM's driver lost control over the wheels and the car overturned. The SDM was admitted to a private hospital in Alambagh. The police spokesman said the SDM was out of danger.

## BA student ends life

Lucknow (PNS): A BA first year student ended her life in her house in Madioan on Wednesday afternoon.

As per reports, the girl, Savita Bharti (19), was found hanging from the grill of the ventilator with a dupatta tied around her neck. No suicide note was recovered from the room. The family said Savita was depressed as she feared that she would not fare well in her exam.

**DUPED:** Madioan resident Abhilash Chakroverty and his friend were accused of duping a woman doctor of ₹75,000 in name of facilitating her a job under AYUSH scheme in Madioan. The brother of Chandrakala Giri, a homoeopath of Bahraich, Dilip Giri was acquainted with Abhilash who offered her help to get the job. Abhilash demanded ₹1.5 lakh. Chandrakala transferred half of the amount in the bank account of Abhilash who neither provided the job nor returned the money.

**PARADIP PORT TRUST e-TENDER NOTICE**  
**Name of the work:** Cleaning of level crossing, Clamping of hand Lever points, Vacuum release etc. inside Port prohibited area.  
**Estimate Cost:** Rs. 1,03,68,162/- excluding GST.  
**Last date & time of submission of bid:** 28.11.2019 up to 16:30 Hrs.  
Refer our website for details : <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>  
Traffic Manager,  
PPT/PR/452/19-20 Dated: 13.11.2019

## JP CONVENTION CENTRE LDA demand for more funds rejected by govt

Lucknow (PNS): The state government on Wednesday turned down a demand of Lucknow Development Authority for release of Rs 13.50 crore more for the Jai Prakash Narayan International Convention Centre in Gomti Nagar.

LDA chief financial controller RK Singh in October had asked the state government to release the fund for completion of guest house and sport complex, making changes in the existing car parking lot, and to install the latest fire fighting equipment in the complex.

However, the state government on Wednesday rejected the demand without giving any reason.

Interestingly, the LDA administration has only Rs 43 crore with it to carry out the civil work at the convention centre.

LDA Vice-Chairman PN Singh has called a meeting to discuss the situation and chalk out a plan to tackle it.

Singh said all efforts would be made to ensure that the ongoing civil works did not stop and the project, launched in 2016, was completed at the earliest.

A sum of Rs 995.59 crore has already been spent on the project but it is still incomplete. If the project is not completed, it will prove to be a white elephant for the LDA and the money spent on it would go waste as the development authority is not in a position to maintain such a giant project. It is said that the financial health of the LDA is not good.

It has been suggested that the state government take over the prestigious project for its speedy completion and public use to generate revenue.

## Girl jumps from moving tempo to save modesty

Lucknow (PNS): A BEd student fractured her arm and leg after she jumped from a moving tempo to save her modesty from the tempo driver in Bakshi Ka Talab police station area on Wednesday morning.

The girl was admitted to a government hospital and the BKT police are hunting for the tempo driver.

As per reports, the girl left for her college by a tempo at around 10 am. When the tempo reached a lonely stretch of the road, the driver started talking with her and asked her mobile phone number.

When the girl refused to give him

## Probe ordered into homeguard payment scam in GB Nagar

Lucknow (PNS): The Uttar Pradesh police on Wednesday ordered a high level probe after detecting a scam in payments to homeguards in Gautam Buddha Nagar district.

DGP OP Singh said a three-member committee had been set up and the probe would cover the entire state. Principal Secretary (Home Guard) Anil Kumar said here that the probe would be ordered if such irregularities were found in other districts. The committee sent to Noida includes senior staff officer of DG (Home Guard) Sunil Kumar, district Commandant of Mirzapur, Shaileendra Pratap Singh, and district Commandant of Baghat Neeta Bharati. The committee in its initial

## CM reviews e-way projects ... says no compromise on quality

PNS n LUCKNOW

Asking officials not to compromise on quality of work, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that Purvanchal Expressway, Ganga Expressway and Defence Industrial Corridor would become the lifeline of the economy of Uttar Pradesh. He also said that district magistrates who were not active in the field should be given forced retirement.

"The project managers should remain at their respective sites so that there is no compromise on quality. If any flaws are found in the audit, the accountability will be fixed on the project manager concerned," Yogi said.

The Chief Minister on Wednesday reviewed the works of Purvanchal Expressway, Ganga Expressway and Defence Industrial Corridor at Lok Bhawan here. He expressed his displeasure over the delay in land acquisition in Sultanpur, Azamgarh, Mau and Ghazipur for Purvanchal Expressway.

The Chief Minister said that district magistrates who were not working should be removed from the field and if they are above 50 years of age they should be given forced retirement and sent home. The Chief Minister said that the Chief Secretary would review projects above Rs 50 crore after every 15 days through video conferencing with the officials concerned. Projects above Rs 100

crore would be monitored by the officials at the Chief Minister's secretariat and every month the Chief Minister himself would review them through video conferencing. The Chief Minister said that in these projects, bridges, culverts, ROBs, flyovers should be built on time. He also asked the officials to write letter to the Railway Ministry and ask it to speed up construction of ROBs.

He asked the officials to ensure construction of flyovers, bridges, culverts and ROBs started within a month-and-half.

Reviewing the progress of Ganga Expressway, the Chief Minister said that work should be started on the project with immediate approval. He directed the officials present in the meeting to immediately stop the purchase and sale of land in these areas by issuing notifications.

Reviewing the Defence Industrial Corridor, the Chief Minister said that there were leather-related industries in Kanpur and Agra and they should also be linked with the corridor.

The surrounding industries involved in traditional trade should be linked with this project, he added.

Cabinet minister Satish Mahana, Chief Secretary RK Tiwari, Additional Chief Secretary Awanish Kumar Awasthi, Information Director Shishir and other officials were present in the meeting.

## CITY BRIEFS



### CJS VISIT HISTORICAL MONUMENTS

The Presidents, Prime Ministers, Law Ministers, Chief Justices, judges and many other high dignitaries of 71 countries, who participated in the 20th International Conference of Chief Justices of the World at City Montessori School went out for the city tour and visited the historical monuments and experienced the 'Ganga Jamuni Tahzeeb' of Lucknow.

The auditions were held in junior, middle, senior and yuva kalakaar category. The finalists of all the categories will be invited to perform at the grand finals to be held in December.

### SCIENCE FESTIVAL

Regional Science City organised a science festival, which was inaugurated by DIOS Mukesh Kumar Singh. At the festival, more than 60 projects are on display including 30 individual projects and 35 team projects, highlighting the global problems like energy, transport, food, agriculture, eco bill board, etc.

### AUDITIONS

The saangeet milon auditions were held at the St Joseph Inter College on Wednesday.

## EPF scam: Power staff up in arms, to stage demonstration today

PNS n LUCKNOW

Even as the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Uttar Pradesh Police arrested a broker in connection with alleged unauthorised investment of power employees provident fund in a private housing finance company, the power employees are up in arms against the Yogi Adityanath government over the scam.

The power employees along with their family members will stage demonstration at the Shakti Bhawan here on Thursday. Power Employees Joint Action Committee convenor Shaileendra Dubey said here on Wednesday that the demonstration would be held in protest against the apathy of the state government in the matter and delay in takeover of the investigation by the CBI.

He said no senior officer involved in the scam had been arrested so far.

Dubey said the power employees were demanding an undertaking from the state government for payment of provident fund and arrest of former UPPLC chairman, who was instrumental in investing the employees provident fund in the private company DHFL. "We have decided that the family members

of the employees, including their spouses, mother, father, sisters, brothers and children, will stage demonstration in front of the UP Power Corporation Limited headquarters, Shakti Bhawan, on Thursday mornings," Dubey said in a statement here.

Meanwhile, the agitation by the power employees continued for the ninth consecutive day on Wednesday. They are demanding stern action against the guilty officials and government's commitment on payment of provident fund to the employees. The Power Employee's Joint Action Committee has raised question over the enquiry entrusted to the EOW by the UP government. The committee said most of the investment in DHFL was made after the BJP came to power in March 2017 and only Rs 18 crore were invested in the private company during the previous Samajwadi Party regime.

It alleged that to shield the senior UPPLC officials, mostly IAS officers, the state government was delaying the probe by the CBI and the investigation of the EOW was just eyewash.

The EOW has arrested Abhinav, son of former general secretary of UPPLC Employees' Trust PK Gupta, who is said to be the broker in the investment of the fund in DHFL.

ON TRIBUNALS

# SC strikes down rules in Finance Act 2017

## Congress hails apex court's decision

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday said the Supreme Court decision on Government diluting appointments to different tribunals will have far-reaching consequences on any future attempts by the Modi dispensation to abuse the money bill route. It sought a debate on the issue in Parliament.

"I wholeheartedly welcome the decision of the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court of India in my case. I am deeply grateful to the Supreme Court for this decision," party leader Jairam Ramesh said.

"It will have far reaching consequences on any future attempts by the Modi Government to abuse the money bill route and is also a



reminder to future Governments that any attempt at diluting our institutions will not be allowed," he said. Ramesh, who is a petitioner in the case, said "it is important to have a discussion on the money bill in Parliament." He also claimed that there has been misuse of Article 110 by the Government in the last three years, whereby it has been converting key bills as money bills for avoiding a vote and passage in Rajya Sabha.

He said the five-judge bench wants this issue to be sent to a larger bench and thus will have its consequence on the Aadhaar bill judgement, which was also given by a five-judge Constitution bench where the Supreme Court has said it is a money bill.

"It is a victory not for the Congress. This is a very big victory especially for the Rajya Sabha and democracy and it is a defeat of the BJP," he said. Ramesh in his petition had challenged the Finance Act of 2017 (as notified on March 31, 2017) and the rules framed thereunder (notified on June 1, 2017) through which the Government had sought to dilute appointments to nineteen different tribunals, including crucial institutions like National Green Tribunal and Central Administrative

Tribunal, among others. Through the rules, the government extended executive control over these institutions by altering the composition of the selection committees and vastly downgrading the qualifications and experience required to staff these bodies, he alleged.

"This was done with the furtive intention of vesting greater control in the central government on the appointments of judges to these judicial and quasi-judicial bodies," Ramesh said. "Knowing fully well the Finance Act (and the Rules framed thereunder) would not pass Parliamentary muster, the Modi Government classified it as a money bill so as to prevent voting in the Rajya Sabha," he said, adding that the ruling dispensation lacks numbers there.

# CRPF conducts security review at Sonia's residence

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is conducting a security review of Congress chief Sonia Gandhi's residence and related arrangements after taking her protective cover from the Special Protection Group (SPG).

After the security audit of Gandhi's residence, commandos and other security paraphernalia will be tweaked as per the assessments and requirements, sources said without any further elaboration.

Earlier this month the Centre had decided to withdraw the SPG protection of Gandhi, her son Rahul and daughter Priyanka Gandhi Vadra after a review of their threat perception by the security agencies. Following the removal of SPG cover to the Gandhis, the Centre had accorded Z+ protective cover and tasked the CRPF to take over their security.

**Centre had accorded Z+ protective cover and tasked the CRPF to take over their security**

The threat perception of each SPG protectee is reviewed every year as provided in the SPG Act. The current review indicates a reduced threat perception for Gandhis and their security can be handled by other forces, government officials had said after the decision.

The Special Protection Group was raised in 1985 after the assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to secure the Prime Minister and their immediate family members. Former Prime

Minister and their family members were brought under the SPG cover after the assassination of former PM Rajiv Gandhi in 1991.

In August, the SPG cover of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was also lifted and accorded Z+ category security protection by CRPF commandos.

The SPG security cover entails Advance Security Liaison by the commandos who sanitise the venue in advance to be visited by the protectee and a three-layer security ring is in place to secure the VIP from outer security cordon manned by the local police to elite force's commandos in the proximate security zone.

The CRPF has a VIP Security Wing with a strength of about six battalions (6,000 personnel). However, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) is the designated Central paramilitary for VIP security.

# Centre extends moratorium period for sugar mills

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has extended the moratorium period for repayments by six more months as the ₹15,000 crore soft loan scheme for sugar mills is moving at a snail's pace. Now, the moratorium period is one-and-a-half years. A moratorium period is a time during the loan term when the borrower is not required to make any repayment.

The Centre had announced the loan package in two tranches — first in June 2018 amounting to ₹4,440 crore and the other in March 2019 of ₹10,540 crore. The objective was to help millers in clearing cane arrears and divert surplus sugar for ethanol manufacturing. A soft

loan is a loan that is given at a subsidised interest rate.

"When the soft loan scheme was launched to augment ethanol production in the country, one year moratorium was provided. This has now been extended to 1.5 years in the interest of sugar mills and farmers," a highly placed source said. A notification in this regard will be issued soon, the source added.

Of 418 applications for the loan, the Food Ministry has found 282 eligible. Of this, 114 applications have been cleared for loans amounting to ₹6,139.08 crore, as per official data. However, banks have sanctioned the loan to 45 applicants and disbursed ₹900 crore to 33 applicants till September-

end, the data showed.

At present, 3-4 lakh tonne of sugar gets diverted for ethanol making. With creation of additional capacity under the scheme, 9-10 lakh tonne of sugar is expected to be diverted for ethanol production. Sugar mills have supplied 175 crore litres of ethanol to oil marketing companies (OMCs) till October 22 of the 2018-19 season (October-September) and helped them achieve 5.2 per cent blending with petrol.

Cane arrears still remain high at ₹9,000 Cr so far this year based on sugarcane price fixed by both Centre and States, as per the Ministry data. There is a sugar glut in India, the world's second largest sugar producer after Brazil.

# Onions continue to sell at ₹80-₹100 per kg

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Despite various measures in place by the State and Central Governments, onions continue to be sold at ₹80-₹100 per kg in many States across India. In a bid to get rid of shortage of onion in domestic market, the Agriculture Ministry on Wednesday extended relaxed fumigation norms for imported onions up to December 31. Farmers and traders say the onion price is expected to be lowered by December end.

Retail prices of onion in the country have remained high for more than a month due to 30-40 per cent decline in kharif onion output because of heavy rains in growing States. The excessive rain in key onion pro-

ducing states across country such as Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar, is one of the main reasons that have led to a shortfall in its supply as 50 per cent crops of onion has been damaged. Another reason for price hike is believed to be the delay in the arrival of monsoon, which in turn delayed sowing. This resulted in a cascading effect on arrival in the mandis.

On the other hand, the Income Tax Department has also surveyed and examining onion traders in Maharashtra, Delhi and Madhya Pradesh following reports of alleged hoarding of the commodity amid its skyrocketing prices.

**Income Tax Dept has also surveyed and examining onion traders in Maha, Delhi and Madhya Pradesh**

Ministry had liberalised fumigation provisions under the Plant Quarantine (PQ) Order, 2003 till November 30 to facilitate import of the key kitchen staple from Afghanistan, Egypt, Dubai, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Iran to boost availability and check price rise. In its latest order, the Ministry has extended these relaxed provisions till December 31 for onion imports with some con-

ditions. Traders who have imported onions without fumigation or having endorsement of such treatment on phytosanitary certificate (PSC) will be allowed to fumigate in India through an accredited treatment provider, it said.

The consignment will be inspected thoroughly by quarantine officials and released only if found free from pests and diseases of concern to India, it said. Also, such consignments of onions will not be subjected to the four times additional inspection fees on account of non-compliance of conditions under the 2003 PQ Order, it added. Presently, imported onions are allowed in the country after the commodity is fumigated with methyl bromide and certified

by the exporting nation. Importers are required to pay huge charges if found in non-compliance with this provision.

As onion prices fail to cool down, the Government has decided to increase the availability through import of about 1 lakh tonnes of onion through public trading company MMTTC, which has already floated tender for about 4,000 tonnes of imports. The Government is facilitating private imports as well.

Private traders have informed the Government that they have placed order for import of 2,400 tonnes of onion which would reach India by month-end. Another 2,600 tonnes will be contracted for arrival in December, sources said.

# IIT Guwahati develops technology that can assess quality of milk



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Researchers from IIT Guwahati have developed a paper-based technology that can assess the quality and freshness of milk within 13 minutes by changing its colour. No special equipment or instrument will be required.

Pasteurisation is commonly used to kill the microbes in milk and various tests are used to ensure the effectiveness of the process, according to the researchers led by Pranjal Chandra, an assistant professor at IIT Guwahati.

Commonly used tests such as the methylene blue test, are time consuming, and could take many hours for colour changes to indicate the presence and absence of microbes.

Commercial phenol-based tests require sophisticated spectrophotometers and involve multi-step procedures, which necessitates dedicated testing centres and skilled personnel.

However, to cut-short this time, the research team which included Kuldeep Mahato, research scholar developed a simple visual detection technique to detect the quality of milk, without the need for special equipment and instruments.

"It would be useful if the quality of milk can be tested at the point of collection of milk or even in the home kitchen," said Dr Chandra, adding that such testing requires easy-to-operate and portable detection kits.

He explained, "Alkaline Phosphatase (ALP) is a metalloprotein found naturally in

raw milk samples and is considered an important biomarker in quality control of milk". It is found in raw milk and is destroyed during pasteurisation. "ALP is also found in higher amounts in the case of milk derived from animals with infection in the mammary glands. Detection of ALP in milk can thus point to inadequate pasteurisation and perhaps contamination."

"Despite ALP's recognisable detection potential in native milk, the multi-step nature, and requirement of sophisticated bulky analytical instruments and trained personnel, to detect ALP, limit their use as a sensor of milk quality in remote settings and in home kitchens," added Chandra.

The researchers used simple filter paper, chemically modified it, and loaded it with a recognition element — anti-ALP — which captures the ALP present in the milk.

Upon treatment with the colour-forming compound 'BCIP', the captured complex of ALP forms a blue-green coloured precipitate, that otherwise does not give any colour in the absence of ALP.

The intensity of the colour indicates the amount of ALP present. The researchers used a smartphone to capture the image of the colour. They used the RGB (Red Green Blue) filter in the phone to profile the colour obtained, which could be co-related to the concentration. The researchers' work has been published in the journal, Biosensors, and Bioelectronics.

# Pneumonia takes toll on kids under age of 5: UNICEF

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Pneumonia is taking toll on India's kids under the age of five years with one of them succumbing to every 4 minutes to the preventive disease last year, according to a study by Save the Children, UNICEF and Every Breath Counts.

It said that India was among the top five countries responsible for over half of the child deaths due to the disease globally that year. Overall, pneumonia claimed 1,27,000 under-five children in 2018. Pneumonia is an inflammatory disease affecting the lung. It is characterised by an accumulation of fluid in the alveoli, resulting in the obstruction of normal breathing. It is usually caused due to air pollution besides poor food intake.

Dr Rajesh Khanna, Deputy Director of Health and Nutrition, Save the Children said that "Acute malnutrition is associated with more than half of childhood pneumonia deaths. Indoor air pollution contributes to 22 per cent and outdoor air pollution contributes to 27 per cent of these deaths."

Just five countries were responsible for more than half of child pneumonia deaths - Nigeria (162,000), India (127,000), Pakistan (58,000), the Democratic Republic of Congo (40,000) and Ethiopia (32,000), it said.

Globally, pneumonia is the major cause of paediatric mortality, especially in children under 5, claiming the lives of more than 800,000 kids every year, more than 2,000 every day.

In India 5 per 1,000 live births under five mortality rate due to pneumonia in 2018, the study said.

**Overall, pneumonia claimed 1,27,000 under-five children in 2018**

"In India, 14 per cent of child deaths were due to pneumonia in 2017, and it was the second biggest killer of children under-five in 2017 (after wasting). Pneumonia killed more than 1,27,000 children under-five in 2018 - more than 14 children every hour," the study said.

It further said USD 16 was spent by the government on health per person in 2016 in India.

"Every day, nearly 2,200 children under the age of five die from pneumonia, a curable and mostly preventable disease. Strong global commitment and increased investments are critical to the fight against this disease," Henrietta Fore, Executive Director of UNICEF said.

Pneumonia is caused by bacteria, viruses or fungi, and leaves children fighting for breath as their lungs fill with pus and fluid.

Globally, more children under the age of five died from pneumonia in 2018 than from any other disease. Around 437,000 children under five died due to diarrhoea and 272,000 due to malaria.



## CJI OFFICE WITHIN RTI AMBIT

Further, while applying the proportionality test, the type and nature of the information is a relevant factor," it said.

It said the transparency and openness in judicial appointments "juxtaposed" with confidentiality of deliberations remain one of the most delicate and complex areas.

With the passage of time, there has been a change as concerns have been expressed on disclosure of the names and the reasons for those who had not been approved by the collegium, it added.

Deciding three appeals, the judgement said it was not possible to answer these questions in absolute terms, and "in each case, the public interest test would be applied to weigh the scales and on balance determine whether information should be furnished or would be exempt."

Consequently, the top court dismissed first appeal filed by CPIO against the HC verdict asking it to furnish information on SC judges who had declared their assets.

It, however, partly allowed the other two appeals of the CPIO of the apex court in which it was directed to disclose complete correspondence with the then CJI as a news report alleged that a Union Minister had approached a HC Judge to influence his judicial decisions. The second appeal pertained to seeking file notes on appointment of three judges in SC while superseding some senior HC judges.

The verdict referred these two cases to the CPIO to re-examine them after following procedure under the RTI Act.

## SC VERDICT BLESSING IN DISGUISE FOR BSY

Justices NV Ramana, Sanjiv Khanna and Krishna Murari said the Speaker, being a neutral person, is expected to act independently while conducting the proceedings of the House or adjudication petitions.

The constitutional responsibility ended upon the Speaker has to be scrupulously followed and his political affiliations cannot come in the way of adjudication, the apex court said.

If the Speaker is not able to disassociate from his political party and behaves contrary to the spirit of the neutrality and independence then such person does not deserve to be reposed with public trust and confidence, it added.

The Bench also deprecated the manner in which the disqualified MLAs directly approached it without first moving High Court.

The court said its verdict is based on facts and circumstance of the case and does not interfere in the Speaker's power to disqualify members.

Some of these disqualified MLAs had argued in the apex court that they have an "indefeasible right" to resign as members of the Assembly and the decision by the then Speaker to disqualify them smacks of

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

### “vengeance” and “mala fide”

During arguments in the matter, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the Karnataka Congress, had contended that the then Speaker, who was the master of the Assembly, had exercised his jurisdiction to disqualify these MLAs and his decision cannot be questioned.

Sibal had also submitted that "the matter needs to be referred to a Constitution Bench as it raises matters of grave constitutional importance".

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the office of the Karnataka Assembly Speaker, had submitted that under the scheme of the Constitution, a lawmaker has a right to resign and the Speaker should accept it. The current Assembly Speaker is V Hegde Kageri.

### 50:50 SENA'S POST-POLL ARTIFICE, ASSERTS SHAH

145 in the 288-MLAs strong Maharashtra Assembly. But the State plunged into political uncertainty after both the allies entered into a tussle for power. While the Shiv Sena claimed that it was assured a 50:50 power-sharing deal in the State after winning the elections, the BJP denied making any such promise.

The Shiv Sena pulled out its lone Minister Arvind Sawant from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Cabinet, signalling the end of partnership between the two parties in Maharashtra. Shiv Sena since then opened negotiations with NDA's rival alliance partners NCP and Congress.

### NCP, CONG TALK CMP AS BIDS ON FOR GOVT

had met Uddhav on Tuesday night and set the tone for the deliberations among the three parties in the coming days.

Uddhav, accompanied by his junior party colleagues Vinayak Raut and Milind Narvekar, met State Congress president Balasaheb Thorat, senior party leaders Ashok Chavan and Manikrao Thakre, at the Hotel Trident for little over 45 minutes.

Talking briefly to mediapersons after the meeting, Uddhav said: "Talks have begun on a right note. I will let you know about the outcome of our talks at a proper time".

Thorat said he and his senior party colleagues held a "courtesy meeting" with Uddhav, in the context of the deliberations that senior Central leaders had with NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Tuesday. "Ours was as courtesy meeting with Uddhavji. First, we would like to arrive at mutual understanding with the NCP on issues relating to the Government. After that, we - both the parties - will meet the Shiv Sena leaders... At today's meeting, we discussed with Uddhavji as to how move forward," Thorat said.

Before holding talks with Uddhav, the State Congress leaders - Thorat, Ashok

Chavan and Manikrao Thakre - met Shiv Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut at the Leelavati Hospital, where Raut was recuperating after an angioplasty carried out on him on Monday night. Raut was discharged from the hospital later in the afternoon.

Though there has so far not been any formula discussion on the power-sharing arrangement among the three parties, a power-sharing formula emerged from the Congress-NCP camp. Under this formula, the Shiv Sena and NCP - which have 56 and 54 MLAs respectively - will share the post of Chief Minister for a period of two and half years each, while the Congress - with a strength of 44 MLAs - will get the deputy Chief Minister's post for the entire period of five years. Similarly, the Sena and the NCP will get 14 ministries each, while the Congress will get 11 ministries.

The formula does not throw light on the crucial Speaker's post. All the three parties are vying for this post, as the Speaker plays a crucial role in the current Assembly in which there may be frequent battles over numbers during the next five years.

Sources in both the NCP and Congress said that they were agreeable to Sena president Uddhav Thackeray being nominated as the Chief Minister of the three-party for the first two and a half years.

Earlier in the day, the NCP and Congress nominated five leaders each for holding meetings and drafting the CMP for the three-party Government. While leaders like Jayant Patil, Ajit Pawar, Chhagan Bhujuwal, Dhananjay Munde and Nawab Malik will represent the NCP, the team of the Congress will comprise Balasaheb Thorat, Ashok Chavan, Prithviraj Chavan, Vijay Wadetiwar and Manikrao Thakre.

### SC DOUBTS EFFICACY AS MORE ODD-EVEN MULLED

Was 454 at 3.30 pm. Rohini was the most-polluted area with an AQI of 486, followed by Nehru Nagar (484) and Jahangirpuri (483). Faridabad (442), Ghaziabad (464), Greater Noida (460), Gurugram (448) and Noida (468) also choked an extremely polluted air.

While talking about extending the odd-even scheme beyond November 15, Kejriwal appealed to Opposition parties to shun their resistance to the scheme. "Pollution has increased drastically. All of Delhi is demanding the odd-even and at such a time the Opposition should support the people's wish," he said. The scheme, implemented from November 4, is to end on November 15. "If the need arises, we will extend it (odd-even scheme)," the CM said. Kejriwal blamed stubble burning in neighbouring States for episodes of rising air pollution in Delhi.

"I remember German Chancellor Angela Merkel was in Delhi a few days ago... when a public health emergency was declared. What kind of image of Delhi she must have carried to her country?" he said.

SC VERDICT ON KARNATAKA MLAs

# Ruling against conspiracy of ex-Speaker, Sidda, says BSY

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa on Wednesday welcomed the Supreme Court decision to allow disqualified MLAs to contest polls, and termed it as verdict against the "conspiracy" of the then Speaker KR Ramesh Kumar and Congress leader Siddaramaiah.

Expressing confidence that BJP would win all the 15 seats, where bypolls are scheduled to be held on December 5, he said the party would decide on giving tickets to disqualified MLAs.

"The whole country was eagerly awaiting this verdict. The previous Speaker Ramesh Kumar had conspired along with Siddaramaiah (Congress leader) — Supreme Court has given clear decision to it,"

Yediyurappa said. Welcoming the court decision to allow disqualified MLAs to contest the polls, he said, preparations have begun to win all the seats.

"From tomorrow itself all our ministers and leaders will take responsibility. We will put all efforts to win all the seats," he added.

The Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld the disqualification of 17 Congress-JD(S) MLAs by the then Speaker KR Ramesh Kumar but allowed them to contest the December five bypolls in the state.

The court struck down the portion of the order of then Speaker by which the legislators were disqualified till the end of the 15th Karnataka Assembly in 2023.

Responding to a question

whether disqualified MLAs would get BJP tickets, Yediyurappa said, "we will discuss at the core committee meeting today and take decision by evening."

Asked if the 17 disqualified MLAs — 14 of the Congress and three belonging to the JDS — will be joining BJP, he said, "wait till evening."

They are all be coming back in the evening, I will discuss with them, also with national leaders and take an appropriate decision."

Bypolls to 15 of 17 seats represented by disqualified MLAs, whose resignation and absence from the trust vote led to the fall of the Congress-JD(S) coalition Government, and made way for the BJP to come to power, will be held on December five.

# Cong demands K'taka Govt dismissal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday called for the dismissal of the Yediyurappa Government in Karnataka, saying the Supreme Court's decision upholding the decision disqualifying 17 Congress and JD(S) MLAs but allowing them to contest the bypolls had exposed BJP's 'Operation Kamal' in the State.

"The Supreme Court's decision has exposed the BJP's 'Operation Kamal' in Karnataka... The Yediyurappa Government is an 'illegitimate' Government in terms of law and constitution and should be dismissed immediately," Congress spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said. He also asked for an inquiry into the role of the BJP leadership.

"Public opinion and democratic values demand that not should only the 'illegitimate' Yediyurappa government be sacked, but the BJP's conspiracy to bring down an elected Government on the basis of



by the BJP to destroy democratic values through shameless display of money power... The Supreme Court decision vindicates the stand of the Speaker almost 95 per cent. It shows

"I welcome the judgement of the Supreme Court which has now permitted all 17 MLAs to contest the elections," Vishwanath told reporters.

The speaker had disqualified the 17 legislators of the ruling Congress-JD(S) coalition ahead of a trust vote in July.

Then Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy resigned after losing the trust vote, paving the way for the BJP-led Government in the state under Yediyurappa.

Bypolls to 15 out of these 17 Assembly seats which fell vacant following the disqualification of MLAs are scheduled on December 5 and candidates are required to file their nomination papers between November 11 and November 18.

# K'taka ex-Speaker Ramesh Kumar heaves sigh of relief

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Former Karnataka Speaker KR Ramesh Kumar on Wednesday expressed "sigh of relief" as the Supreme Court upheld his decision to disqualify 17 Congress-JD(S) MLAs.

"Supreme Court has upheld the disqualification - to that extent, it's a sigh of relief (for me). On the issue of tenure (of disqualification), Supreme Court has not agreed to my interpretation I will speak on that after going through the text of the judgement," Kumar said.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, he has gone by the tenth schedule, keeping in mind the political and constitutional morality.

The apex court on Wednesday upheld the disqualification of 17 Congress-JD(S) MLAs in Karnataka on orders of the Speaker but allowed them to contest the December 5 bypolls in the state.

The court struck down the portion of the order of Kumar by which the legislators were disqualified till the end of the 15th Karnataka Assembly in 2023.

In July this year, 17 MLAs were disqualified by Kumar based on the complaint of Congress and JD(S) after their absence and resignation from the assembly during the trust vote leading to the collapse of then H D Kumaraswamy-led Government.

# SC verdict on K'taka MLAs has no meaning: Kumaraswamy

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Former Karnataka Chief Minister and JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswamy claimed on Wednesday the Supreme Court's verdict on the disqualified MLAs "has no meaning".

"On the one hand upholding the disqualification and on the other, allowing them to contest the election..." he told reporters.

The apex court upheld the disqualification of 17 Congress-JD(S) MLAs on orders of the then Speaker but paved the way for them to contest the December 5 bypolls for 15 seats.

The court struck down the portion of the order of then Speaker KR Ramesh Kumar by which the legislators were disqualified till the end of the term of the 15th Karnataka Assembly. "Without giving power to the anti-defection law, we put our back saying that we have introduced the law. What is there in the anti-defection law? To prohibit them (public representatives) from arbitrary acts of resigning whenever they want and can be easily influenced,"



Kumaraswamy said. "The way you are encouraging, your decision has no meaning," Kumaraswamy said.

"If at all the democracy of the country has to survive, some degree of discipline should be displayed. There is no meaning if the anti-defection law is not respected," he said.

Asked whether there was any possibility of "compromising" with the BJP, Kumaraswamy said there was no need for him to do so.

He accused Congress leader and former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah of creating such a narrative about the JD(S). "When 2018 assembly elections were held, he asked Rahul Gandhi to announce that the JD(S) is the B-team of BJP. The same card he wants to play again. This time it will not work," he said.

# BSY can run Govt safely for remainder of his term: Gowda

PTI ■ BENGALURU

JDS supremo HD Deve Gowda on Wednesday said Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa can complete his term as he no longer has to worry about how to manage the disqualified MLAs, who have been allowed by Supreme Court to contest coming bypolls.

"With common sense I can say that Yediyurappa was worried about how to manage these 17 people (disqualified Congress-JDS MLAs)," he said when asked to comment on the Supreme Court verdict on their petitions.

"We don't need to bother about him (Yediyurappa). He can run the Government safely for the next three years and four months (remainder of the term)," he added.

He also ruled out any truck with the Congress in future, especially with its senior leader Siddaramaiah. "Siddaramaiah is also safe. There is no problem. There is no question of Siddaramaiah and Deve Gowda coming together to form the government. He will remain safely as the opposition leader," Gowda said.

# BJP bracing for rebellion in bypoll bound constituencies in K'taka

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Ruling BJP in Karnataka is staring at rebellion in a few of the bypoll-bound Assembly constituencies amid indications that several of the 17 disqualified Congress and JD(S) MLAs who are set to join the party might get tickets to contest the December 5 polls.

At least two leaders Raju Kage from Kagwad and Sharath Bachegowda, son of BJP Chikkaballapura MP BN Bacchegowda, have openly revolted against the party upset over indications that they may not get tickets to contest the bypolls to 15 constituencies.

Both had unsuccessfully contested the 2018 assembly elections against Congress candidates, who are among the disqualified MLAs.

Kage had already announced his decision to quit the BJP and join the Congress, while Sharath on Wednesday said he would file nomination as an independent in Hoskote.

Sharath's announcement came on a day when the Supreme Court gave partial relief to the disqualified MLAs by allowing them to contest the bypolls and

Kage had already announced his decision to quit the BJP and join the Congress, while Sharath on Wednesday said he would file nomination as an Independent in Hoskote

all eyes are the BJP's next move on whether it will give tickets to them.

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa said the disqualified MLAs would join the BJP on Thursday.

Kage on Wednesday met Congress leader Siddaramaiah and said he was all set to join the party and would file his nomination from Kagwad on November 18.

"Today or tomorrow, I am going to resign from the primary membership of BJP, he told reporters here.

BJP is likely to field Congress rebels Shrimant Patil and K Sudhakar in Kagwad and Hoskote.

Barely two days ago, Congress leader D K Shivakumar had met Kage and another BJP member Ashok Pujari of Gokak in Belagavi giving rise to speculations they may be absorbed by the party and fielded in the bypolls.

# Cong releases manifesto for Rajasthan civic body polls

PTI ■ JAIPUR

The Congress' Rajasthan unit on Wednesday released its manifesto for the November 16 civic body polls in the State.

The party promises the State's people that it will do everything to ensure development, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said after releasing the manifesto.

Forty-nine civic bodies are going to polls on Saturday.

In its manifesto, the Congress has promised to start urban bus services in Bharatpur, Udaipur and Bikaner, get work worth Rs 3,500 crore done under the Smart City scheme in the next two years in Jaipur, Udaipur, Kota and Ajmer, and revive the Rajasthan Urban Development Fund besides 25 other promises.

"People have appreciated the Government's programmes. The Government will once again start the 'Prashashan Shehara Ki Aur' programme," the Chief Minister said.

Keeping in mind that



all-round development of cities is necessary, the Congress has prepared a manifesto and the government will work on its promises, he said.

Development of local bodies took place only when the Congress was in power, Gehlot said.

Congress Rajasthan chief and Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot said the good work done by the government will be carried forward at a rapid pace in the remaining four years of this dispensation and all-round development will be done.

The BJP Government ran a rhetoric on smart cities. Six years have passed but no city has turned smart, whereas investments worth crores were made under the 'Jawaharalal Urban Renewal Mission' programme during the tenure of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, he said.

The Congress's Rajasthan in-charge Avinash Pandey said in the last bypolls, people of the state gave votes to the policies of the Congress and the good work done in the last one year by the Government.

When asked by PTI, Baidya said he received the notice.

The displaced people had

# Death of birds at Sambhar Lake worrying, officials investigating cause: Raj CM

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Wednesday said the death of birds at Sambhar Lake is worrying and protecting flora and fauna remains one of the top priorities of the state government.

Hundreds of birds including Northern Shoveler, Ruddy Shelduck, Plovers, Avocets were found dead on Sunday in the 5-7 km area around the Sambhar Lake, a wetland of international importance and key wintering area for tens of thousands of migratory birds.

"Death of birds at Sambhar Lake is very worrying. State govt has taken all necessary steps to find out what is causing loss of avian lives and also to take immediate steps to prevent deaths during this migratory season. Protecting flora & fauna remains one of our top priorities," Gehlot said in a tweet.

He said officials are investigating whether it has been caused by water contamination or algae poisoning.

"Once investigations are complete, we will do everything possi-



ble so that no more birds lose lives," he said.

Gehlot said a ground-level assessment has found that due to heavy rains in Sambhar, a number of new water bodies have formed, raising saline level and causing toxicity.

He said the Chief Conservator of Forest as well as several teams of Animal Husbandry Department are at Sambhar Lake to assess the situation.

"Both chief wild life warden (CWLW) and CCF are also monitoring the situation. Water samples have been taken and sent for testing. Carcasses are sent to Bhopal for testing for bird flu. Toxicologists have also been called from SARCON, Coimbatore," he said.



A man and a child walks past plastics and other wastes accumulated on the beach at Marina, in Chennai on Wednesday PTI

# TSRTC strike: Another worker commits suicide

Hyderabad:

Another Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) driver allegedly committed suicide on Wednesday in Mahabubabad district as the indefinite strike by the employees' unions entered the 40th day. A Naresh, 45, consumed some poisonous substance at his house in the early hours and was rushed to a hospital by his family where he

died, police said. Already, four RTC employees had ended their lives and some others attempted suicide in different parts of Telangana since the strike began on October 5.

A senior police official said Naresh resorted to the extreme step apparently "upset" whether the ongoing RTC issue would be resolved.

A purported suicide note

in the name of Naresh allegedly mentioned that the State Government was not responding properly to the stir, the official said and added that its authenticity has to be verified.

Scores of TSRTC workers and employees along with members of some political parties took his body in a procession from the hospital towards the RTC depot raising slogans against the Government. PTI

# SC lawyer issues legal notice to officials for stopping ration supply to Bru refugees

PTI ■ AIZAWL/AGARTALA

A Supreme Court lawyer has issued a legal notice to six officials for stopping supply of free ration and cash-dole to Bru refugees living in relief camps in Tripura leading to the "death of six persons," an organisation of the displaced people said on Wednesday.

The Ministry of Home Affairs has stopped free ration and cash-dole after repatriation of the Brus to their homeland Mizoram started on October 3. It is scheduled to continue till November 30.

The Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF) had claimed that six people including

babies have died in relief camps since October 29 "because of starvation" after the ration supply was stopped to the 35,000 odd refugees. The Tripura Government, however, said four people died and the cause of the deaths was being ascertained.

Advocate Ali Zia Kabir Choudhary sent the legal notice to six officials including Tripura Director General of Police Akhil Kumar Shukla, North Tripura District Magistrate Ravel H Kumar and Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Kanchanpur Abhedananda Baidya, MBDPF leaders said.

When asked by PTI, Baidya said he received the notice.

launched a roadblock at Anandabazar, known for a prominent market, at Kanchanpur in North Tripura district from October 31 demanding resumption of cash-dole and free ration to them. Following assurance from Tripura Deputy Chief Minister Jishnu Debverma to resume supply of free ration, the blockade was withdrawn on October 7.

Baidya said, "The refugees have already started getting free ration."

Every adult Bru person living in a camp gets ₹3.50 in cash and 600 grams of rice per day as allowances, while each minor receives ₹2.50 in cash and 300 grams of rice per day, official sources said adding that they get clothes in every three years.

# Guj Govt announces ₹700-cr relief for rain-hit farmers

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat Government on Wednesday announced a relief package of ₹700 crore for the farmers in the State, whose crops have been damaged due to excess rain this year.

Talking to reporters, Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel said the move would benefit over four lakh farmers in the State.

Farmers in Gujarat witnessed damage to their crops due to excess rains that lashed the State even after the monsoon season officially ended.

"The cabinet meeting held today decided to declare a relief package for farmers who have faced crop losses due to excess rains in the last week of October and early part of November," Patel said.



"We have decided to give a relief package of ₹700 crore for the farmers. The main crops that have been damaged are groundnut, cotton and rice... Over four lakh farmers will benefit from this package," he said.

The relief package will be over and above the crop insurance that the companies will provide to the

farmers who under the insurance cover. The relief will be given as per the rules of the Central Government's Calamity Relief Fund, Patel said.

According to him, a survey is being carried out in different parts of the State to assess the crop damage and it will soon be completed.

"Chief Minister Vijay Rupani had promised to provide relief to all the farmers even if they have not taken crop insurance. To keep that promise to the farmers in the state, this relief package has been announced," he said.

However, the opposition Congress termed the relief package to farmers as a mere "lollypop" and

asked the State Government to provide crop insurance to them.

The Gujarat Government's announcement came at a time when Congress leader Hardik Patel was about to end his day-long symbolic fast at Paddhari in Rajkot district over the issue of crop insurance and farm loan waiver in the wake of unseasonal rains.

"Farmers are committing suicide as they are not paid 100 per cent crop insurance. While we welcome the government's move (relief package), we want prompt disbursement of crop insurance," Hardik said.

"The BJP Government was forced to announce a package of Rs 700 crore because of the Congress. We will continue our fight for the farmers in the coming days," he added.

# Sabarimala verdict: Anxiety grips Kerala

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Political parties, right wing outfits and devotees in Kerala are keeping their fingers crossed as the Supreme Court is set to pronounce on Thursday its verdict on pleas seeking review of its decision to allow entry of women of all age groups in the Sabarimala Temple.

The southern State had witnessed high drama and protests by devotees and right wing activists last year against the CPI(M)-led LDF Government's decision to implement the top court's order.

The verdict was also crucial for the LDF Government, led by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, as the beginning of the annual pilgrimage season at Sabarimala is just three days away.

The portals of the hill shrine, located in a reserve forest in Western Ghats in Pathanamthitta district of the state, would be opened for the two-month-long Mandalam Makaravilakku season on November 16 evening. Vijayan had on Saturday



taken stock of the preparations being carried out by various departments to ensure a hassle-free pilgrimage.

DGP Loknath Behara has said there will be tight security during the pilgrimage season.

Over 10,000 police personnel will be deployed in phases in and around the Sabarimala Lord Ayyappa temple during the two-month long pilgrimage season.

While the state BJP, on Wednesday, expressed hope that the order on the review petitions, would be in favour of devotees, the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB), the

Government's decision to go ahead and implement the verdict.

BJP state general secretary M T Ramesh said if the verdict was against devotees, the party would seek constitutional means to address the concerns of devotees.

"We hope that the verdict on the review petitions will be in favour of devotees."

The stand adopted by the state government was the reason for the earlier judgment that came out against the sentiments of devotees," he told reporters.

The stand taken by the apex court in the Ayodhya case that deity Ram Lalla could be viewed as a special personality, can be applicable in the Sabarimala case also, he said.

A Padmakumar, the outgoing president of TDB, said the verdict should be accepted with self-restraint and peace.

"The Board's request to everyone is that we should accept the verdict whatever it may be. We hope that the state

government will act in accordance with the verdict," he told TV channels.

Attempts by around a dozen women, including activists and journalists in the 10-50 age group, to climb the sacred hills had come to nought last year as frenzied devotees of Lord Ayyappa heckled and hassled them and forced them to retreat.

However, defying protesters, two women, in their 40s, had entered the Ayyappa temple in January this year and offered prayers scripting history.

The apex court, on Thursday, will deliver its judgment on as many as 65 petitions — including 56 review petitions and four fresh writ petitions and five transfer pleas -- which were filed after its verdict sparked violent protests in Kerala.

A five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi had reserved its decision on February 6 after hearing various parties including those seeking re-consideration of the September 28, 2018 judgment.

# Sena not to mention plea against Maha Governor in SC

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Shiv Sena will not mention in the Supreme Court on Thursday its plea challenging the Governor's decision of not granting it 3 days time for getting letter of support for Government formation in Maharashtra, according to the party lawyer.

The lawyer representing Shiv Sena in the apex court told PTI that the party has preferred not to mention the petition.

Advocate Sunil Fernandes, who had filed the petition on behalf of the Shiv Sena, said on Tuesday that the Supreme Court had asked them to mention the writ petition at 10:30 AM on Wednesday.

The lawyer said another petition challenging the imposition of President's rule in the state was being readied. The Shiv Sena had on Tuesday moved the apex court challenging the Maharashtra governor's decision but failed to get an urgent hearing in the mat-

ter.

The Shiv Sena had sought a direction from the apex court to quash the Governor's decision of not giving it the opportunity to prove majority on the floor of the House.

The party had claimed it was invited to form the Government on Monday and had indicated its willingness to do so on Tuesday.

In the petition, the Sena had contended that the governor's decision was violative of articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution.

The plea had said the governor's decision rejecting the claim of the Shiv Sena, which is the second largest party with 56 MLAs, to form Government is "ex facie arbitrary, unconstitutional and violative of article 14".

The Shiv Sena was invited to form the state government on November 10 and the petitioner had indicated its willingness to form the Government on November 11, it said

# BJP workers, police clash in Kolkata

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Dozen people including policemen and BJP workers were injured after saffron activists clashed with the police during an agitation against alleged "Government apathy" in handling rising dengue cases in Kolkata.

The police lathi-charged the protesters and used water cannons to disperse hundreds of charging BJP Yuva Morcha supporters marching towards the Kolkata Municipal Corporation. At least 37 BJP men including State party leaders Raju Banerjee were arrested.

"We were protesting peacefully but the police suddenly started charging batons and firing water cannons," Banerjee said asking "how can the police use water cannons purchased with the tax-payers money. There is no democracy in Bengal," he said.

State BJP president Dilip Ghosh attacked the Government for "reckless handling of dengue cases," adding "the number of dengue infection has more than doubled in the past fortnight taking the figure to about 50,000, and the Government is hiding facts," adding "repeated using of batons means that the Government has lost confidence." He asked "why will the



people have to descend on the streets if everything is fine. The people are agitating because they are bearing the brunt of Government apathy," he maintained while Kolkata Mayor and senior Minister Firdah Hakim said "we don't have to hide anything. Kolkata is not Balakote that we have to fudge reports."

Meanwhile alleged Trinamool Congress supporters shouted "go-back" slogan against Union Minister Babul Supriyo while he was visiting the Bulbul-affected areas of Namkhana in South 24 Parganas. The Minister would not react but Dilip Ghosh hit back strongly to the proceedings saying, "we have every right to visit the affected areas as there are numerous complaints that Government is playing politics over distributing relief materials."

He said "the Chief Minister is not allowing the opposition parties to extend the hand of cooperation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sent Rs 200 crore for relief in advance but she is not paying heed to our suggestions. What is the harm if other parties too come in and work together at this time of crisis for the common people."

Cyclone Bulbul has affected large parts of nine districts destroying crops and properties worth hundreds of crores. "This has caused a bigger damage than Aila," a State official said.

Meanwhile Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who was on Wednesday touring Basirhat sub-division in North 24 Paraganas told in an administrative meeting that "no partiality should be shown while distributing relief. Politics is in its own place but during grief we must unite and relief must be distributed without seeing political colours."

# Cong, NCP hold talks over CMP away from media

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Senior NCP leader and former deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar pulled a fast one on the media on Wednesday night. Or so it appeared.

There was considerable confusion and drama surrounding the first co-ordination committee scheduled for Wednesday night to discuss formulation of Common Minimum Programme (CMP).

After the conflicting versions emerged from both the Congress and the NCP camps as to whether the scheduled meeting was held at all or not, it was confirmed later in the night that the meeting was indeed held at a five-star hotel's conference room.

Senior leaders of both the parties, including veteran leader Sushilkumar Shinde, Prithviraj Chavan, Balasaheb Thorat, Vijay Wadetiwar, Ashok Chavan, Manirao Thakre (all from the Congress), Ajit Pawar, Jayant Patil, Dhananjay Munde and Nawab Mallik (all from the NCP) were present.

The Congress and NCP leaders present reviewed the manifestos of the Congress-NCP alliance, which had come out with a joint manifesto, and the Shiv Sena. The two parties will use the manifestos of the Congress-NCP alliance and Shiv Sena as the base for the CMP. Given the different ideologies, the Congress-NCP leaders also discussed the conflicting stands/views taken by the Congress-NCP alliance one hand and the Shiv Sena on the other. If it wants to go with the Congress-NCP alliance, the Shiv Sena will have to keep its Hindutva agenda on the back burner till they are in alliance



Senior Congress and NCP leaders attend a joint meeting on Wednesday to discuss issues relating to the formulation of Common Minimum Programme

with the two "secular" parties. Now that the Shiv Sena's process of alliance with the Congress-NCP alliance has begun, Sena president Uddhav Thackeray may cancel his scheduled visit to Ayodhya on November 24.

Earlier, while state NCP president Jayant Patil claimed that the meeting was going on, State Congress president Balasaheb Thorat said that the meeting was cancelled at the last minute at the instance of the NCP.

The drama unfolded after NCP's Legislature Party leader Ajit Pawar emerged out of a meeting that he and other state party leaders had with chief Sharad Pawar at the latter's "Silver Oak" residence in south Mumbai. He said that the meeting, scheduled between the leaders of his party and Congress on Wednesday night, to dwell upon issues relating to CMP, had been cancelled.

"The meeting has been cancelled. I am leaving for Baramati," Ajit Pawar said.

However, Sharad Pawar clarified later that Ajitdada, as the Ajit Pawar is known in the state political circles, was very much in Mumbai and the

meeting between the NCP and congress leaders would take place in Mumbai on Thursday. "Ajitdada is very much in Mumbai. He might have made the comment in jest that he was heading towards Baramati," Sr Pawar said.

State Congress chief Balasaheb Thorat also confirmed that the meeting scheduled for on Wednesday was cancelled. "We (Congress and NCP leaders) were to meet today at 7.30 pm. The Congress leaders told us all of sudden that the meeting is cancelled. We will meet tomorrow," Thorat said.

Former chief minister and senior Congress leader Ashok Chavan said: "We had an internal meeting among the Congress leaders today... We were to meet the NCP leaders today. But that meeting is not happening today. We will meet them tomorrow."

Later in the night, State NCP president Jayant Patil claimed that the meeting between the leaders of his party and NCP was currently. "It was in jest that Ajit Pawar had made the statement that the meeting had been cancelled and that he was going to Baramati?"

NORTHERN RAILWAY				
Tender Notice				
A.T.No.	Closing date	Short description	Qty.	Website Address
96196049A	11.12.2019	Gauge Cum Level	20 Nos.	www.ireps.gov.in
96195789A	11.12.2019	Track aligner	03 Nos.	www.ireps.gov.in
96195785A	11.12.2019	Double action Weld Trimmer	02 Nos.	www.ireps.gov.in
96195673B	11.12.2019	Automatic gate lamp	25 Nos.	www.ireps.gov.in
96195784A	11.12.2019	Light weight rail drilling machine	03 Nos.	www.ireps.gov.in
96195787A	11.12.2019	Non Infringing track jack	20 Nos.	www.ireps.gov.in
96195788A	11.12.2019	Hydraulic rail tensor	01 No.	www.ireps.gov.in
96195662A	11.12.2019	Automatic gate lamp	25 Nos.	www.ireps.gov.in
96195661A	11.12.2019	Night vision LED Safety banner flag LED light	75 Nos.	www.ireps.gov.in
96195663A	11.12.2019	LED Based railway crossing barrier light	75 Nos.	www.ireps.gov.in
96196312	11.12.2019	Complete Medical gases and Vacuum Pipeline	01 No.	www.ireps.gov.in
96196269	11.12.2019	Slit Lamp	01 No.	www.ireps.gov.in
96196317	11.12.2019	Operating Microscope for Eye	01 No.	www.ireps.gov.in
96196318	11.12.2019	OCT for Eye	01 No.	www.ireps.gov.in
96196316	11.12.2019	Laprosopic Surgery camera Set	01 No.	www.ireps.gov.in
96196310	11.12.2019	Ceiling Suspended Double Dome LED Light	01 No.	www.ireps.gov.in

No. : Sr.DMM/NRTENDER/ATLKO/2019-20 Date 13.11.2019 3652/2019

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Applications are invited from the retired Railway staff to work at Railway Electrification Lucknow Project on the following posts. Payment to the Re-engagement staff is admissible as the last guide lines on the subject issued by Railway Board. The Railway employees who have retired under age limit i.e. on completion of 60 Yrs of age are eligible to apply Last date submission of application form in this office is 06.12.2019.

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Department-Electrical			
S.N.	Post	Grade/Level	No. of Post
1	SSE/Elect	4600/07	03
2	JE/Elect	4200/06	01
3	Tech.I, II, III	2800, 2400, 1900/05, 04, 02	02
4	Helper	1800/01	02

Department-Engg			
S.N.	Post	Grade/Level	No. of Post
1	SSE/W	4600/07	02
2	SSE/P/Way	4600/07	03
3	Mason	1900/02	02
4	Khalasi/Gangman	1800/01	02

Department-Store			
S.N.	Post	Grade/Level	No. of Post
1	DMS	4200/06	01
2	Khalasi/Helper	1800/01	01

The willing applicants may submit their application in his office along with their complete biodata to be addressed to **The Chief Project Director, Railway Electrification Office, A.P. Sen Road, Lucknow (U.P.)-226001** latest by 06.12.2019. They should enclosed copy of Service Certificate and Pension Payment Order (PPO) with their application. Address and mobile no should be mentioned on application form. Remuneration of retired employee to be determined as per latest guidelines of Railway Board. The Re-engagement staff can be allowed to work on this Project Maximum up to the age of 65 yrs.

Note:- The notice can be seen on the website as follows ([www.cores.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.cores.indianrailways.gov.in)) About us-RE Projects-CPD office, Lucknow-Notification)

**SENIOR PERSONNEL OFFICER**

No. PR/100/19 (Kaka) FOR CHIEF PROJECT DIRECTOR/RE/LUCKNOW

Serving Customers with a Smile

# With Maha under President's Rule, GAD seeks files

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A day after President's Rule came into force in Maharashtra, the Ministries have been ordered to hand over possessions to the General

Administrative Department (GAD) by Wednesday evening. The GAD order is applicable to all ministries, OSDs (Officers on Special Duty) working for ministers, personal secretaries and personal assistants.

They are directed to submit telephone bills and return identity cards issued to them to the GAD, the order stated. They are told to return official files, confidential documents, office stationary, furniture etc.

**SOUTH ASIAN ENTERPRISES LIMITED**

Regd. Office: Mikky House, K-Block, Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur-208011

Corp. Office: 2nd Floor, 13, Sant Nagar, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065, Ph. No.011-46656666, Fax No.011-46656699

CIN No.LB1990UP1990PLC011753, Website: [www.sael.co.in](http://www.sael.co.in), Email: [southasianenterprises@gmail.com](mailto:southasianenterprises@gmail.com)

**STATEMENT OF UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND HALF YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2019**

S. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended		Year Ended
		30.09.2019	30.09.2018	31.03.2019
		(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)
1	Total Income from Operations (Net)	23.57	28.16	167.86
2	Net Profit (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional Item and Or extraordinary Item)	(14.01)	(18.83)	(32.65)
3	Net profit (Loss) for the period before Tax (After Exceptional Items and or Extraordinary items)	(14.01)	(18.83)	(32.65)
4	Net Profit (Loss) for the period after Tax (After exceptional Items and or Extraordinary items)	(13.84)	(16.35)	(31.36)
5	Total comprehensive Income (Comprising Profit/ Loss for the period and Other comprehensive Income)	(0.58)	(56.83)	(108.84)
6	Equity Share Capital	399.90	399.90	399.90
7	Reserves excluding Revaluation Reserve as per balance sheet as on March 31, 2019	-	-	197.31
8	Earnings Per Share for continuing operation (of Rs.10/- each) Basic and Diluted	(0.35)	(0.41)	(0.78)

**NOTES:**

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly and Annual Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly and Annual Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange's website at <http://www.bseindia.com> and also on the Company's website at [www.sael.co.in](http://www.sael.co.in).
- Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items adjusted in the Statement of profit and Loss in accordance with Ind AS Rules.
- Corresponding figures of the previous period have been regrouped / rearranged, wherever necessary.

For and on behalf of the Board  
**T. B. Gupta**  
Managing Director  
DIN: 00106181

Place: New Delhi  
Date: 13.11.2019

**DHFL DEWAN HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION LIMITED**

National Office: DHFL, HDIL Towers, B-Wing, 6<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Anant Kanekar Marg, Bandra (East), Mumbai - 400 051. Regional Office: Office No. 211 and 212, 'Titanium' Shalimar Corporate Park, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow - 226010

**APPENDIX IV POSSESSION NOTICE**  
(for immovable property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited (DHFL) under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, Demand Notice(s) issued by the Authorized Officer of the company to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) mentioned herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of the Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement rules, 2002. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of DHFL for an amount as mentioned herein under with interest thereon.

S.N.	Name of the Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower (s)	Description of Secured Asset (Immovable Property)	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Date of Possession
1.	(LC No. 00000513 of our Haldwani Branch) Babu Lal (Borrower) Suneeta Sarakar (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing Part Of Khasra No.668 Min Of Village Vijaynagar Tehsil Gadarpur, Kalinagar Rudrapur Distt Us Nagar U.K.Rudrapur, Udhamsinghnagar-263153	24/10/2018 Rs. 7,56,470/-	08-11-2019
2.	(LC No. 00000243 of our Gorakhpur Branch) Vishwa Prakash Singh (Borrower) Mithlesh Singh (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing House On Arazi No-259 Mohalla- Jungle Salikram , Gorakhpur, Gorakhpur-273003	20/05/2019 Rs. 7,95,421/-	08-11-2019
3.	(LC No. 00003853 of our Haldwani Branch) Nakul Bishwas (Borrower) Nitaai Bishwas (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing Part Of Khasra No. 671 Min Pvt. Plot No.44 & 45 Village Vijaynagar, Rudrapur, Udhamsinghnagar-263153	20/05/2019 Rs. 15,36,215/-	08-11-2019
4.	(LC No. 00002378 of our Bareilly Branch) Sarvendra Kumar (Borrower) Dharmendra Pal (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing Part Of Khasra No. 365 Tesil Faridpur Village Bakainiya, Bareilly, Bareilly-243001	27/03/2019 Rs. 13,29,230/-	08-11-2019
5.	(LC No. 00042870 of our Lucknow-Lalbagh Branch) Shaikprakash Laxminarayan (Borrower) Saitayakari S Divedi (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing Plot On Part Of Khasra No.23 Sa Ibrahimpur Ward Ibrahimpur Pargna Bijnore Tehsil Sarojnagar,Lucknow,Lucknow-226002	25/01/2019 Rs. 18,50,062/-	12-11-2019
6.	(LC No. 00003762 of our Kanpur Branch) Manoj Kumar Tiwari (Borrower) Mansi Tiwari (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing Plot No 49, Arazi No 753ka, Mauza Makshudabad, Kanpur Kanpur Urban Uttar Pradesh 208001	27/12/2018 Rs. 10,39,989/-	12-11-2019
7.	(LC No. 00003201 of our Lucknow Branch) Girjesh Sharma (Borrower) Hemlata Sharma (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing Plot No 18 Khasra No 18 Vill Samera Garbi Ward Fajilulganj,Lucknow-226020	20/05/2019 Rs. 13,68,903/-	12-11-2019
8.	(LC No. 00003655 of our Haldwani Branch) Raghuvver Singh (Borrower) Vineeta V (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing Part Of Khasra No. 643/1 Min Village Maheshpur Kashipur Udhamsinghnagar Uttaranchal 244713	25/01/2019 Rs. 20,47,402/-	13-11-2019

Place : Uttar Pradesh Date : 14/11/2019 Sd/- Sorabh Pahwa (Authorised Officer) For Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited

**MAHINDRA RURAL HOUSING FINANCE LTD.**

Corporate Office: Sadhana House, 2nd Floor, 570, P.B. Marg, Worli, Mumbai 400 018, India  
Tel: 22 66523500, Fax: +91 22 24972741, CIN - U65822MH2007PLC169781  
Regional Office address : LDA Colony, B2/B70 Kanpur Road, Near Phoenix Mall, Lucknow-226005

**POSSESSION NOTICE**

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Ltd, under the securitization and reconstruction of financial assets an enforcement of security interest act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 9 of the security interest (enforcement) rules 2002 issued demand notices to the Borrower/s as detailed hereunder, calling upon the respective borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the said notices with all costs, charges and expenses till actual date of payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of the same. The said Borrowers/Co-Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/Co-Borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described hereunder in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said act/r/w rule 9 of the said rules on the dates mentioned along-with. The borrowers in particular and public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Ltd., for the amount specified therein with future interest, costs and charges from the respective dates.

Details of the Borrowers, Co-borrowers, And Guarantors, scheduled property, outstanding dues, demand notices sent under section 13(2) and amounts claimed there under, date of possession is given herein below:

S. No.	Name and Address of the Borrower, Co-Borrower, Loan Account No. Loan Amount	Details of the Immovable Property	1. Date of Possession	2. Demand Notice Date	3. Amount Due in Rs.
1	XSEMLCK00326483 MUSARAT KHAN, SAMIM BEGUM, YAGYANARAYAN SHARMA	All the piece and parcel of the land along with construction thereon house bearing grampanchayat property no.27/11/6, 19 assessment register HOUSE No. 27/1/16, 16, 19, CHAKMAFI DUGAWAN WARD-RAJENDRA NAGAR, LUCKNOW, Admeasuring 445.5 Sq Fts, (i.e. 41.403 Sq. Mt.), which is bounded by - To the East - Sarkari Gali 4 ft. wide, To the West - House of Jai Pal, To the North - Half part of House of Bhanwar Lal, To the South - House of Advocate Sabeh.	1.08-11-2019	2.28-02-2018	3.Rs. 1862770/-
2	XSEMLCK00385917 SHEELA SINGH, PABAN KUMAR SINGH, RAMU SINGH	All that part and parcel of the Grampanchayat Property No., Admeasuring, 1133 Sq.Ft., Assessment register-PLOT ON KHASRA NO-1147 KA MIN, GRAM-BADEL, BAHAR SEEMA, PARGANA NAWABGANJ, Boundaries :-East :- PLOT, West :- 20-WIDE ROAD, South :- HOUSE, North :- 20-WIDE ROAD	1.08-11-2019	2.28-02-2018	3.Rs.1153385/-
3	XSEMLCK00433813 AMIT SINGH, MENIKA SINGH, RAKESH SRIVASTAVA	All that part and parcel of the Grampanchayat Property No.Grampanchayat Property No.1330, Admeasuring, 1000 Sq.Ft., Assessment register-, Admeasuring, 930 Sq.Ft., Assessment register-PLOT ON KHASRA NO 1330, GRAM KESHRI KHEDA, KANAUSI LUCKNOW-226005 Boundaries :- East :- Property of Ratan Kumar, West :- Other Plot, South :- Plot, North :- Rasta	1.08-11-2019	2.29-11-2018	3.Rs.1452312/-
4	XSEMLCK00455455 RATAN KUMAR, POONAM	All that part and parcel of the Grampanchayat Property No.Grampanchayat Property No.1330, Admeasuring, 1000 Sq.Ft., Assessment register-, Admeasuring, 1000 Sq.Ft., Assessment register-PLOT ON KHASRA NO-1330, KANAUSI KESARI KHEDA, PARA LUCKNOW. Boundaries :-East :- OTHER PLOT, West :- OTHER PLOT, South :- OTHER PLOT, North :- 20 WD ROAD	1.08-11-2019	2.29-11-2018	3.Rs.1715583/-
5	XSEMLCK00532523 MAHESH PRASAD BARANWAL, RADHA DEVI, JAI VERMA,	All that part and parcel of the Grampanchayat Property No.Grampanchayat Property No.495, Admeasuring, 600 Sq.Ft., Assessment register-, Admeasuring, 600 sq.ft.Sq.Ft., Assessment register-PLOT ON KHASRA NO.495 SA, GRAM-NANDPUR SARAISEKH PARGANA- LUCKNOW Boundaries :-East :- PLOT			

## Let Rajpath be

Repairing and rejigging heritage structures is one thing, changing skylines quite the other



When the glass Pyramid came up in the courtyard of the Louvre Museum, ostensibly to serve as a central conduit for a more functional visitor movement, the then French President François Mitterrand was lambasted for creating “an architectural joke, an eyesore, an anachronistic intrusion of Egyptian death symbolism in the middle of Paris, and a megalomaniacal folly.” Parisians still have mixed feelings about the new-age intrusion, which has allowed more utilitarian and pedestrianised access to art besides increasing foot-

falls. But the oddity of its existence was such that critics and conservationists compelled the architects to tone down on drama, keep much of the rejig of the Louvre’s internal map underground and stay away from the surrounding classical architecture. Mitterrand, an avid art lover, was thinking about keeping the Louvre relevant for generations than sealing a political legacy. However, the real intent of the argument that Lutyens’ Delhi needs a makeover, particularly the central vista of the Rajpath, to create more spaces for Ministry offices and freeing up more citizen-friendly spaces, is entirely political and in no way cultural or futuristic. Tradition’s co-existence with modernity is encoded in our DNA and Delhi is the best testimony, where each successive ruler has sedimented through relics and monuments. And Delhiites have never denied heritage its place — Rajput, Islamic, European or colonial — making it a part of their living history, one where Lutyens’ Delhi is a key chapter. Talking of the central vista and the domed buildings around it, do we really need to tamper with the elegance and classicism of design here? The green pavilions, perches, cupolas and the islands are the only democratic spaces where citizens can move and roam free, catching the afternoon sun in the middle of winter and the gentle breeze of a summer evening. No kiosk or retail space is needed for it is precisely to escape these that Delhi families assemble here.

Besides, being the first stretches to be locked down for security around Republic and Independence Days, they are anyway sanitised and cannot ever be a porous event space like Washington’s National Mall. Redevelopment wouldn’t necessarily mean more freedom to the masses. Considering the India Gate and now the war memorial are a tribute to martyred soldiers no less, do we need to scream our triumphalism and identity any louder with an Eiffel tower-like structure? Shouldn’t the Government be wiser to leave a legacy of policy and governance instead? Repurposing administrative offices within the shell of an existing facade and rejigging interiors are the done thing. But to change the skyline is quite the other. Agreed, there may be an increasing demand for land in the cities and the size of the Government means that its bureaucracy needs to be accommodated. Does that mean Lutyens’ bungalows should be torn down indiscriminately without attempting a solution within the original plan? Cannot some Government accommodation be relocated to areas where vertical structures are the norm than the exception? The Rajpath has been our ceremonial pivot, providing a monumental, dignified and symbolic setting for governmental structures, museums and national memorials. Attempting to change it for no pressing reason, therefore, is like marginalising and eroding its place-based identity. Simply because of its historicity as a power statement. Or that the current regime wants to overlay with its own imposition of a Bharat Parv, as if we never had one through millennia. Prime Minister Narendra Modi doesn’t quite like the “Lutyens’ world” and the power structures embedded in it. “For me, everything is about the people of India,” he had said. But in the name of breaking elitism and freeing up space for people, one cannot justify political point-scoring. Or even the political economy it will generate — the project is expected to run into multi-crore tenders. There are fruits of preservation; they serve as reminders of what was and where we need to go. There are only ruins of demolition, forcibly reconstructing the past on wobbly stubs to suit our ends. Given the secrecy around the makeover project, the least the Government can do is to put a proposed plan to a public vote, keep it transparent, consultative and reasonable and synchronise its character with the aspiration of Delhiites to be citizens of a world heritage city. The city’s application, submitted to the Unesco in 2013, lists Lutyens’ Bungalow Zone (LBZ) along with Shahjahanabad (old Delhi) as the rationale for seeking the tag. That sure will have a longer legacy than proving a point for BJP’s manifesto of 2024, the deadline of the project.

## Trouble in Jharkhand

After Maharashtra, allies AJSU and LJP turn adamant on seats, show BJP why it needs them



From the west to the east, BJP’s allies in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) are seeking to assert themselves and give the “big brother” a tough time in both pre and post-poll scenarios. That’s because the results in Maharashtra have proven that the BJP, regardless of the brute force of the Lok Sabha verdict, cannot make it on its own. It has hardly recovered from the jolt in Maharashtra, where its three-decade-old ally, the Shiv Sena, snapped ties with it for its failure to honour a rotational chief ministerial formula, but is staring at another one in Jharkhand. Here its long-time ally, the All Jharkhand Students’ Union (AJSU), has upped the ante by staking claim to 17 seats for itself. But the BJP is not willing to concede. The AJSU has since gone ahead by fielding its candidate even against the BJP’s State unit chief. As if this wasn’t enough, another BJP ally, the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), has announced it will go alone and field its candidates in 50 of the 81 Assembly seats.

The timing is all wrong for the BJP, which is actually looking to consolidate its gains in the State. The Raghubar Das-led regime has the distinction of completing a full five-year-term, which is a first in the 20-year history of the State that has always had fractured mandates leading to half-a-dozen Chief Ministers helming the affairs from time to time. For the BJP however, the LJP is not a cause of worry given its minuscule presence in the State. The LJP contested only one Assembly seat in 2014 and lost. By contesting 50 seats this time round, its new president Chirag Paswan wishes to gain some foothold in Jharkhand. But as far as AJSU is concerned, the party, which is a product of the Jharkhand movement, has a strong presence, especially in areas around Ranchi. AJSU has been a part of almost all Governments formed in Jharkhand ever since the State’s creation when Babulal Marandi became the first Chief Minister. Its chief Sudesh Mahto has handled plum portfolios throughout, including that of the funds-rich Road Construction department. He played a key role in hijacking MLAs to prop up the Arjun Munda regime. The AJSU is also gaining strength from the fact that Opposition parties are courting it. AJSU fighting alone, nevertheless, will be advantage BJP as the former shares a support base with the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and could cut into its votebank. Despite its dominance, the BJP cannot alienate time-tested allies who have stood by it through thick and thin. As Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Naresh Gujral said, the BJP should not treat its allies as lesser partners as they, too, have self-respect.

# Guarantors vs enforcers

The brawl between police officers and lawyers over a parking lot was the manifestation of a misplaced sense of entitlement at work. The episode should lead to corrective introspection



BHOPINDER SINGH

Submission to an inviolable sense of justice, order and probity ought to be at the heart of professionals rendering policing and legal services to society. The nobility of purpose in both these professions mandates a certain code of conduct and ethics that posits the responsibility to the citizenry at large and, thereby, the nation. Many such mandates have been legislated, ingrained and templatised in the form of standard procedures, processes and even uniforms that they bear with aplomb and responsibility. The allegorical personification of Lady Justice (originally *Lustitia*, the goddess of justice in the Greek mythology) with a blindfold, a balance and a sword is deeply symbolic of those who uphold its tenets as protectors of justice.

Similarly, the khaki uniform of the police personnel is freighted with the citizen’s charter that explicitly seeks, among other things, the “maintenance of law and order in civil society” as a common bond between the two services. Many illustrious lawyers and policemen (and policewomen) have conducted themselves with the highest dignity, civility, service and personal sacrifices that have been the pride of the society and the nation.

Yet, the unfortunate spectacle of the violent clash between policemen and the lawyers at the Tis Hazari court in the national capital shamed the edifice of justice, which is the shared responsibility of these two callings. In an age of reckless social media, the free flow of visuals of the fights, accusations and the public protests was a reflection of institutional breakdown at various levels.

The immediate impact of this wholly avoidable fracas goes way beyond the perceptions about these two professions. It speaks volumes about the institutional one-upmanship, prevailing societal anger and above all, a misplaced sense of entitlement that some individuals may carry — all of which could taint the entirety of their services. For the sake of national security and order, institutional blame-game must be contained with immediate effect. The High Court-appointed judicial inquiry must ascertain individual acts of misdemeanour and those involved must be punished, irrespective of their professional callings.

However, the lazy and wanton lust to sully the reputation of either of the institutions can have unfathomable repercussions that the nation can ill-afford, given that both are unique and irreplaceable services, often the only source of ensuring justice to the citizenry. To that extent, the act should be treated as a matter of individual (at best a group of individuals) culpability or complicity as opposed to a situation where the top-brass of either institutions lock horns on behalf of their colleagues. The fact that the violence was triggered by



a seemingly innocuous dispute over a parking space reeks of ego, vanity and a sense of fiefdom that was involved. The proverbial “turf-war” further eroded the citizen’s waning trust, faith and decorum about governmental and judicial arms, who are in dire need for reforms and reassurances.

In the melee of excesses was the regrettable irony of the Delhi Police’s motto of “*Shanti, Sewa, Nyaya*” (Peace, Service and Justice) or indeed, the fact that the lawyers are the ultimate restorers of the law of the land. The hapless citizenry could only mull and reminisce their own experiences at the hands of either of these two.

Such incidents also give a parallel vent to latent concerns that have remained unaddressed for far too long but contextualising the same to this incident is to distract from the immediacy and specificity of action. The unwarranted politicisation of the incident, with political parties assuming positions that suit their immediate narrative, can only fan the fire. Sane voices, who are either in positions of seniority in the respective hierarchies or those who have retired from official service, would do yeoman service by insisting on isolating the individuals concerned in the violence, as opposed to taking institutional positions.

“SUCH INCIDENTS ALSO GIVE PARALLEL VENT TO LATENT CONCERNS THAT HAVE REMAINED UNADDRESSED FOR TOO LONG BUT CONTEXTUALISING THE SAME TO THIS INCIDENT IS TO DISTRACT FROM THE IMMEDIACY AND SPECIFICITY OF ACTION. THE UNWARRANTED POLITICISATION OF THE INCIDENT CAN ONLY FAN THE FIRE”

Other collateral concerns like work conditions and officer-soldier relationship in the police among others, however true and important in their own right, are a matter of separate enquiry and resolution. In fact, there has been a plethora of committees and commissions that have identified various reforms pertaining to the efficacy of the judicial and policing services. Unfortunately, political will has been lacking and even institutional lethargy to undertake the recommendations made by experts in the field.

A more reassuring arm of the Government has been the armed forces. The principal factor for this has been the relative isolation from the politicisation of its environment, functioning and ethos. In cases of individual culpability pertaining to the rare wrongdoings of a soldier of the armed forces, care is taken to isolate them from institutional framework as discipline cannot be compromised.

Discipline, leadership and soldiering ethos are made to walk the talk in the armed forces. The finest example of this is the “officer-to-soldier” fatality ratio, which is the highest for any military in the world. It is the professional culture and standard that are at stake when murmurs abound

of creeping politicisation even in the armed forces.

The onus is on the Government to contain this incident with speedy intervention, resolution and then usher in the much-delayed institutional reforms. No society can thrive where a revenue officer is burnt alive during the conduct of his/her duty, where police-lawyers vandalise public property, where policemen in uniform protest raising slogans, where suicide attempts for justice by lawyers are made. Indeed, forgotten from the recent limelight is the unprecedented tragedy of the war heroes of the armed forces sitting on roadside, asking for what was rightfully promised in OROP.

There is certainly a power play of institutional relevance, elbow-room and assertion at play. The fight over the parking lot was symbolic of the misplaced sense of entitlement that is at work with a few that shame their own institutions. This incident should lead to corrective introspection and cooling of tempers as opposed to a field day for those who have vested interest in TRPs, partisan concerns or perpetuating the existing systemic rot.

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

## SOUNDBITE

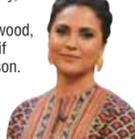
RCEP is in our interest. If it is signed by other 15 nations and we are sitting outside, no multinational will want to come here.

**NITI Aayog vice chairman**  
—Arvind Panagariya



Today, whether it’s pageantry, surviving in the modelling business or entering Bollywood, I don’t think you’ll survive if you’re not strong as a person.

**Actor**  
—Lara Dutta



India, China and Russia are doing absolutely nothing to clean up their smokestacks. The garbage that they drop in the sea floats into Los Angeles.

**US President**  
—Donald Trump



Women need to get out of their comfort zone. It’s time for them to lead the transformation in emerging technologies like AI and IOT.

**Union Minister**  
—Smriti Irani



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### JNU hullabaloo

Sir — This refers to the editorial, “Fee hike unjust” (November 13). There is no doubt that there has been a significant hike in both the hostel room fee and one-time mess fee at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) but we also need to ponder as to how long will the State exchequer keep funding its students’ subsidised education. The monthly fee of ₹20 for a hostel room is something that really needed to be changed but at the same time, the authorities should have held discussions with the stakeholders on the amount that needed to be increased. There should have been a hike that would not pinch too much as students from all sections of the society come to study in this varsity. While it’s good that the authorities have partially rolled the proposed fee hike, students need to introspect why there should not be a basic hike in their fees when they are being part of one of the most sought after universities in the country. There has to be some rationality in this entire issue.

**Bal Govind**  
Noida

### Seshan was a poll crusader

Before TN Seshan occupied the office of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), not much was known about the game-changing ability of the Election Commission of India (ECI). Seshan proved what the electoral body could do to instill decorum in the way elections were conducted in the country. Until he took over, booth captures, corruption, impersonation, vandalism and violence were part of the election process. The introduction of electors’ photo identity cards was one of the measures taken by him which put the ECI’s integrity on the rising graph. The Model Code of Conduct got a fresh meaning as the “maverick” Seshan cracked the whip on politicians.

Ironically, Seshan paved the way for a three-member ECI. His aggressive style and frequent tiffs with leaders prompted former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao to re-introduce the three-member ECI. Again, Seshan met his match in the Supreme Court after he contested the powers of two newly-appointed Election Commissioners — MS Gill and GVG Krishnamurthy.



He had to eat the humble pie everytime he tried to assert his supremacy. Despite his frequent squabbles with the Government, colleagues and the courts, Seshan was the architect of the “new Election Commission” in India.

**Ganapathi Bhat**  
Akola

### Expand bases

Sir — It is given to understand that an applicant can apply for a normal passport at all Post Office Passport Sewa Kendras (POPSKs) and Passport Sewa Kendras (PSKs) spread across various States. It is further given to understand that for *tatkal* pass-

port applications, an applicant can approach only a few PSKs located within the States. Thus, for an applicant there is no possibility to apply for a *tatkal* passport at any POPSKs located across various district headquarters.

The current non-availability of *tatkal* appointments at POPSKs is causing much inconvenience to the applicants. All are compelled

to approach the nearest PSK located within the State. The move, thus, causes inconvenience to the applicants owing to logistical factors to reach the venue.

The Ministry of External Affairs must accept *tatkal*-based passport applications and allot appointments under *tatkal* quota at POPSKs, too. The suggested move will entail quick processing

of such applications and subsequently may even reduce the burden of PSKs.

**Varun Dambal**  
Bengaluru

### The great reformer

Sir — As the Chief Election Commissioner, TN Seshan brought many reforms in the country’s electoral process, which includes the enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct, introduction of voter ID cards for eligible candidates and curbing malpractices like the exchange of liquor and money during elections.

The real tribute to Seshan would be to enforce one of his orders where he directed that the ballot papers be mixed without fail before they were counted so that polling agents would not know in which booth who voted and how. This will partially curb the behaviour of our elected representatives who tend to tilt development funds towards the area that voted for them.

**Harvinder Singh Chugh**  
Jalandhar

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

**FIRST COLUMN**

**Governor's decision unconstitutional**

President's Rule in Maharashtra must be shot down by the SC. Elections are a costly affair and a poor country like India can ill-afford frequent polls



MARKANDEY **KATJU**

In my opinion, the recent imposition of President's Rule in Maharashtra under Article 356 is unconstitutional and needs to be declared as such by the Supreme Court (SC). In the recent elections to the 288-member Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, the BJP got 105 seats, the Shiv Sena got 56, the NCP 54 and the Congress 44. Although the BJP and the Shiv Sena had fought the election in alliance, after the poll it fell apart on the issue of power-sharing. No single party got a majority in the House and no alliance could be formed claiming a majority. Hence the Governor of the State recommended President's Rule, which was imposed. Now, a similar situation had arisen in Uttar Pradesh (UP) in 1996 where also President's Rule was imposed soon after the Legislative Assembly elections for the same reason, viz no party, nor combination of parties, had a majority in the House. The imposition of President's Rule was challenged in the Allahabad High Court (HC) and a full Bench of the HC, of which I was a member, held the imposition unconstitutional, vide HS Jain vs Union of India case.

The reasoning which the full Bench gave in that case squarely applies to the imposition of President's Rule in Maharashtra too and it was this: "It has been held in the authoritative judgment of the Supreme Court in Bommai's case, (1994) 3 SCC 1 (in paragraphs 109, 120, 383 and 391) that imposition of President's Rule should not be resorted to unless all other recourses have failed."

In paragraph 112 of my decision, I observed: "The Governor should have sent a message to the House under Article 175(2) of the Constitution, after summoning it under Article 174(1) stating that despite his best efforts he was unable to find out who can command the confidence of the House and hence the House itself should inform him about such person. The Governor in this message should have asked the House to assemble and decide the matter within a reasonable period of time and then inform him. In this message the Governor could have also warned the House that if it did not make up its mind within a reasonable period of time, the House may have to be dissolved." In paragraph 128 of my decision, I observed that in case of a fractured electoral verdict, where no party or combination of parties appeared to have a majority in the House, "the only legal alternative left for the Governor is to ask the Assembly to inform him about the person in whom it has confidence. Who can be in a better position than the House itself to inform the Governor in whom it has confidence?" And in paragraph 131 of my verdict I stated, "Although this course of action has not been expressly mentioned in the Constitution, it logically flows out of Article 164(2) and is the only democratic alternative short of dissolution. In today's era of fractured verdicts, it is the only logical method."

I referred to Article 6 of the Japanese Constitution which states, "The Emperor shall appoint a Prime Minister as designated by the Diet" (the Japanese Parliament is called the Diet) and observed "Although we do not have a similar provision in our Constitution, while judicially interpreting it we can borrow from the democratic spirit of the Japanese Constitution."

Thus, when the Governor of Maharashtra could not find any party or combination of parties, which appeared to have a majority in the Assembly, before recommending imposition of President's Rule he should have sent a message to the House under Article 175(2), after summoning it under Article 174(1), asking the House to assemble, deliberate and then inform him within a reasonable period of time in whom it has confidence, so that he could be appointed Chief Minister.

In Bommai's case it was held that imposition of President's Rule was a very serious step and was a last option, to be resorted to only when all other recourses failed. In Maharashtra, as in UP in 1996, there was an option left, as referred to above. Hence without resorting to it, recommending imposition of President's Rule straightaway was clearly unconstitutional.

Some people may ask what use such a step would have been when the political leaders were unable to come to a compromise?

The answer was given in paragraph 134 of my judgment. "In my opinion, if the elected members are permitted to come together and meet in the House, then a Socratic debate may take place and it is possible that a solution may emerge. When two or more persons are sitting separately they may not be able to resolve their differences but when they come together it is possible that by discussions and negotiations some compromise may come about. This is the democratic method also. The elected representatives may put pressure on their leaders to give up their intransigent and uncompromising attitude and adopt a more flexible approach."

It must be remembered that elections are a costly affair and frequent polls are a recourse which a poor country like India can ill-afford. Also, frequent elections were one of the causes of the collapse of the Weimar Republic and Hitler coming to power in 1933. Hence every effort should be made to avoid them.

If elected representatives are not allowed to meet in the House, should they meet in a tennis court, as happened in France during the French Revolution of 1789?

(The writer is a former judge of the Supreme Court of India.)

**POINTCOUNTERPOINT**

EVERYTHING IS GOING FINE. TALKS ARE ON IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AND A DECISION WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME.

— SHIV SENA PRESIDENT  
**UDDHAV THACKERAY**



OUR MEETING WITH UDDHAV THACKERAY WAS A COURTESY CALL. THE FACT THAT WE ARE MEETING IS ITSELF A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT.

—MAHARASHTRA CONGRESS CHIEF  
**BALASAHEB THORAT**

**Shed the protectionist mindset**

Keeping in mind the criticality of being an integral part of the global supply chain to achieve a \$5 trillion economy, India needs to reconsider its decision on RCEP



UTTAM GUPTA

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a conglomeration of 10 members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) viz. Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, The Philippines, Myanmar, Brunei, Laos and Cambodia plus six others viz. Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, China and India. If it really sees the light of day with all 16 members intact, the group will cover 3.6 billion people or almost 50 per cent of the world's population and account for nearly 40 per cent of the global GDP (Gross Domestic Product).

India is aiming to double its GDP to \$5 trillion by 2024-25. To achieve this, it is looking inter alia to doubling its exports from the current over \$500 billion to \$1 trillion and increasing agricultural exports 2.5 times from \$40 billion to \$100 billion. In this backdrop, the RCEP with a combined GDP of \$30 trillion presents, at least on paper, a huge opportunity that the country can't afford to miss.

Since 2012 (when the RCEP was mooted), 29 rounds of negotiations have already been held. During the ASEAN Summit (November 11-15, 2018), Prime Minister Narendra Modi had called for early conclusion of the process. In the recent ministerial gathering held in Bangkok (October 10-12), even as discussions reached a deadlock over a dozen contentious issues, ministers were given 10 days to iron out the differences. If, they didn't succeed, Modi, with his famed "Midas touch" was expected to make it happen in the third RCEP leaders' summit.

However, on November 4, Modi announced India's decision not to join the group citing that "the present form of the RCEP Agreement does not fully reflect the basic spirit and the agreed guiding principles of RCEP. It also does not address satisfactorily India's outstanding issues and concerns". So, what are India's major concerns? And, are these valid?

First, India wants the reference date for undertaking tariff reduction to be extended to 2019 instead of 2014 planned initially. Since 2014, the Government has raised import duty on 3,500 items. In this backdrop, if for the purpose of phasing out duties, it were to use 2014 as a reference point, this benefit will be lost. The Indian stance is perfectly logical as the quotation date for commencement of tariff cuts has to be in sync with the date the agreement takes effect.

Second, under the Most Favored Nation (MFN) clause, the investment or service related concessions given to a trading partner under a bilateral treaty have to be automatically extended to all other members of the group without any time gap. India was not inclined to accept this. This stance is illogical. MFN is a cardinal principle governing World Trade Organisation (WTO) — the international body dealing with global rules of trade. India should not be seen as taking a stance which is inconsistent with WTO rules.

Third, India wanted an "automatic trigger safeguard mechanism." What it really means is that in the event of import of a particular commodity exceeding a certain number (also known as threshold), this clause will automatically kick in, giving the right to the importing country (read: India) to apply higher tariff to prevent a surge. This stance is untenable as it militates against the principle of free international trade based on comparative advantage.

INDIA'S APPROACH TO NEGOTIATIONS ON RCEP IS OVERLY PROTECTIONIST. BARRING SHIFTING THE REFERENCE DATE FOR UNDERTAKING TARIFF PHASE OUT TO 2019, IN ALL OTHER AREAS, THE GOVERNMENT'S STAND IS NOT TENABLE. IT IS BORNE OUT OF THE FEAR THAT JOINING THE GROUP WILL DEVASTATE OUR FARMERS AND SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES AT THE CURRENT JUNCTURE WHEN THE ECONOMY IS IN THE GRIP OF A SLOWDOWN. ITS WORRY IS MORE ON ACCOUNT OF A FLOOD OF IMPORTS FROM CHINA. THIS FEAR IS UNFOUNDED



The rationale behind eliminating tariffs on goods moving across international borders is to enable participating countries to maximise their respective gains from trade. This overarching objective will be defeated if a member gets the right to automatically increase the duty, which will prevent the exporting country from realising the full potential of its low cost. Moreover, if India insists on this clause, others too will want it. In that scenario, all members will end up compressing the market for each other.

Additionally, there will be practical problems in determining the threshold level (each member would like to keep it at the lowest level possible for extracting maximum mileage) and the number of commodities to be covered by this dispensation (each member will insist on having a large number). They will end up denying access to the market for each other instead of expansion, which is the overriding consideration behind forging a free market area.

India should shun the idea of automatic trigger safeguard mechanism. Instead, it needs to focus more on requiring member countries to refrain from giving subsidies, including "hidden" (as China does by making fuel, power and other inputs subsidised for enterprises) so that a situation of selling commodities at below cost (or dumping in plain words) in other members' markets is avoided. Further, it should insist on stricter and transparent rules of origin to ensure that China does not use other members' territories to flood the Indian market (it is learnt that our negotiators have not done enough home work in this area).

Fourth, India is opposing the demand of other members to seek trade concessions in its domestic space. Termed as "ratchet" in trade terminology, the concept implies that any policy changes will be automatically com-

mitted under RCEP agreement to all members after a fixed period. While, India is willing to give concessions in the services and investment segment, developed countries are pushing for similar concessions in goods trade as well.

Fifth, India is also not comfortable with the "standstill" clause, which binds a member to the current level of domestic liberalisation in services; hence can't be reversed in future. For instance, if the Modi Government wishes to withdraw the 51 per cent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Multi-brand retail, which was allowed earlier in 2012 by the UPA dispensation, it won't be able to do so.

Having taken a policy decision in the overall interest of our economy, there is nothing wrong in staying with it to ensure stability of the policy environment.

Finally, India has offered to phase out Customs Duty on imports from China on nearly 74 per cent of the tariff lines (jargon for a product as defined in lists of tariff rates; products can be sub-divided, the level of detail reflected in the number of digits in the Harmonised System code used to identify the product) as against 90 per cent of tariff lines on imports from all other members. China refused to join negotiations on this offer which it considers highly restrictive.

To sum up, India's approach to negotiations on RCEP is overly protectionist. Barring shifting the reference date for undertaking tariff phase out to 2019, in all other areas, the Government's stand is not tenable. It is borne out of the fear that joining the group will devastate our farmers and small-scale industries at the current juncture when the economy is in the grip of a slowdown. Its worry is more on account of a flood of imports from China. This fear is unfounded.

First, under the agreement, tariff elimination is mooted over a reasonably long period of up to 20 years and it should be possible to backload most of it, especially on sensitive items. Any apprehension of an adverse effect in the near-term is misplaced. The Government should not allow its decision to be obliterated by the present state of the economy.

Second, the handicap of domestic industry is more due to local factors such as the high cost of power, fuel (currently, neither is under the Goods and Services Tax, which means suppliers are not eligible for Input Tax Credit resulting in a cascading effect on cost. Besides, the excise duty and Value Added Tax are also high), logistics, capital and so on. If only these costs are lowered, "Made in India" products can compete with the lowest priced goods from anywhere in the world.

Third, we also need to look at the potential that China offers for boosting India's exports. The Chinese economy is undergoing a metaphorical transformation from export-driven (until hitherto) to domestic consumption and from industry to services. According to an estimate, China has plans to import goods and services worth \$12 trillion over five years. India should tap this potential market.

Keeping in mind the criticality of being an integral part of the global supply chain to achieve a \$5 trillion economy, India needs to reconsider its decision. The Government should shed its present tough stance on MFN, safeguard mechanism, "standstill" and "ratchet." On the offer to China, this may be improved to 80-85 per cent (from the 74 per cent already on the table). With a flexible mindset, it should consider joining RCEP which is expected to be sealed in March 2020.

(The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst)

**Answer to power woes blowing in the wind?**

The speed at which India is progressing on its wind energy agenda is not encouraging, whereas the targets the country has set itself are very ambitious. Why is there such a major disconnect between plan and action?



KOTA **SRIRAJ**

Many environmental sceptics will write off wind energy as a resource that has literally gone with the wind and rightly so, as India still has a long way to go before it can say that wind power has come to play a pivotal role in becoming the alternate source to fossil fuels.

Having said this, wind energy obviously cannot be written off as it has tremendous potential that is just waiting to be tapped. The specific circumstances in India are not able to create an enabling environment for the full-fledged harnessing of this amazing pollution-free sustainable and renewable power resource.

The speed at which India is progressing on its wind energy agenda is not encouraging whereas the targets the country has set itself are very ambitious.

Why is there such a major disconnect between plan and action? Is it due to the lack of a cohesive vision?

For instance, India has set an ambitious target of achieving 175 gigawatt (GW) renewable energy capacity by 2022. As per the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy's figures, at the end of 2018, India had an installed capacity of 35 GW. Hence, the jump from 35 GW to 175 GW by 2022 sure looks ambitious and maybe a tad unachievable, not because the target is high but because there is an absence of aggressive policy-backed implementation efforts and initiatives to achieve the same.

The world is witnessing a major shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy, mainly due to the rising awareness regarding their ill-effects.

Thanks to this awakening, the cost of renewable energy infrastructure is coming down rapidly elsewhere in the world, but in India this fall in installation rates is not translating into renewed enthusiasm for wind energy and this is concerning. The full potential of wind energy, if and when harnessed, has the ability to mitigate climate change and pollution together. In our renewable energy sector, the emphasis on grand plans and commitments is given primary importance, whereas time-bound execution of projects is sorely missing. Yet another pressing factor is going to make reliance on renewable energy compulsory sooner than later. According to a



study by the Indian Statistical Institute, the projected domestic social cost of coal-based power generation will be too high by 2024-25. This will necessitate reduction in building of new coal-based power plants and render the operations of the existing ones unviable. At a time such as this, a fully-developed portfolio of renewable energy options will be able to shoulder the burden of India's energy demand. However, this portfolio, with a robust GW capacity cannot happen overnight and needs a sufficient run up, which is not happening in the country today.

Senior environmentalists and policymakers must understand that

though time is short, it is also ripe for harnessing wind energy. This is because the technology is available and energy storage is improving exponentially as a place of innovation is taking place. Hence, it will be much more easy to adopt wind energy today than ever before.

Wind energy cannot be seen as a back-up resource or a plan B. Renewable power sources, especially the trio of solar, wind and hydro power are going to be the mainstay of the future energy sector of the country. To make this happen India must invest appropriately also.

According to the estimates of the US-based Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), the country will require \$500 to \$700 billion in renewable energy and supporting grid investment over the coming decade in order to meet its renewable energy targets. Some immediate steps can go a long way to counter the wind ener-

gy generation slowdown.

India must first, bring policy consensus and ensure that implementation and execution remain the strong points of its policy. Also, a monthly monitoring of the hurdles being faced by the renewable energy sector will help in smooth scaling up of the wind energy portfolio.

In addition to this, the authorities may want to prepare a compelling mix of wind and solar energy generation options for small and medium investors as this will raise awareness and present a major business opportunity too. The proper and viable storage of energy is an ongoing issue, which needs to be taken care of as well.

Wind energy has a potential that is still waiting to be tapped and India can easily sail through any future energy crisis only if it has got the wind in its sails.

(The writer is an environmental journalist.)



**BEIJING NEEDS TO STEP BACK A LITTLE**

John Tsang, Hong Kong's former financial secretary, defeated by Carrie Lam for the chief executive's post, has said that given the imbalance of power between protesters and the Chinese Government, the latter must take the initiative to de-escalate the force it is using. Coming from a pro-establishment figure it is a striking statement. Yet it will almost certainly go unheard by Beijing.

(The Guardian editorial)

# Sensex tumbles on weak macro data, rupee woes

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark BSE Sensex on Wednesday fell 229 points as concerns over poor macro data and confusion over US-China trade deal persisted. Further, continued unrest in Hong Kong led to fall in regional markets, also impacting sentiment on Indian bourses. A sharp depreciation in the Indian rupee too added to investors' woes, traders said. The rupee dropped below the 72-level against the US dollar in intra-day trade. After gyrating 386 points during the day, the 30-share Sensex ended 229.02 points, or 0.57 per cent, lower at 40,116.06.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty fell 73 points, or 0.61 per cent, to end at 11,840.45. Yes Bank was the top loser in the Sensex pack cracking 6.51 per cent, followed by SBI, Axis Bank, Vedanta, Sun Pharma, ICICI Bank, IndusInd Bank, ITC, Infosys and Tech Mahindra, shedding up to 3.69 per cent.

On the other hand, TCS, RIL, HUL, Maruti and NTPC rose up to 3.76 per cent.

Posing questions over the much-anticipated trade deal, US President Donald Trump dubbed China a cheater on trade even as he seeks an initial settlement to calm an 18-month trade war,

adding to the uncertainty over the deal between the two countries. Bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul settled up to 1.82 per cent lower violent protests in Hong Kong.

Exchanges in Europe were also trading in the red in their respective early deals.

In the forex market, the Indian rupee plunged 57 paise to 72.04 against the US dollar intra-day. Besides global weakness, poor domestic factory output numbers dampened market mood, traders said.

The industrial production shrank by 4.3 per cent in September, registering the weakest performance in seven years due to output decline in manufacturing, mining and electricity sectors, as per official data released on Monday.

Market is now awaiting cues from consumer price inflation data, which is scheduled to be released later in the day.

Further, an SBI research report on Tuesday sharply cut the country's GDP growth forecast to 5 per cent for FY 2019-20 from the earlier projection of 6.1 per cent, raising concerns over the health of the economy.

Meanwhile, Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, fell 1.22 per cent to USD 61.30 per barrel.

# FinMin seeks suggestions for rationalising income tax, duties

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In perhaps the first instance, the finance ministry has kicked off the exercise to formulate the next budget by seeking suggestions on changes in direct and indirect taxes from industry and trade associations. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who had to announce additional measures to stimulate a slowing economy within a month of her maiden budget being approved by Parliament, is due to present the annual budget for the financial year 2020-21 on February 1.

While the ministry holds pre-budget consultations with representatives of different sec-

tors and stakeholders, the Department of Revenue in the finance ministry perhaps for the first time put out circular seeking suggestions for changes in income tax rates for both individuals and corporates as well as in indirect taxes such as excise and customs duty.

The November 11 circular asked industry and trade associations to give "suggestions for changes in the duty structure, rates and broadening of tax base on both direct and indirect taxes giving economic justification for the same."

"Your suggestions and views may be supplemented and justified by relevant statistical information about the production, prices, revenue

implication of the changes suggested and any other information to support your proposal," it said.

After her maiden budget on July 5, Sitharaman on September 20 announced a cut in corporate income taxes for domestic companies to 22 per cent from 30 per cent previously. This would bring effective corporate tax rate, including all additional levies, to about 25.2 per cent, for companies that are not receiving any incentives or exemptions.

New manufacturing companies formed after October 1 will enjoy a 15 per cent (effective rate of 17 per cent) corporate income tax rate, against 25 per cent previously.

The move is estimated to result in Rs 1.45 lakh crore in revenue loss for the government during 2019-20.

Subsequent to this, there have been demands for a reduction in income tax rates for individuals as well so as to put more money in the hands of the common man for a consumption-led revival of the economy. India's economic growth had slipped to a six-year low of 5 per cent in the April-June quarter and the revival may take a few quarters despite announcements to boost real estate and financial sectors. "As regards direct taxes, while forwarding your proposals, please take into consideration the recent initia-

tives of the government to reduce corporate tax rates applicable to domestic companies" provided they do not avail of any other tax rebate or concession, the orders said.

"The government policy with reference to direct taxes in the medium term is to phase out tax incentives, deductions, and exemptions while simultaneously rationalising the rates of tax. It would be also desirable that while forwarding the suggestions/recommendations, positive externalities arising out of the said recommendations and their quantification are also indicated," it said.

With the GST Council, an umbrella body comprising of central and state ministers, the

final decision-making authority on the goods and services tax (GST), the order said that GST-related requests are not examined as part of the annual budget. It, however, sought suggestions related to customers and central excise duty.

The suggestions have been sought by November 21.

"The request for correction of inverted duty structure, if any for a commodity, should necessarily be supported by value addition at each stage of manufacturing of the commodity. It would not be feasible to examine suggestions that are either not clearly explained or which are not supported by adequate justification/statistics," the order said.

# Stabilise IT infrastructure, reduce multiple compliances for GST success: Experts

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

India should stabilise information technology infrastructure and consider reduction in multiple compliances under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) to ensure long-term successful implementation of the indirect tax regime, say several experts here.

Highlighting the now-abolished GST regime in Malaysia and the nearly 25-year-old continued implementation of the indirect tax in Singapore, they said India should now move towards further simplification of GST and timely issuance of clar-

ifications considering the varied advance rulings.

Nirmal Singh, partner-GST at Nangia Andersen LLP, said policy makers have been engaged with stakeholders to iron out any impediment and are taking necessary steps to ensure smooth implementation and transition to GST.

"However, India should work towards stabilising IT infrastructure for GST compliances and also there should not be frequent amendments in GST laws besides effective and careful implementation of anti-profiteering law," he suggested.

Citing the example of other

countries, Singh said some of the reasons debated for abolition of GST in Malaysia were rising living costs, inflation and the perception of being not consumer/business friendly.

"As opposed to this, India has been able to manage these aspects," he said.

According to Lau Zheng Zhou, research manager at the Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS), Malaysia started GST effective from April 1, 2015 with the standard rate of 6 per cent.

However, GST was perceived to be broadly unpopular with the general public and had

partly caused the defeat of the then government in the May 9, 2018 general elections.

"As promised in the election manifesto by the new governing coalition Pakatan Harapan, the GST was zero-rated on June 1, 2018 and subsequently replaced with sales and service tax (SST) starting September 1, 2018," he said.

Referring to GST in Malaysia and Singapore, Lau highlighted the rebate system in Singapore to cushion the blow.

Asked what lessons could India draw from Singapore and Malaysia, he said compared to Malaysia, Singapore selected a

low rate of GST to start off with, and a rebate system was also employed to soften the blow of the GST, which benefited lower income groups on an annual income of less than SGD 30,000.

Lau said the collection system is also facilitated by advanced information technology to help in the accounting of taxes.

According to Suresh Varanasi, partner at law firm AZB & Partners, India stands in a far better position in terms of implementation of the GST laws as compared to Malaysia. "However, India should

continue to simplify the technical processes/procedures relating to filing of returns and obtaining refunds to enhance the ease of doing business in India," he said.

Varanasi said India should focus on rendering the process and procedures easier for the taxpayers and introduce greater stability in the GST laws in order to safeguard itself from a situation like Malaysia.

He said the unique structure of Indian GST laws would contribute significantly to the total revenue of India in the long term and would also enhance ease of doing business.

## NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	11908.30	11946.80	11823.20	11840.45	-73.00
BRITANNIA	3271.00	3299.00	3200.00	3270.75	151.20
TCS	2118.00	2183.80	2118.00	2179.00	78.05
RELIANCE	1430.00	1475.90	1430.00	1469.10	41.30
NESTLEIND	14108.45	14329.60	14070.25	14223.00	114.55
BAJAJFINSV	8888.00	9027.00	8855.55	8970.00	66.70
HINDUNILVR	2084.00	2094.90	2072.45	2091.10	9.75
TITAN	1155.70	1167.00	1150.10	1158.20	2.30
NTPC	117.90	119.25	117.55	118.40	0.15
MARUTI	7130.00	7169.85	7095.00	7145.00	7.70
EIGHERMOT	21370.00	21824.00	21200.00	21386.00	9.10
HEROMOTOCO	2627.00	2677.00	2575.40	2594.00	0.00
HCLTECH	1150.00	1156.10	1134.70	1142.90	-3.05
ASIANPAINT	1773.75	1787.00	1756.70	1769.00	-4.95
M&M	574.00	580.90	572.00	573.05	-1.95
ULTRACEMCO	4137.05	4172.40	4105.10	4122.35	-14.70
HDFCBANK	1261.95	1270.00	1253.60	1258.00	-6.75
KOTAKBANK	1617.00	1628.00	1611.00	1606.00	-10.90
BAJFINANCE	4166.90	4175.00	4132.00	4136.55	-32.50
BAJAJ-AUTO	3230.00	3245.00	3190.80	3204.00	-33.35
TATAMOTORS	171.50	176.00	169.40	170.20	-1.80
INFRAEEL	221.90	221.90	216.05	218.20	-2.35
ONGC	139.10	140.40	137.50	137.50	-1.60
HDFC	2227.95	2231.95	2195.45	2207.45	-27.10
IOC	135.60	135.60	133.15	133.95	-1.65
COALINDIA	215.90	216.00	206.20	207.10	-2.75
WIPRO	257.30	259.00	252.15	252.95	-3.50
POWERGRID	192.00	194.35	188.30	189.10	-2.65
UPL	551.00	553.75	538.50	541.00	-7.85
BHARTIARTL	372.10	373.40	366.15	366.15	-5.35
BPCL	514.00	523.00	507.40	510.00	-7.60
IT	1418.45	1419.85	1389.05	1393.80	-23.20
JSWSTEEL	251.00	254.70	247.35	247.75	-4.15
CPIA	452.00	455.40	446.00	446.55	-8.30
ICFYE	696.50	700.00	687.75	691.45	-12.95
AXISBANK	496.80	497.00	483.30	487.00	-9.80
TATASTEEL	400.90	408.85	392.70	393.45	-8.00
DREDDY	2820.00	2823.85	2755.00	2758.00	-57.75
SUNPHARMA	420.00	426.90	410.00	412.55	-8.90
TECHM	768.00	773.80	746.00	754.05	-16.35
ITC	258.90	259.25	253.15	253.70	-5.75
INDUSINDBK	1440.50	1462.45	1408.55	1411.20	-33.85
AXISBANK	733.70	737.40	707.85	710.20	-23.50
VEDL	152.40	154.45	147.65	147.20	-5.00
HINDALCO	197.05	201.95	192.35	193.50	-6.65
SBIN	316.05	318.60	305.65	306.85	-11.40
GRASIM	760.00	768.85	736.25	739.00	-28.10
ADANIEXPORTS	391.00	391.80	369.40	370.80	-17.10
ZEELE	302.30	302.30	290.00	291.20	-14.20
GAIL	129.90	129.90	123.25	124.05	-6.30
YESBANK	74.40	75.30	67.10	68.85	-4.15

## NIFTY NEXT 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	2853.85	2874.65	2821.20	2828.60	-152.55
HDFCAMC	3385.00	3650.00	3376.05	3644.95	298.15
HDFCLIFE	572.00	593.00	572.00	591.00	20.00
BANDHANBNK	552.25	574.70	552.25	564.65	14.80
SBILIFE	984.50	1000.95	966.20	992.90	22.95
ICICIGI	1345.20	1369.00	1342.95	1365.55	26.75
ASHOKLEY	78.50	82.65	77.20	80.45	1.25
NHPC	23.95	24.25	23.50	23.70	0.35
PEL	1769.40	1824.50	1761.55	1804.85	23.80
SRTRANSFIN	1118.95	1151.95	1119.95	1131.90	11.95
PIDILITIND	1321.00	1346.40	1316.00	1332.90	11.80
ICICIPRULI	531.95	537.30	526.15	528.90	3.95
BAJAJHOLDING	3711.00	3787.55	3707.45	3722.65	11.80
MOTHERSUMI	134.20	136.45	132.75	134.45	0.25
OFSS	3110.00	3154.15	3106.00	3110.00	-9.00
SHREECEM	19825.00	20268.75	19700.00	19713.20	-70.80
INDIGO	1482.00	1494.95	1466.40	1476.00	-5.35
UBL	1252.00	1260.00	1237.00	1240.20	-6.20
DMAT	1969.80	1989.95	1952.50	1952.50	-13.70
BERGEPAINT	489.00	495.00	478.70	479.50	-4.15
BOSCHLTD	15299.95	15495.00	15052.10	15198.85	-132.80
GODREJCP	733.00	743.10	720.00	726.00	-6.60
LUPIN	754.00	758.80	727.00	729.05	-6.70
CONCOR	582.00	591.70	575.10	576.80	-5.55
ACC	1505.20	1525.00	1485.00	1490.00	-14.45
HINDZINC	210.30	210.90	208.00	208.05	-2.25
AUROPHARMA	445.00	457.95	427.65	432.45	-5.25
MCDOWELL-N	627.90	634.00	617.90	619.00	-8.00
NIACL	152.40	159.40	148.55	149.70	-2.15
MARICO	371.30	374.35	363.85	365.80	-5.50
PAGEIND	23987.00	24140.60	23500.00	23600.00	-392.75
PETRONET	284.00	285.00	278.00	278.25	-4.80
COPAL	1599.00	1602.60	1547.70	1560.00	-29.85
PEC	113.00	113.60	110.30	110.60	-2.20
HINDPETRO	296.90	299.20	288.00	292.45	-6.25
CADILAHAC	231.85	232.55	223.15	225.40	-4.95
PNB	61.85	62.50	60.05	60.35	-1.35
DABUR	479.00	480.65	462.45	465.00	-11.05
PGHH	11208.00	11299.00	10940.00	10940.00	-267.90
NMDC	103.75	107.50	100.25	101.15	-2.50
SIEMENS	1689.00	1695.00	1624.00	1632.00	-43.20
DIWELAB	1710.00	1719.00	1660.00	1665.50	-45.05
HAVELLS	693.50	704.10	671.70	674.25	-18.40
BIOCEN	262.25	264.15	255.05	256.50	-7.00
DLF	210.20	214.40	201.15	202.60	-5.60
AMBIJACEM	200.15	202.20	194.55	194.60	-5.55
BANKBARODA	97.00	97.35	93.00	94.45	-3.05
L&T	99.15	100.40	95.10	95.40	-3.55
GICRE	273.80	286.70	265.00	270.10	-10.95
IDEA	3.75	4.00	3.65	3.70	-0.30
IBULHSGFN	241.00	245.60	215.20	218.10	-20.45

## BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP	VENKYS
YESBANK	74.60	75.35	67.20	68.25	MFSL
VSTIND	4163.00	4349.95	4163.00	4276.65	ICICIPRULI
IBULHSGFN	240.25	245.40			

# Seven killed in Kabul car bomb blast

AFF ■ KABUL

At least seven people were killed and ten wounded, including four foreigners, when a minivan packed with explosives detonated during Kabul's morning rush hour Wednesday, an interior ministry spokesman said.

The spokesman, Nasrat Rahimi, said the bomb — targeting an SUV belonging to a private Canadian security company, GardaWorld — had gone off in a neighbourhood which is near the interior ministry and north of Kabul airport.

"As a result, seven of our people were killed and ten, including four foreign members of the security company, were wounded," he said, describing the dead as Afghan civilians. He did not confirm the nationalities of the foreigners involved.

Interior Minister Massoud Andarabi said that one of those killed was a 13-year-old child heading to school.

"The enemies of our people should know that our people are determined for peace, nothing can stop them from achieving peace," he said.

A source at the interior ministry said the blast was detonated by a suicide bomber in the vehicle, which officials had earlier described as a car.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Both the Taliban and the Islamic State group are active in the city,



Security personnel gather at the site of car bomb attack in Kabul, Afghanistan on Wednesday

the way" for the start of unofficial direct talks between his government and the Taliban, who have long refused to negotiate with the administration in Kabul.

Over the past year the US and the Taliban had been holding direct talks seeking a deal that would bring the insurgents to the table for peace talks with Kabul, and allow the US to begin withdrawing troops.

But President Donald Trump abruptly ended the negotiations in September, citing continued Taliban violence.

Most experts agree that there is no military solution in Afghanistan, and that talks will have to restart again eventually.

Until then, however, civilians continue to pay a disproportionate price in the long-running and brutal war.

Last month, the United Nations released a report saying an "unprecedented" number of civilians were killed or wounded in Afghanistan from July to September this year.

The figures — 1,174 deaths and 3,139 injured from July 1 until September 30 — represent a 42 percent increase over the same period last year.

The UN laid most of the blame at the feet of "anti-government elements" such as the Taliban, who have been carrying out an insurgency in Afghanistan for more than 18 years.

# PM Modi hopes BRICS will enhance eco, cultural links

PTI ■ BRASILIA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday hoped that the BRICS summit will enhance the economic and cultural linkages between the member nations as he arrived in the Brazilian capital to take part in the two-day meeting.

"Reached Brazil to take part in the BRICS Summit. Will also meet various world leaders during this visit," Modi tweeted after his arrival here.

On the sidelines of the 11th BRICS Summit, Modi will meet Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro to discuss ways to enhance the bilateral strategic partnership.

The Prime Minister is scheduled to hold separate bilateral meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping on Wednesday.

"I am sure the BRICS Summit will enhance cultural and economic linkages between BRICS nations," he said.

BRICS is the acronym coined for an association of five



Brazilian army soldiers prepare a security base prior to the 11th edition of the BRICS Summit at the Itamaraty Palace in Brasilia (Brazil)

major emerging national economies — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. This year's event is being held under the theme BRICS: Economic Growth for an Innovative Future.

This will be the sixth time Modi is participating in the BRICS summit, his first being at Fortaleza, also in Brazil in 2014.

Describing his welcome as "as vibrant as BRICS itself", Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs Raveesh

Kumar tweeted, "PM @narendramodi arrives in Brasilia to participate in the 11th #BRICS Summit. This year's Summit under the theme 'BRICS: Economic Growth for an Innovative Future' will further strengthen the traditional ties among the BRICS countries."

During the summit, the five major economies of the world will aim to significantly strengthen their cooperation in science, technology and innovation, Modi said in his departure statement.

# Air pollution in Afghan capital is deadlier than war

AP ■ KABUL

Yousuf fled with his family from his home in eastern Afghanistan eight years ago to escape the war, but he couldn't escape tragedy. In the capital, Kabul, five of his children died, not from violence or bombings, but from air pollution, worsened by bitter cold and poverty.

At the camp for displaced people they live in, they and other families keep warm and cook by burning the garbage that surrounds them. One by one over the years, each of the children got chest infections and other maladies from the pollution and never made it to age seven, he told The Associated Press. The 60-year-old has nine surviving children.

"We didn't have enough money for the doctor and medicine... I can barely feed my children," said Yousuf, who works as a porter in a vegetable market earning barely a dollar a day. Like many Afghans he uses only one name.

Afghanistan's pollution may be even deadlier than its

war, now 18 years long.

There are no official statistics on how many Afghans die of pollution-related illnesses, but the research group State of Global Air said more than 26,000 deaths could be attributed to it in 2017. In contrast, 3,483 civilians were killed that year in the Afghan war, according to the United Nations. Kabul, a city of some 6 million, has become one of the most polluted cities in the world — ranking in the top of the list among other polluted capitals such as India's New Delhi or China's Beijing. Decades of war have wrecked the city's infrastructure and caused waves of displaced people.

On most days, a pall of smog and smoke lies over the city. Old vehicles pump toxins into the air, as do electrical generators using poor quality fuel. Coal, garbage, plastic and rubber are burned by poor people at home, as well as at the many brick kilns, public baths and bakeries. Many apartment buildings have no proper sanitation system, and garbage is

stacked on roadsides and sidewalks.

The large majority of victims are poisoned by the air in their own homes, as families burn whatever they can to keep warm in Kabul's winters, with frequent sub-zero temperatures and snow. Children and elderly are particularly vulnerable.

At least 19,400 of the 2017 deaths were attributable to household pollution, which also contributed to a loss of two years and two months of life expectancy at birth, according to the State of Global Air survey.

Yousuf's camp, home to more than a hundred families, has no proper water or sanitation system and is surrounded by garbage dumps. His and other families' children search through the garbage for paper, cloth, sticks or plastic, anything that can be burned for fuel.

"We are so poor, and we have lots of problems, we don't have enough money for medicine, wood or coal for heating, so this is our life, my children collect garbage from dump

yards and we use it for cooking and heating to keep the kids warm," he added.

Decades of war have worsened the damage to Afghanistan's environment and have made it a huge challenge to address them. Environmental issues are far down the list of priorities for a government struggling with basic security issues, rampant corruption and a plunging economy.

Three or four decades ago, "it was a wish for people to come to Kabul and breathe this air," said Zzatullah Sediqi, deputy director for the National Environmental Protection Agency. But in the wars since, "we lost all our urban infrastructure for water, electricity, public transportation, green areas, all these things," he said.

Kabul's environmental department has launched a new program to control old vehicles, one significant source of pollution.

"Fighting pollution is an important as fighting terrorism," said Mohammad Kazim Humayoun, the department's

director. Authorities warn that this winter is expected to be colder than usual and fear that will only increase the use of pollution-creating fuels to keep warm. The Kabul municipality has also called on residents to stop burning garbage for heat and instead use fuel.

"If everyone follows the instructions laid out by Kabul Municipality, the pollution could be controlled," the municipality's spokeswoman, Nargis Mohmand, said. But if not, "then we might live with this untreatable wound for years to come."

But fuel is either too expensive or not available for many in Kabul. Electrical heaters are too pricey for most, and power outages are frequent.

Doctors at Kabul's Indira Gandhi Children's Hospital say they've seen the numbers of patients with pollution-related illnesses increase, though they could not give exact figures.

In the winter, hundreds of children a day sometimes come in, suffering from respiratory illnesses, according to hospital officials.

# Fireworks expected as televised Trump impeachment hearings open

AFF ■ WASHINGTON

Donald Trump faces the most perilous challenge of his three-year presidency as public hearings convened as part of the impeachment probe against him open under the glare of television cameras on Wednesday.

Democrats in the House of Representatives plan to prove over several weeks of hearings that the US leader abused his office by seeking Ukraine's help for his 2020 reelection campaign, and sought to extort his Kiev counterpart into finding dirt on Democratic rival Joe Biden.

Trump says the inquiry is "corrupt" and "illegal," and maintains he did nothing wrong.

"Democrats in Washington would rather pursue outrageous hoaxes and delusional witch hunts, which are going absolutely nowhere. Don't worry about it," he said confidently Tuesday in a speech to the Economic Club of New York.

But the investigation threatens to make him only the third US president to be impeached, after Andrew Johnson in 1868 and Bill Clinton in 1998, and placed on trial in the Senate for possible removal from office.

"On the basis of what the witnesses have had to say so far, there are any number of potentially impeachable offenses: including bribery, including high crimes and misdemeanors," House Intelligence



Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, who will lead the hearings, told NPR radio Tuesday.

Neither Johnson or Clinton was convicted and removed. But in 1974 Richard Nixon resigned in the face of certain impeachment and removal from office for the Watergate scandal.

Hearings are expected to be fiery as a series of government officials take the stand to testify on Trump's Ukraine machinations during the middle of this year.

Both sides have spent the past several days rehearsing for the showdown. Coming just one year before national elections, the hearings carry great risks for both parties and no certain reward, with the US

election deeply divided and weary of Washington infighting.

Polls show a slim majority of Americans favor impeaching the president.

But they also show that Trump's sizable voter base, which delivered his shock victory in 2016, rejects the allegations. Trump has focused his personal defense on ensuring Republicans in Congress heed their views.

Republicans have accused the soft-spoken and prosecutorial Schiff of an unfair and unconstitutional process, and they have attacked witnesses as biased against the president.

They have also sought, in closed door depositions over the last six weeks, to refocus

# Google healthcare data move makes some queasy

AFF ■ SAN FRANCISCO

Google on Tuesday defended a project aimed at modernizing healthcare while giving it access to medical data of millions of people.

Reports that Google was amassing medical data prompted a blog post by the internet giant revealing a project code-named "Nightingale," evidently in tribute to Florence Nightingale whose nursing work during the Crimean War in the 1850s is credited with turning such work into a profession. The news also caused the US Office for Civil Rights in the Department of Health and Human Services to launch an inquiry to make sure Google was obeying laws regarding

keeping people's medical information private, according to the Wall Street Journal.

Google has made no secret of its collaboration with health care providers on computing tools to improve patient care.

In the post Tuesday, Google released information about a collaboration with US health systems non-profit Ascension that includes moving data and analytics to a private, secure cloud hosted by the internet firm.

Ascension could also use Google computing tools to allow employees to communicate and collaborate securely in real time from different sites, according to the post by Google cloud industry products and solutions president Tariq

Shaukat. "All of Google's work with Ascension adheres to industry-wide regulations regarding patient data, and come with strict guidance on data privacy, security and usage," Shaukat said.

"To be clear: under this arrangement, Ascension's data cannot be used for any other purpose than for providing these services we're offering under the agreement, and patient data cannot and will not be combined with any Google consumer data."

The internet colossus disclosed little about what it is testing in Project Nightingale as it competes to be the preferred platform for patients and care providers. "It is a shame that the rush of distrust is hitting

this one for Google," said analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group.

"This is actually them trying to do something good. Project Nightingale is, for the most part, intended to improve the quality of healthcare." Google's cloud team works with dozens of healthcare service providers on technology to analyze medical data and make it readily available to patients and those treating them, according to the company.

"Google is really doubling-down on healthcare," said Wedbush Research managing director Daniel Ives.

"Health care is really the next frontier that Google, Amazon, IBM, Apple and others are going after."

# Nita Ambani on Metropolitan Museum of Art board

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Philanthropist and Chairperson of the Reliance Foundation Nita Ambani has been elected to the board of the prestigious The Metropolitan Museum of Art for her "truly exceptional" commitment to preserve and promote India's art and culture.

Chairman Daniel Brodsky of the museum, considered as the largest and most visited art museums in the world, announced that Ambani has been named its Honorary Trustee. Her election took place at the meeting of the board on Tuesday.

Welcoming Nita Ambani, 56, to the board, Brodsky, in a

statement, said that her "commitment to The Met and to preserving and promoting India's art and culture is truly exceptional. Her support has an enormous impact on the museum's ability to study and display art from every corner of the world."

Nita Ambani, wife of Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani, is the Founder and Chairperson of the Reliance Foundation, which has supported The Met since 2016, beginning with the exhibition 'Nasreen Mohamedi', which was the first museum retrospective of the artist's work in the United States and was also one of The Met Breuer's inaugural exhibitions.

Ambani is also a member of

The Met's International Council. The museum had announced in October 2017 that the Reliance Foundation promised a "generous gift" to support exhibitions that explore and celebrate the arts of India. It had not stated the amount of the gift. The museum had then described Nita and Mukesh Ambani as "great champions of The Met."

In a statement made at the time of the announcement of the gift in 2017, Nita Ambani had said that India has a rich heritage of art and culture that can be traced back to the fourth century B.C. She had said that the Foundation aims to recognize and promote the "valuable tradition" by offering opportunities

and platforms for Indian art not only within the country but at various institutions around the globe as well. "This partnership with The Met enables Indian art to be shown at an iconic institution and further encourages us to continue our work in the art world," she had said then.

The first exhibition to benefit from the Foundation's gift was 'Modernism on the Ganges: Raghbir Singh Photographs' that ran from October 2017 till January 2018, followed by 'Phenomenal Nature: Mrinalini Mukherjee' (June-September 2019). This exhibition marked the first comprehensive display of the renowned Indian sculptor's work in the United States.

# Chaos in Hong Kong as protests spread

AFP ■ HONG KONG

Pro-democracy protesters stepped up Wednesday a "blossom everywhere" campaign of road blocks and vandalism across Hong Kong that has crippled the international financial hub this week and ignited some of the worst violence in five months of unrest.

The new phase in the crisis, which has forced schools and shopping malls to close as well as the shutdown of large chunks of the vital train network, prompted police to warn on Tuesday the city was "on the brink of total collapse".

China, facing the biggest challenge to its rule of the territory since it was handed back by the British in 1997, has insisted it will not buckle to the pressure and warned of tougher security measures.

On Wednesday, commuters across many parts of the city woke to the increasingly familiar scenario of roads choked with bricks, bicycles, couches and other materials that had been laid out by the protesters overnight to block traffic.

Various lines on the subway, used by more than half of the city's 7.5 million people daily, were also suspended due to vandalism, forcing many workers to stay at home.

Meanwhile, masked protesters dressed in their signature black were locked in a series of tense standoffs at university campuses following battles on Tuesday that continued



A pro-democracy protester with protection gears holds a bottle of molotov cocktail on a bridge outside the Chinese University campus in Hong Kong on Wednesday. Police increased security around Hong Kong and its university campuses as they brace for more violence after sharp clashes overnight with anti-government protesters AP

through the night with police firing tear gas and rubber bullets.

The chaos was part of the largely anonymous protest movement's new strategy of "blossom everywhere", in which small groups of people target as many parts of the city as possible to cause maximum disruption and stretch police resources.

Protesters had until this week largely confined their

actions to evenings and the weekends.

The campaign began with an effort to shut down the train network and enforce a city-wide strike on Monday.

The already tense atmosphere escalated on Monday when a police officer shot an unarmed 21-year-old protester, leaving him in a critical condition.

It was only the third confirmed time a police officer had

shot someone with live bullets since the unrest began in June.

A masked person on Monday then doused a 57-year-old man, who had been arguing with protesters, with a flammable liquid and set him on fire. He was also hospitalised in a critical condition.

The protest movement has been fuelled by fears that China is choking the liberties and freedoms Hong Kong is meant to have under the terms of the

handover deal with the British.

Protesters are demanding the right to freely elect their leaders.

But instead of offering concessions, China has responded with ominous warnings that it is prepared to further curb freedoms, and that it wants tougher security measures in Hong Kong.

On Tuesday the People's Daily, the mouthpiece of China's ruling Communist

Party, warned that local district elections due to be held on November 24 may be cancelled if the protesters do not back down.

"Only by supporting the police force to decisively put down the riots can (Hong Kong) return to peace and hold fair elections, to help Hong Kong start again," the commentary said.

Other powerful arms of the Chinese state media have also again raised the prospect this week of the Chinese military being deployed in Hong Kong to end the crisis.

Still, China is not yet prepared to take such drastic action as military intervention as it plays a longer game of weakening and intimidating the protest movement, according to Ben Bland, Sydney-based director of the Southeast Asia Project at the Lowy Institute, a policy think-tank.

"It still seems, as far as we can tell, that the most likely response is going to continue to be led by the Hong Kong authorities and the Hong Kong police," Bland told AFP on Wednesday.

But the events this week have deepened concerns that Hong Kong's police cannot solve the crisis, and that a political solution must be found.

The police force's spokesman, Kong Wing-cheung, appeared to echo those fears on Tuesday.

"Hong Kong's rule of law has been pushed to the brink of total collapse," Kong said.

# Uncertainty in Bolivia as senator claims interim presidency

AP ■ LA PAZ (BOLIVIA)

Bolivians have new uncertainty to grapple with now that opposition Sen. Jeanine Añez declared herself interim president of the crisis-torn Andean country just hours after Evo Morales flew off to self-exile in Mexico.

Questions remained about who might rally around Añez, while Morales' supporters angrily accused her of trying to seize power in her declaration Tuesday, raising the prospect of more troubles following weeks of clashes over the disputed Oct. 20 presidential election.

Some people took to the streets cheering and waving national flags Tuesday night after Añez claimed the post of Senate leader, the position next in line for the presidency. Furious supporters of Morales responded by trying to force their way to the Congress building in La Paz yelling, "She must quit!"

Añez, a women's rights activist and former TV presenter, seemed in a tenuous position. She declared herself interim president even though she lacked a quorum in the Senate after Morales' party boycotted the session, and she wasn't sworn in by anyone before appearing on a balcony of the old presidential palace wearing the presidential sash.

"My commitment is to return democracy and tranquility to the country," she said. "They can never again steal our vote."

Morales resigned Sunday under pressure from Bolivia's military chief following the weeks of violent protests fed by allegations of electoral fraud in the Oct. 20 election, which he claimed to have won.

Although Añez met with Gen. Williams Kaliman, the armed forces commander, it was uncertain how much support she could count on from other power centers.

Morales resigned shortly after an Organization of American States audit reported widespread irregularities in the vote count. Bolivia's first indigenous president arrived in Mexico on Tuesday under a grant of asylum. But his resignation still needed to be approved by both houses of Congress, and lawmakers could not assemble the numbers needed for formal sessions.

Añez forged ahead anyway, arguing that Bolivia could not wait and be left in a power vacuum. After Morales quit, resignations by allies left vacancies in the only posts listed by the constitution as presidential successors — the vice president, the head of the Senate and the leader of the lower house.

Añez was a second-tier



opposition figure until Morales, Latin America's longest serving leader resigned after nearly 14 years in power.

She immediately tried to set differences with the socialist leader. She greeted supporters at an old palace instead of the nearby modern 26-story presidential palace with a heliport that was built by Morales and that his foes had criticized as one of his excesses. She also carried a Bible, which had been banned by Morales from the presidential palace after he reformed the constitution and recognized the Andean earth deity Pachamama instead of the Roman Catholic Church.

Morales said on Twitter from Mexico that Añez's "self-proclamation" was an affront to constitutional government. "Bolivia is suffering an assault on the power of the people," he wrote.

Even before Añez acted, thousands of his supporters were in the streets of the capital in peaceful demonstrations clamoring for his return. Military fighter jets flew repeatedly over La Paz in a show of force that infuriated Morales loyalists who were blocked by police and soldiers from marching to the main square. "We're not afraid!" shouted demonstrators, who believe Morales' departure was a coup.

d'état and an act of discrimination against Bolivia's indigenous communities.

"Evo was like a father to me. We had a voice, we had rights," said Maria Apasa, who like Morales is a member of the Aymara indigenous group.

Morales' detractors accused him of becoming increasingly authoritarian and rigging the election.

Morales was met at Mexico City's airport by Foreign Secretary Marcelo Ebrard after a flight from Bolivia on a Mexican government plane and repeated his allegations he had been forced to resign by a coup.

"The president of Mexico saved my life," Morales said, thanking President Andrés Manuel López Obrador for granting him asylum. He vowed to "continue the struggle."

Ebrard said Mexican diplomats had to scramble to arrange a flight path for the plane because some nations initially closed airspace to it. The plane stopped in Paraguay to refuel.

Morales' departure was a dramatic fall for the one-time llama shepherd from the Bolivian highlands and former coca growers' union leader who as president helped lift millions out of poverty, increased social rights and presided over

stability and high economic growth in South America's poorest country.

In the end, his downfall was prompted by his insistence on holding onto power. He ran for a fourth term after refusing to accept the results of a referendum that upheld term limits for the president — restrictions thrown out by a top court that critics contend was stacked in his favor.

Gen. Kaliman, the chief of the armed forces, announced a joint police-military operation in a television address Monday seeking to calm street fighting. He said the hope was to "avoid bloodshed and mourning of the Bolivian family," and he urged Bolivians to help restore peace.

Ronald Arias said he had left his home in El Alto and walked for three hours to his job in downtown La Paz because the cable car connecting the cities was suspended for security reasons and barricades blocked access to public transportation.

Arias, a native Aymara, said that thanks to Morales, his parents in the countryside gained access for the first time to running water and gas for cooking.

"I was so saddened by his resignation," he said. "A lot of people in El Alto shed tears for the president."

# Bushfire threat still high as Australia clean up begins

AFP ■ GLENREAGH

Australians on Wednesday began sifting through the ashes of hundreds of bushfires that have ravaged the country, relieved that their worst fears were unrealised — but wary of a long and brutal summer ahead.

Firefighters were still battling around 140 blazes across the country's eastern seaboard, but a respite from "catastrophic" weather conditions meant the danger from many fires was downgraded. The northern state of Queensland remained on high alert, with residents on the north shore of popular holiday town Noosa told to "leave immediately" to avoid an "unpredictable" fire burning nearby.

Underscoring the risks to residents and emergency responders, a firefighting helicopter crashed during waterbombing operations in the state. The pilot survived with "non-life-threatening injuries", a Queensland Ambulance Service spokesman told AFP. In the worst-hit areas of New South Wales, cooler southerly winds eased conditions — a stark contrast with the gale-force gusts and high temperatures that plagued firefighters for much of Tuesday. In all, 50 homes were damaged or destroyed, and

around 20 people were injured, but most populated areas were spared. Residents of the small towns of Glenreagh and Nana Glen returned to find houses intact, a nearby 150,000-hectare (370,000-acre) inferno having stopped just short of their doors.

But on nearby farmland, unlucky families faced homes destroyed and cars transformed into blackened husks.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services acting commissioner Michael Wassing said another wind change on Wednesday afternoon could worsen several large fires in difficult-to-access areas of the state.

"We've got another tough day today and there's an extended forecast that we're not out of the woods by any means," he said.

Tough conditions were expected to flare again in Queensland and New South Wales at the weekend as the temperature rises and winds pick up.

"We will not have all these fires contained before then," New South Wales Rural Fire Service commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said, adding that it could be "many, many weeks" before the situation is fully under control. "Unfortunately, what we need is rain... and there is certainly nothing in the forecast for

the foreseeable future that's going to make any discernible difference." More than 300 new fires broke in the state Tuesday, with 19 classified as emergencies. They spanned a distance of almost 1,000 kilometres (600 miles) — from the outskirts of Sydney north toward Brisbane.

"The losses, the damage, the consequences could have been simply enormous across such a broad geographic area," Fitzsimmons said.

New South Wales Police said they had begun investigating whether a small number of the blazes had been deliberately lit, as they made handful of arrests for suspected looting of fire-stricken properties.

The hot, dry continent of Australia has long experienced bushfires, but scientists say climate change is exacerbating extreme weather conditions, including a prolonged drought in the country's east that has created tinderbox-like conditions.

The Bureau of Meteorology says human-caused climate change is also "influencing the frequency and severity of dangerous bushfire conditions" by increasing temperatures, sapping moisture from the environment and causing an earlier and more extreme fire season.

# Mass pig slaughter stains South Korean river red

AFP ■ SEOUL

A river near the inter-Korean border turned red with the blood of pigs slaughtered as Seoul attempts to curb the spread of African swine fever.

South Korea has culled around 380,000 pigs since the first case of the haemorrhagic disease — which is not harmful to humans but is highly infectious in swine — was reported in September.

Pig cases are nearly always fatal and there is no antidote or vaccine, with the only known way to prevent the disease from spreading being a mass cull of livestock.

A local NGO said that heavy rains last week caused blood from a burial site near the inter-Korean border — where some 47,000 pig carcasses were piled up — to seep into the Imjin River on Sunday, turning some of the stream red.

"It made many people living in the area anxious and worried," Lee Seok-woo, who heads the NGO Yeoncheon Imjin River Civic Network, told AFP.

"What was also hard to endure was the odour. I heard many farmers couldn't work because of the unbearable smell. This should not have happened."

# BHIM UPI goes global, demo held in S'pore

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Singapore.

It is targeted to go fully live by February 2020 and cover thousands of terminals in Singapore, after the Reserve Bank of India's approval.

By February 2020, it is also expected that all RuPay cards, including domestic ones, will be acceptable in Singapore, the High Commission said in a release on Wednesday.

This is another achievement for fintech cooperation between India and Singapore, after the launch of RuPay International card and SBI's UPI based remittance app in May 2018 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had then also suggested the launch of BHIM UPI QR code-based payments internationally, said the commission.

"This is the first time that BHIM app has gone international," he said.

The project is being jointly developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and the Network for Electronic Transfers (NETS) of

India and Singapore, after the launch of RuPay International card and SBI's UPI based remittance app in May 2018 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had then also suggested the launch of BHIM UPI QR code-based payments internationally, said the commission.

Ashraf also witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Trade promotion Council of India (TPCI) and the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) for working towards access of the TPCI dashboard to Business sans Borders (BSB).

# India pledges \$5 m to UN Palestine refugee agency

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

India has pledged to contribute USD 5 million in 2020 to the UN Palestine refugee agency, even as it voiced concern over the agency's "dire" financial situation due to the funding gaps that risk its core services to the refugees in the fields of education and health.

India's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador K Nagaraj Naidu said as a mark of solidarity with the Palestine refugees, the Indian government has increased its annual financial contribution fourfold to the core budget of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), from USD 1.25 million in 2016 to USD 5 million in 2018.

"We have contributed USD 5 million in 2019 and pledge to contribute USD 5 million in 2020 also," he said while speaking at the General Assembly Fourth Committee meeting on the UNRWA for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

"India's support and solidarity with the 5.5 million Palestine refugees remains strong and abiding," he added.

India also appealed to other traditional donors of UNRWA to consider enhancing their contributions and non-donor member states to consider contributing to UNRWA in solidarity with the Palestine refugees.

Naidu, however, noted that UNRWA's resources come from voluntary contributions, with a limited donor base,

saying that this arrangement is already "fraught with uncertainties" of sudden crisis and it is critical that the faith of donors in the agency is restored.

Voicing concern over the agency's "dire" financial situation, Naidu said the funding gap of USD 89 million in 2019 has put to risk the agency's core services to the Palestine refugees, notably in the fields of education, health, and assistance to the most vulnerable ones.

About 3.1 million Palestine refugees depend on health services provided by UNRWA while the agency's schools educate 526,000 students every year, of which half are female. Keeping these services operational throughout the year is important, Naidu said.

He added that the agency has been able to overcome similar funding gaps in the past through innovative global fund raising campaign and outreach and internal cost-saving measures.

Naidu, however, cautioned that while these efforts continue, they may still not be adequate in 2019.

Highlighting India's ongoing capacity-building assistance in Palestine, Naidu said 150 Palestinian professionals are trained every year under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation programme and 100 meritorious Palestinian students are offered fully funded scholarships under the General Scholarship Scheme of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations every year.

# Venice underwater as tide sweeps through canal city

AFP ■ VENICE

Venice was hit by the high-tide Tuesday, with tourists wading through flooded streets to seek shelter as a fierce wind whipped up waves in St. Mark's Square.

The exceptionally intense "acqua alta", or high waters, peaked at 1.87 metres (six feet) as the flood alarm sounded across the Italian city of canals, the tide monitoring centre said.

"We're currently facing an exceptionally high tide. Everyone has been mobilised to cope with the emergency," Venice's mayor Luigi Brugnaro tweeted.

Only once since records began in 1923 has the water crept even higher, reaching 1.94 metres in 1966.

As emergency services took to the canals to survey the damage, Italian media reported that a 78-year old local had been killed by electric shock as the waters poured into his home. The coast guard laid on extra boats to serve as water ambulances.

Tables and chairs set out for aperitifs bobbed along alleyways in the dark, as locals and tourists alike waved aloft inside-out umbrellas, the water slopping over the top of even the highest waders and wellies.

Water taxis attempting to drop people off at the glamorous and historic hotels along the Grand Canal discovered the gangways had been washed away, and had to help passengers clamber through windows. "It will be a long night," Brugnaro tweeted, saying that as the water level began to drop again "the fears of a few hours ago are now being replaced by an assessment of the damage done".

He said he would declare a state of disaster for the city.

The exceptional flood, which he blamed on climate change, was "a wound that will leave a permanent mark".

At the sumptuous Gritti Palace, which has played host to royals and celebrities over the decades, including Ernest Hemingway, Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, the decadent bar was largely underwater.

Rich tapestries were piled onto tables, while the waters lapped around velvet sofas and leather-bound books.

A couple of French tourists caught out said they had "effectively swum" after some of the wooden platforms placed around the city in areas prone to flooding overturned.

Since 2003, a massive infrastructure project has been underway to protect the city, but it has been plagued by cost overruns, scandals and delays.

The plan calls for the construction of 78 floating gates to protect Venice's lagoon during high tides.

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Tourists and their luggage wade in a flooded street after a high tide, in Venice, Italy on Wednesday. The high-water mark hit 187 centimetres (74 inches) late Tuesday, meaning more than 85% of the city was flooded. The highest level ever recorded was 198 centimetres (78 inches) during infamous flooding in 1966. AP

# IN DURYODHANA'S VOICE

PUNEET ISSAR's retelling of Mahabharata through the eyes of its antagonists, though bleak in its representation due to the TV soap-like execution of its script, raises the right questions against the unjust society and challenges the idea of how history has always belonged to the victors, says CHAHAK MITTAL



Every story has a protagonist and an antagonist. And the latter is usually the flawed one, who is eventually defeated by the former and mostly called the 'villain'. The protagonist, on the other hand, is always praised and looked at as an example of the ideal human being. But ever wondered why the antagonist is an antagonist after all? And why not a hero? Who decides what is wrong or right? How are the two terms defined? What if even the protagonist did something wrong initially? And what if what he did was even worse than the actions of the one portrayed as the negative character?

Actor-director Puneet Issar's retelling of the Mahabharata through Karna and Duryodhana's (the so-called antagonists of the great epic) perspectives makes one ask these questions. The play challenges the notion of history, which has always been written through the eyes of the victors rather than those who were defeated. It questions as to why he has always been looked at as such a bad character in the epic while he was so generous with his countrymen and loyal to his friend. Despite that, even though Karna is seen as the tragic hero, Duryodhana came to be known as the villain.

The play, divided into different scenes, begins with young Duryodhana's soliloquy where he laments how the Kauravas have always

been neglected as compared to the Pandavas due to their father and blind king Dhritrashtra. He calls out, 'Jo adhikaar mila na pita ko, mujhe kyun na mile? Main toh andha nahi hun,' and swears to be the one who is the first one to be remembered by the generations to come when they speak of the Mahabharata. Even though the narration lacks elements of some subtlety due to its very direct though powerful narration by Meghna Malik, Puneet makes Duryodhana the centre of the epic brilliantly, without justifying any of his wrong or misguided deeds. He reasons, 'Jab mujhme ghrina ka beej boya hai bachpan se, toh mere phal bhi toh ghrina ke hi hongee na. Main likhunga itihaas naya, mujhe yaad rakhegi duniya,' presenting an idea that even

though he and his brothers have always been despised, there's a reason for their behaviour which lies in their treatment.

The second scene showcases Karna's coronation by Duryodhana as the Angaraaj and a clash between Arjun and Karna where the other people in the court, including Vidura and Dronacharya, put him down by calling him a Sutputra and asserting that only Kshatriyas are allowed to fight in the court of Bharatvansha. The act introduces a number of characters in the play as Arjun and Karna's confrontation is always interrupted by some or the other character, including (orderwise) Duryodhana, Bheem, Yudhishtir and Nakul and Sahdev. And each one of them, emerge from the back of the auditorium and make

their way amidst the audience. The act, however, was the most powerful of all as it did bring across a message when Duryodhana questions the discrimination being done against Karna. From questioning the 'dasi-putra' Vidura to reminding Drona of Eklavya's sacrifice, he says, 'Sir pe swarnmukut, bheetar se kaale kaale!' and makes a point that one's destiny is decided by one's actions (karma) and that caste cannot determine it. He then honours Karna as the king of Anga and his friend.

The next act takes one to Draupadi's swayamvar where Karna is all set to hit the fish's eye with his arrow. He is interrupted by Draupadi who insults him by calling him a Sutputra and hence, ineligible of being her husband. Full marks to Draupadi's (played

by Urvashi Dholakia) acting skills, however, unfortunately, the woman who has symbolised power and femininity has been shown in a very dark light in the play. The director's rendition of her showcases her as a woman who was just arrogant and proud of her wealth and beauty rather than depicting her as the epitome of justice and feminism. She was a woman of substance and her strong personality and will power made her attractive. Furthermore, while the play says that it tells Mahabharata through the eyes of Duryodhana and Karna both, I wished there was more of Karna as much as it was of the former's. Even after Draupadi walks off the stage and Karna is left alone, he does not voice opinion.

Duryodhana's insult by Draupadi is the next act and what I said about Draupadi's representation in the previous scene continues here as well. She calls Duryodhana as 'Andhe ka putra andha', and laughs out loud like the villainous women in Indian TV soaps. Though Duryodhana's brilliant monologue after Draupadi exits the stage saves the act, which is followed by Sakuni's entry and his plotting of the dice game against the Pandavas. The scene makes for laughs too when Sakuni delivers some humorous dialogues. After the Pandavas lose all that they had, including themselves and their wife, Panchali is dragged to the stage by Dushasan by her hair. Well, the most striking thing that I observed here is that even though Karna is anguished by this behaviour against Panchali and wants Duryodhana to take back his order of stripping her in the court, he never says anything. In other versions,

it is said that Karna at least tried to stop Duryodhana but is shunned due to his loyalty and promise to his friend of never going against him. However, here, especially when the play was said to be told through both of their perspectives, I wished Karna's misery came across at least once. The scene got a round of applause as Draupadi questioned all the men in the court who turned blind during her assault, reflecting upon society's reality and how it has turned its back towards women during the time when it is needed the most. The act also makes space for the audience to explore what Duryodhana felt about how Panchali's five husbands stayed silent to their wife's harassment. He says that it was wrong of Dushasan to have held her by her hair and thrown in the court but why did nobody question Yudhishtira who didn't utter a word. 'Main galat kyun? This is not the way Bharatvansha's bahu (or daughter-in-law) should have been treated and you know that, Pitamah Bhisma!' he says.

Certainly, the play makes for a great visual representation of the epic with its vibrant costumes and stage set-up; however, there isn't anything new that the audience would find here. The attempt of presenting the story by making its antagonists the heroes is commendable but the perspectives given by the character doesn't present a lot of new things. The over-dramatised scenes and repetition of certain punchlines remind one of the various TV soaps based on the epic. And the extremely loud dialogue delivery definitely reminds one of Mahabharata that became every household's Sunday breakfast show during the 90s.

## 550 years of Nanak

Artist ARPANA CAUR says that it is very hard to capture 'a being as elevated as the Sikh Guru' on canvas with a painter's limited skills. By UMA NAIR



other stories that have always stayed in my mind. Whenever I think of Nanak, it's a journey that goes deep into the roots of my own existence. Its like finding a fragrance."

One look at the many artworks of Nanaks that she has done over the years show that she always sought to achieve near perfection. Khushwant used to say that Caur's Nanak was like a reminder to invoke Lord's blessings for strength. Caur's images have graced many books. The finest being *Nanak: The Guru* in collaboration with author Khushwant's daughter Maya Dayal. Apart from that — *Hymns of the Sikh Gurus*, which unfortunately is now out of print.

### SO MANY NANAKS

Caur explains her oeuvre over more than four decades. "It is very hard to capture 'a being as elevated as Nanak' on canvas with a painter's limited skills. My solo on Him was almost 20 years ago. There were 'Baba Nanak, Guru Nanak, Peer Nanak, Lama Nanak'. I have been to many of the innumerable places he went on foot, (Baghdad, Sri Lanka, Dhaka, Kashmir, South India, Leh and Sikkim). He, of course, went to many many more."

It is clear that you cannot create so many Nanaks unless you have deep devotion for him. "I love him because of the life affirming things he did. He did away with the caste system. He said 'Nako Hindu Na Musalman'. He considered women as equal to men and said so in his verses that too 550 years ago. He was an ecologist and has even praised nature in his verses. He was against feudal oppression. He shared and asked all to share their earnings with the needy. He was a great poet and was against rituals (sacred thread, pilgrimages etc) and believed only in humanity. Love, and service to every-



### SURREAL AND STARK

In most of her paintings, Caur's depiction of Nanak in a minimal, organic form, is what excels. Her backgrounds are surreal and stark. She plays with different backgrounds but it is the darker ones that have a deeper resonance. The stark black backgrounds draw attention to the contemplative expression on his face and the prayer beads in his hands even as she lines the silhouette with grace. Surrounding him are lined details in blue and white and these trace abstractions and reflect perhaps his many journeys as well as his thoughts. She creates a metaphor of the many journeys that he undertook during his lifetime not only around the India but also to Afghanistan, Iraq, China and Tibet.

According to Caur, she added shards of colour and light, in white, grey and blue to create a transient feel of spirituality. Each Nanak in Caur's hands is unique and deeply contemplative.

## HIS ENDURING LEGACY

A new exhibition on GEORGE ORWELL seeks to remind people how the author's premonitions about fake becoming the gospel have shaped the minds of generations

War is Peace. Freedom is Slavery. Ignorance is Strength. Those were the slogans of the Party in George Orwell's 1949 novel *1984* that allowed the superstate of Oceania to keep its population under control. The Thought Police thwarted dissent. The Ministry of Truth promoted lies. The Ministry of Love tortured lovers. Those dystopian warnings about the fake becoming the gospel have shaped the minds of generations since they appeared in print more than a half-century ago. And now a new exhibit on Orwell at the University of New Mexico's Zimmerman Library in Albuquerque, New Mexico seeks to remind people about the author's premonitions amid a new — yet very familiar — era.

*George Orwell: His Enduring Legacy*, which runs to April, features posters and material related to *1984* and his 1945 allegorical novella, *Animal Farm*. It also contains rare Orwell books in different languages to highlight his reach and evolution as a writer. Orwell, who died in 1950, was known for *Animal Farm* and *1984*, both of which tackled totalitarianism. Orwell's *1984* has become a best-seller in the US again during the Trump administration.

The exhibit was sparked after a longtime advocate and employee of the University of New Mexico University Libraries donated his collection of rare Orwell books. For years, Russ Davidson, a University of New Mexico professor and curator emeritus, amassed rare Orwell books from around the world.

Those rare works included first editions of *Animal Farm* and *1984* in Icelandic, Ukrainian, Swahili, French, Urdu, German, Hungarian and Spanish. He also obtained first, early and other scarce editions of many of Orwell's other books, essays and reportage.



Such unique books are on display in the exhibition. Yet, the most captivating aspect of the small but powerful exhibit is the art and objects connected to themes and Orwell's life. Artifacts and posters from the Spanish Civil War are shown to illustrate how the conflict played a role in Orwell's intellectually formation. Orwell fought against a right-wing military coup in Spain but fled after he was shot in the throat and officials sought his arrest.

The campy book cover art also is seductive, offering commentaries about the eras the editions were produced rather than the work inside. In one edition of *1984*, for example, the cover features characters for the Sen. Joseph McCarthy Era 1950s with the words "forbidden love...fear...betrayal." It's almost as if novel was merely a pulp fiction soap opera found at Route 66 gas stations, except it's not.

Then, there are the portrayals of Napoleon, the authoritarian pig in *Animal Farm*. Red posters show Napoleon in military gear of communist Eastern Europe. Other images show his celebrating his abundance at the sake of others, since, "all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."

Journalists, academics and political observers of every succeeding generation since Orwell's untimely death have argued that Orwell remains relevant in their time. And, yes, the same could be said of today. Orwell's concepts of doublespeak (deliberately

euphemistic, ambiguous or obscure language), newspeak (doublespeak for political propaganda) and thought-crimes (thoughts deemed illegal by a mob or a government) continued to be cited in response to current events.

President Donald Trump's practice of blurring falsehoods — like saying, "The Kurds are much safer right now" after Turkey invaded Kurdish strongholds — have been called Orwellian. The same has been noted for some Democrats. California Gov. Gavin Newsom claimed in August that the "vast majority" of San Francisco's homeless people came from Texas. (A 2019 report found 70 percent had previously lived in the city). Even in New Mexico, the most Hispanic state in the US that sits along the US-Mexico border, Orwellian concepts in practice have emerged.

In 2016, for example, a left-leaning immigrant rights group denounced then-Republican Gov. Susana Martinez and her attempts to revamp a state law that allowed immigrants in the country illegally to obtain driver's licenses. The group called a potential compromise to create a "two-tier" system to issue two types of licenses — one compliant with the federal REAL ID Act — nothing but a "scarlet letter." After New Mexico Democrats said it would support the compromise and the bill passed, the group changed course and publicly and proudly claimed Martinez lost. But she won. —AP

Trend Slazer

Deepika shares Ranveer's photo

Actor DEEPIKA PADUKONE shared a glimpse of her actor husband Ranveer Singh's beauty preparations for their first wedding anniversary.

Deepika took to her Instagram stories, where she posted a photograph of the actor getting beauty treatments.

The image showed Ranveer with a face mask on and his hair in a steamer. "In preparation for his first wedding anniversary," she captioned it.

The couple tied the knot on November 14, 2018.

Deepika will soon be seen in director Meghna Gulzar's *Chhapaak*, based on the life of an acid attack survivor.



'I have done Vicky Donor, Badlapur, Kaabil and Sarkaar, which did not do too well

but will still be a special film because of Amitabh Bachchan, then Uri: The Surgical Strike and now Bala. Of course, I feel evolved as an actor and I don't think that I am star. I have a lot of gratitude. It is not easy to be self-made in Bollywood and make it on your own.'

—Yami Gautam

Actor SONI RAZDAN feels that the institution of marriage is crumbling today.

She will be seen in a cameo role in Hotstar Specials' *Out of Love*, which revolves around infidelity in marital relationships.

She said, "There is nothing great about cheating on someone but it seems to be happening all the time. Marriage's purpose is not the same now. Women are not easily taken for granted today. Having said that, there is no reason for people to not get married. Everything is workable if there is a sense of equilibrium."



Kylie's stalker sentenced to jail

A man accused of trespassing on reality TV personality KYLIE JENNER's Los Angeles property has been sentenced to a year at the Los Angeles County Jail.

Brandon Sebastian Sevilla Martinez was arrested by police on October 29 after allegedly hopping over the reality TV star's gate at her private Calabasas residence and banging on her front door, demanding to speak to the 22 year old.

Kylie was not home at the time of the incident, but her security officials reported him to local authorities and he was slapped with a misdemeanor count of trespassing, as well as a felony for bringing contraband into jail when a glass pipe was found on his person at the time of booking.



To touch is to learn

On Children's Day, educationists tell AYUSHI SHARMA about how we can make teaching a multi-sensorial experience rather than a digital one for toddlers and kindergartners

The best gift we could give a child is of wonder and a free mindspace, which lets him or her imagine a blue leaf and a green sky. But the question is how can we make education a multi-sensorial experience rather than just a digital one in today's time, especially for toddlers and kindergartners? In a blog about using imaginative inquiry in the classroom, advanced skills teacher and lecturer Tim Taylor argued that children learn best when they are playing. He writes, "Children need to be engaged in their learning. They learn best when it matters to them as it's contextualised in meaningful ways. Then, they have a sense of ownership. The best learning I've been involved in has not been delivered to a class, but built, over time, in collaboration with students. Explored, examined and argued over."

Over the time, teachers have believed that play has little or no place in the classroom. However, the idea is evolving. As most of the children today are completely dependent on learning apps to pick up things, a lot of schools are deliberately taking children out and making them sit in gardens for the real touch and feel. They are teaching them the importance of bonding by giving them various tasks. But the question arises again — how can we not make them more dependent on these apps and focus on learning through real experiences.

Speaker, author, education and life transformer, and founder of TLI Pedagogics, Marion Hopfgartner tells us that children are attracted to all these digital tools because since day one, they

have observed their parents using phones, laptops and other digital devices. So they try to "imitate" what they see. For toddlers, imitation follows a four-step process — watching and listening, processing the information, attempting to copy a behaviour and then practising. For instance, language development. If parents are more inclined towards reading books, children will capture it and naturally, they will be more interested in that rather than using the gadgets. "When education becomes a real life experience, the child will follow his/her natural impulses. Hence, the surrounding plays a vital role. Using all five senses, the child will take information from the surrounding and process it. For a kid, the world is always multidimensional. For example, take an apple. When the kid eats it, s/he first looks at it, understands its shape, colour and much more. So the most important thing in real life experience is not to create a scenario but rather to live it with the child and let them be a part of it," says the expert, who has been honoured as the Ambassador of Peace and awarded as an international speaker on education.

Children are always curious about everything and they are born with the interest to learn, points out Marion. And this is exactly what Amit Verma, CEO of Makebot, believes. He says, "The creativity factor in early childhood is very sharp and it goes down over a period when the child stops practising innovation. This happens due to a lot of structured learning over the period of time. Hence, it is very important to keep the curiosity and creativity factor high in every child. When we involve children at an early age with hands on activities, their minds get tuned to experiential learning methodologies. This enables them to learn things by practising and creating a strong and long-term self-learning ability, which also forms a strong foundation at an early stage."

Marion adds that it is important that we place a special focus on guiding chil-

dren towards being autonomous and able to easily adapt to challenges. A recent research has emphasised on the need to adopt 'modern thinking models' for the early childhood education on the lines of those adopted in the West, namely, Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, Vygotsky's theory of socio-cultural learning, tools of the mind and many more. Just like everything else, educational needs of children are changing at a very high pace, believes Shakti Chaturvedi, a researcher in the Centre for Historical Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University. He says that just subjecting them to mathematical tables, mugging up poems and memorising the names of animals is not going to help. "They need to be exposed to 'experiences' no matter how trivial. They must be allowed the time of their choice for extra-curricular activities to fetch maximum output. Such style of pedagogy keeps them hooked. Activity-based learning and curriculum gives each child the appropriate time to find his/her acumen and develop an interest. Most importantly, it allows them an opportunity to narrate stories and voice their opinions. These attempts certainly yield great results," he adds.

Effective learning comes with movement, touch, music, audio and visual, feels Nitin Pandey, co-founder and CEO of Parentune.com. For him, digital learning isn't bad by any means but he says that it needs to be done in a balanced manner. "Learning practically and through interpersonal interactions are equally important for a child's mental development. And to get that going, curricula need to go beyond the screen and move towards a multi-sensory approach of learning. This is especially important in the early years (18 months toddlers to nine-year-olds), as this is the time when cognitive development is at its peak," he believes.

It has been revealed in a report that practical learning not only aids children's mental and physical health but it teaches them risk taking and problem-solving

skills, enhances imagination, independence and creativity too. Even though Ashwani Kumar Prithviwasi, founder and principal of Delhi Collage of Art, feels that if children are getting something useful from digital learning apps, it should be welcomed. However, he also suggests that students must be taken out in the playground for the real touch and feel. He suggests that gardening should be a subject in the curriculum as it can stimulate them and help activate their senses. "When children themselves grow plants and nurture them, their first-hand experience makes them learn more. This should be observed by the schools that how much time is given on knowledge through textbooks and how much is dedicated to outdoor activities. It's not always okay to say no to children from playing in mud. Being protective is fine but then this restriction that their parents put on them makes them opt for electronics," he says.

Nowadays, a very strong part which has been missing from children's lives is the art of storytelling. Anita Sharma, principal of SD Public School, Pitampura, tells us. "The stories narrated by parents or grandparents, where children were exposed to our culture, traditions and heritage and also to many morals in life at a very early age, are not a part of their lives anymore. Communication, language development, expressions, control over emotions, empathy and sense of belonging, many such skills and values were automatically infused with the storytelling. Apart from all educational activities and events happening at school, parents must develop the habit of reading and sharing stories with their children," says she.

Undoubtedly, the Indian education system is very dynamic and provides a lot of flexibility in delivering the right set of knowledge and skills to students. "When we use existing curriculum and create an inter-disciplinary approach around it rather than creating a parallel programme, it synchronises with what the child is learning today. Through innovative delivery techniques, the entire process becomes interactive," says Amit.

He points out another factor. "The introduction of the 'edutainment' mode of learning — through various real life problem-solving challenges, competitions targeted toward life skills, community building for like minded innovators, fueling new age ideas through project building/prototyping. The learning which comes out of edutainment not only prepares the children for future but also opens vistas to start thinking on innovation which is what required for forthcoming generations since we don't know what kind of jobs would be there in the future," adds Amit.

To create more awareness around multidimensional experiential learning and edutainment, experts suggest that we have to bring the ecosystem together including parents, children and educational institutions. Since parents today are also concerned with kids' screen time going up alarmingly. The same time can be used to building something creative and by doing new things which are going to be part of future life, coding, story building, robotics, artificial intelligence, project building, mechanics and much more. This allows students to see things in practice and will aligns their thoughts with real world scenarios.

But could this approach also be adapted for secondary education? Or should there be a point when learning stops being a game? Do you think innovative approaches to teaching are some of the most effective ways to motivate students and that secondary schools should look to primaries for inspiration?



No fear of the unknown

Actor SIDHARTH MALHOTRA tells SAKSHI SHARMA about his trajectory that has strayed from the usual. Even his new film *Marjaavaan* has a twist



ferent. "The storyline! It has some interesting dynamics attached to it. The couple is in their happy space until a tragedy hits later. Its turning point will force the audience to dig deeper. And that's the fun of it," said he.

Raghu, an orphan boy who is brought up in the suburban areas of Mumbai, meets Zoya, who is speech-impaired. She has to express her emotions without dialogues. And for Sidharth, this became the most interesting part of the film. He said, "The emotions being portrayed in the film are very nuanced and etched in its narrative. It is an innocent love story, which will make the audience feel bad with its tragedy too. I too felt it when I heard the script."

'Masjid aur mandir dono milenge' (We will get both, temple and mosque), the actor can be seen saying in the trailer. It seems as if the film

has a take on the ongoing religious indifferences in the country. But the actor said that it's a "hard core" love story and doesn't intend to be a message. He then recalled an incident and said, "I wanted my character to have a universal name that doesn't represent any religion. But when I was named Raghu, it seemed inclined towards a religion. So I was given four tattoos on my fist which represent the four most famous religions of the country. And because I am an orphan, for me every religion is the same. I loved this as a thought. Though the film is not about this but it's a subtle attempt to throw light on this topic."

Since the film stars Riteish opposite Sidharth, which would remind one of *Ek Villain*, rumours have it that the film is its sequel. Denying such claims, the actor said that it has more of thrill and drama. "I wish I could tell you how different they are but then I'll end up telling you the whole story. So you'll have to watch the film and discover for yourself," said he.

Sidharth had to work a lot on his physique because he had to look strong enough for the action sequences. Even the styling and personal attitude was worked upon. He had to give his body language a new flair, be it while wearing the headband, lighting a matchstick or delivering dialogues in a way that street thugs do. But the actor seemed prepared for all the risks. "There's no easy or safe film. Even while I was doing *Ek Villain*, where I have played a strong character, people were doubting me. But that was my ₹100 crore film. This profession is about embracing the uncertainties and believing that no character is safe," said he.

This is an era where all the young actors are competing for the same roles in content-driven films. How does he plan to stay ahead of them? "I have always done different films. On one hand there is *Ek Villain* while on the other, there is *Kapoor And Sons*. They are very opposite characters. And when you see that the audience accepts you in the variety that you offer, it opens up a larger variety of script. However, it has to excite me personally regardless of what somebody else is doing. If you see my trajectory of work whether it's a love story or murder mystery or action film I have always tried to stay different. My current film is screwed to a different flavour of action love story."

The actor, who made his Bollywood debut from *Student Of The Year* alongside Alia Bhatt and Varun Dhawan, seemed to be the most promising one. However, after seven years of the film, the other two seem to have a better career graph. When asked about it, Sidharth said, "I don't have my ears to what people say. I think that's irrelevant. What matters is the kind of choices I make in films. The box office is more important. We are all doing different kinds of films. No actor is sticking to one zone. Everyone's experimenting and doing variety. Every Friday is different. I have had Fridays that were beyond my expectations and I have had the ones which were not up to my expectations. That is how the industry is, very unpredictable. The good thing which I feel over the years is that now there's no fear of the unknown. I have seen successes and failures and it adds to me as a performer."

(The film releases on November 15.)

Photo: Pankaj Kumar

Beyond the horizons

Nita Ambani, the founder and chairperson of the Reliance Foundation, has been elected an honorary trustee of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, the arts powerhouse of the US.

Announcing her election by the board, the museum's chairman Daniel Brodsky said, "Mrs Ambani's commitment to The Met and to preserving and promoting India's art and culture is truly exceptional. Her support has an enormous impact on the Museum's ability to study and display art from every corner of the world."

Reliance Foundation has sponsored key cultural events such as *The Elephantia Festival*, and *Abbaji*, the annual concert of master musician Ustad Zakir Hussain, in its mission to recognise the cultural legends of India and ensure their relevance to a younger generation.

With Reliance Foundation's sponsorship, the Met will hold next year the exhibition — *Tree and Serpent: Early Buddhist Art in India, 200 B.C. - A.D. 400* that will cover topics such as 17th-century Mughal art and contemporary Indian sculpture. The museum said that "in her role as founder and chairperson of Reliance Foundation, Mrs Ambani has impacted the lives of more than 34 million people across India through the organisation's initiatives in rural transformation, health, education, sports for development, disaster response, arts, culture and heritage, and urban renewal."



—IANS

# Mission Dushanbe

Blue Tigers ready to counter multiple challenges and emerge victorious in World Cup qualifier away game against Afghanistan



Indian football coach Igor Stimac (second from left) shake hands with Afghanistan coach Anoush Dastagiv before the start of pre match press conference ahead of India's World Cup qualifier game against the Asian rivals

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hours after arriving in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, India head coach Igor Stimac stated that the Blue Tigers need to overcome "tough challenges" imposed by Afghanistan, besides braving adversities, when they face-off in the Group E encounter of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023 preliminary joint Qualification Round 2

match at the Republican Central Stadium in Dushanbe today. "We know how difficult this game is going to be for us. We both (India and Afghanistan) have already faced Qatar and Bangladesh in the qualifiers. We see Afghanistan as a physical side with good composure. They have some players who also have the experience of playing in Europe. They are not in the top division, but playing in Europe always gives you an extra bit of confi-

**Afghanistan vs India**  
Live from 7:30pm IST  
STAR SPORTS NETWORK

dence. They have stamina and they'll pose a tough challenge for us," Stimac said in the pre-match press conference held in Dushanbe on Wednesday morning.

The city welcomed Blue Tigers contingent with chilly weather as the mercury hovered

around 6-7°C. However, despite the low temperature, the fighting spirit of the Indian team remains high as ever.

"As a player, you have to be confident and face every challenge head-on. That's why we are here. Yes, the conditions have not been in our favour to some extent but that won't have any effect when the referee blows the whistle. If we can execute the coach's plans on the pitch, we can surely hope for a good result," a buoyant Pranoj Halder voiced at the official press conference.

The Coach analysed the Blue Tigers' last match against Bangladesh as well, saying, "The most difficult games are those when people who are following you, write the result before the game starts. We witnessed it against Qatar as well as Bangladesh. When Bangladesh came, they were defending with 10 players and were looking to counter-attack. Without taking away any credit from them, we earned a point against them. We can't forget that they were leading until the 87th minute."

The gaffer also maintained that India's passion for the beautiful game is changing and the Blue Tigers will try their level best to fulfil the expectations and grab their first win in the joint qualification round.

"We are happy that people in India are following us with lots of passion now. They have a great expectation on us and we'll try our level best to make them happy," he said.

Meanwhile, Anoush Dastagiv, Afghanistan head Coach mentioned though it's not their own country, they get "confidence" when they play in Dushanbe.

"Yes, geographically it's far from own country and we would have been happier if we could have gotten the chance to play in our own country. But, playing in Tajikistan has always given us much-needed confidence. We have beaten Cambodia, Bangladesh here and settled with a draw against Tajikistan, Jordan. Those results will surely give us a psychological boost," Dastagiv said.

"Here, people speak our language. We feel at home. Whenever we play in front of Afghani crowd, we never fail to get positive results. We hope we can get something closer to that on Thursday as well," he added.



HS Prannoy prepares for a return shot PTI/File Picture

## Sindhu, Prannoy start with win; Nehwal exits

PTI ■ HONG KONG

World Champion P V Sindhu made a positive start to her campaign but Saina Nehwal and Sameer Verma were ousted from the Hong Kong Open after suffering contrasting defeats in the opening round of the \$400,000 event here on Wednesday.

Sixth seed Sindhu, who had faltered in the opening round in a couple of recent tournaments, took 36 minutes to see off world No 19 Kim Ga Eun of Korea 21-15, 21-16 to progress to the second round.

The Olympic Silver medallist will face Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrunphan next. HS Prannoy also crossed the opening hurdle, beating China's Huang Yu Xiang 21-17, 21-17 in 44 minutes to a clash with sixth seed Indonesian Jonatan Christie.

However, eighth seed Saina, who claimed the Indonesia Masters in January this year, suffered her fifth first-round loss in the last six tournaments, going down 13-21, 20-22 to China's Cai Yan Yan for the second successive time. She had lost to Cai at China Open last week.

World No 16 Sameer fought for 54 minutes before going to Wang Tzu Wei of Chinese Taipei 11-21, 21-13, 8-21 in the opening match. It was his third successive loss in the opening round.

Saina and Sameer are both scheduled to play Gwangju Korea Masters Super 300 tournament next week.

Women's doubles pair of Ashwini Ponnappa and N Sikki Reddy also couldn't cross the opening round, losing 13-21, 12-21 to Denmark's Maiken Fruergaard and Sara Thygesen.

## Villa retires after 19-year career

AFP ■ MADRID

Star striker David Villa, Spain's top goalscorer on Wednesday announced he will retire next month, ending a glittering career in which he won the World Cup, European Championships and Champions League.

The 37-year-old Vissel Kobe striker said he will call it a day at the end of the 2019 J-League season after a 19-year career that took in Barcelona, Atletico Madrid and Valencia while accumulating 98 caps for his country.

"I have decided to end my professional career and that I have decided to retire," Villa told reporters in Kobe, his voice occasionally breaking with emotion.

"I've been thinking about this for a long time. This is the result of discussions I had with my family and people around me... I wanted to retire from football, not be forced to retire from football," he said.

Villa played in three World Cups and was a member of the Spanish side that lifted the trophy in 2010 and won the European Championships in 2008, though he missed out on the 2012 triumph through injury. He scored 59 times for Spain, a national record.

His club honours include the 2010-11 Champions League, the 2011 UEFA Super Cup, 2011 Club World Cup and two La Liga wins in 2010-11 and 2012-13 with Barcelona.

Villa scored the third goal for Barcelona at Wembley in the 3-1 win over Manchester United in the 2010-11 Champions League Final.

He won a third La Liga with Atletico Madrid in his one season there in 2013-14 after leaving Barcelona.

After leaving Atletico, Villa embarked on a successful spell in Major League Soccer for New York City, where he scored 80 goals in 124 appearances.

At Vissel Kobe, he played alongside fellow Spanish legend Andres Iniesta and German striker Lukas Podolski but the presence of the ageing foreign stars has done little to bring success to the ambitious Japanese club.

Villa has scored 12 goals in 26 appearances for Vissel. He is expected to play three more J-League matches as well as semi-finals and finals of the Emperor's Cup.

His retirement ceremony will be on December 7, the day of his last J-League game.

# Djokovic, Federer ready for shootout

AFP ■ LONDON

Dominic Thiem produced a scintillating display of attacking tennis to beat Novak Djokovic and qualify for the last four at the ATP Finals on Tuesday, leaving the Serbian facing a shootout against Roger Federer.

In the standout match so far at London's O2 Arena, the Austrian fifth seed took the fight to the world number two, recovering from losing the first set to triumph 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 7-6 (7/5).

Earlier, Federer put himself back in the mix at the end-of-season event with a 7-6 (7/2), 6-3 win against Italian debutant Matteo Berrettini in their round-robin clash.

Federer and Djokovic will face off on Thursday in a repeat of this year's Wimbledon final to determine who else will progress from Group Bjorn Borg.

Thiem was forced to play high-stakes tennis against the



Dominic Thiem celebrates after defeating Novak Djokovic in ATP World Tour Finals AP

16-time Grand Slam winner, taking the breath away with some of his inside-out forehands and single-handed backhands

Forced to play at his limit, he hit 50 winners compared with

Djokovic's tally of 27 but also racked up 44 unforced errors.

"This was really one of these special matches, what I've practised all my life for, for all childhood for," Thiem said.

"Really epic one in an amazing atmosphere, beating a legend of our game. And also I've qualified for the semi-finals, which is the best."

"Coming back from 1-4 (down in the deciding tie-break) was a little bit of luck, but it was an unbelievable match and one I'll never forget. Novak is the best player in the world and I had to do something special."

In a captivating first set the players swapped a break apiece but Djokovic, a five-time ATP Finals champion, edged the tie-break.

Undaunted, Thiem broke his opponent at the first opportunity in the second set and, with Djokovic's error count climbing, went on to level the match.

Thiem also drew first blood in the decider but cracked in the sixth game as Djokovic levelled

the match and appeared to have engineered a switch in momentum.

The Austrian successfully challenged at 30-30 in the 10th game after his forehand was ruled out, preventing

a match point for Djokovic and he toughed it out to level at 5-5.

He then broke Djokovic to love to earn a chance to serve for the match but stumbled and the decider went to a tie-break.

Still the drama was not finished. Thiem slipped to 4-1 down but battled back to win it on his second match point when Djokovic dumped a forehand into the net.

Third seed Federer had put himself under the cosh by losing his opening round-robin match to Thiem.

The six-time champion was not at his fluent best on Tuesday but ultimately had too much for

his Italian opponent.

The Swiss upped his game to take the first set tie-break comfortably and broke immediately at the start of the second set to leave the big-serving Berrettini with too much to do.

Federer was asked after his win against Berrettini whether his defeat to Djokovic at Wimbledon had left emotional or mental scars.

"We'll find out, but I think it's all flushed away from my side," said the Swiss.

"A lot of water has gone under the bridge since then."

Djokovic is hunting a sixth ATP Finals title to pull level with Federer's record and is also seeking to pip Rafael Nadal to the year-end number one ranking.

On Monday, top seed Nadal lost his opener in Group Andre Agassi to defending champion Alexander Zverev while Stefanos Tsitsipas beat Daniil Medvedev.

AFP ■ LONDON

# England out to confirm Euro place

and country since failing to find his best form at the World Cup 18 months ago.

He has also been a leading figure as England have stood up to the racist abuse suffered by a number of players in Montenegro and Bulgaria.

Sterling could even return to action as soon as Sunday when Southgate's men travel to Kosovo.

England will hope there is nothing riding on that match for them as a point against the side ranked 61st in the world today will be enough to guarantee qualification.

Even in Sterling's absence, Southgate is blessed with an array of attacking talent including Harry Kane, Jadon Sancho and Marcus Rashford that should continue England's free-scoring form.

**DUTCH ON CUSP** EURO2020  
A thrilling crop of young players has Euro 2020 in its sights as the Netherlands prepare for a return to the big stage, while Teemu Pukki's Finland are on the brink of



England players including Trent Alexander-Arnold, second from left trains during practice England/Twitter

**England vs Montenegro**  
Live from 1:15am IST  
SONY TEN 2 NETWORK

their first ever major tournament.

Ronald Koeman's side need just a draw at Northern Ireland to guarantee a spot at their first international tournament since coming third at the 2014 World Cup.

The 56-year-old has revitalised his country's dormant national team with the help of a crop of young players who are



Memphis Depay celebrates after scoring for the Netherlands Oranje/Twitter

putting a famous footballing nation back on the map.

They are level on 15 points with fierce rivals Germany but above them on head-to-head record and three ahead of Northern Ireland, who realistically need a win to carry on their battle for a spot in the tournament.

A late double from 25-year-old Memphis Depay, a revelation in qualifying with six goals in five appearances, in Rotterdam last month helped sink the brave Northern Irish and means they just have to avoid defeat at Windsor Park to join the likes of Italy and Spain.

Germany meanwhile just need to better Northern Ireland's result to make sure of their place.

The Finns are also on the verge of making history, with a win over lowly Liechtenstein in Helsinki tomorrow enough to see them qualify for their first ever European Championship.

They lie second in Group J behind already-qualified Italy thanks to a

magical run inspired by the incredible form of star man Pukki.

**WORLD CHAMPIONS**  
France are among several big hitters also a hair's breadth away from the main tournament. They might qualify before they even take the field against Moldova at the Stade de France today.

Didier Deschamps' world champions will take their place at the finals should third-placed Iceland not beat Group H leaders Turkey, although a win for France over bottom side Moldova would be enough regardless of what happens in Istanbul.

Reigning European champions Portugal meanwhile will have the chance to defend their title with a win over Lithuania, who have collected just a point from seven Group B games, if Serbia fail to beat Luxembourg.

The Portuguese are a point ahead of the Serbs as coach Fernando Santos recalls Lokomotiv Moscow forward Eder, whose goal won Euro 2016, with teenage star Joao Felix sidelined.

# RED ALERT

India aim to build on early World Test Championship lead against Bangladesh

PTI ■ INDORE

The action begins with the red cherry but the focus is firmly on the pink ball as a formidable India looks to overpower a depleted-but-gritty Bangladesh in the first Test of a two-match series starting here at Holkar stadium today.

The rubber opens here but the buzz and the talk has been consistently centered on the second game in Kolkata, which will be played under lights — a historic first for both the teams.

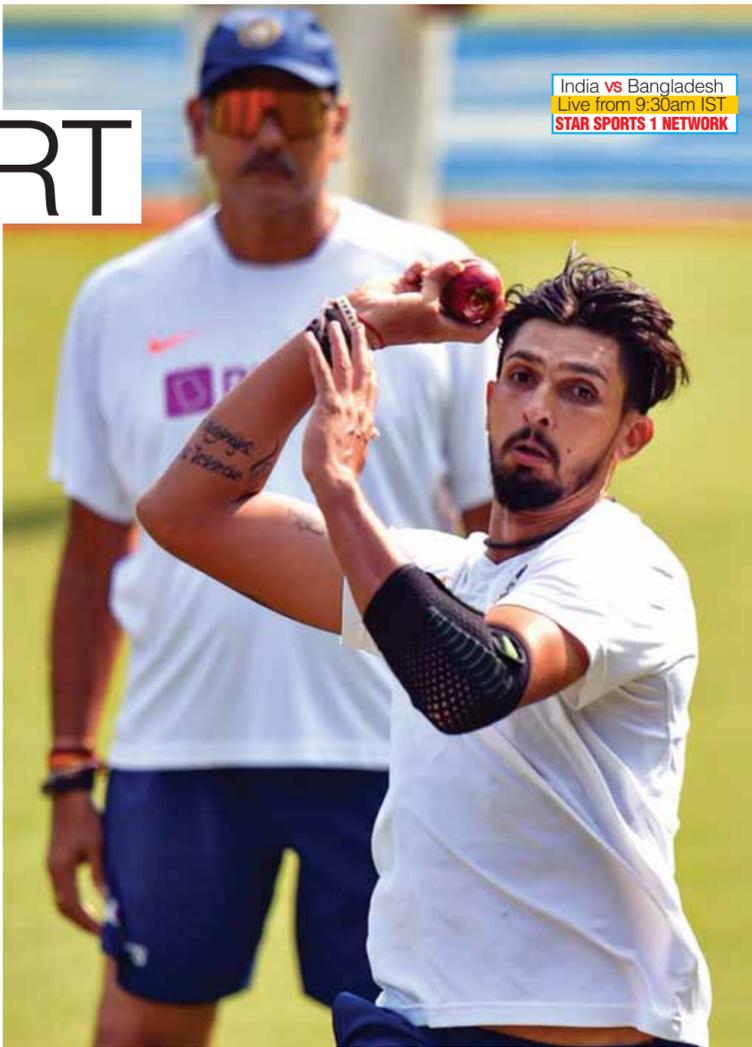
This is also that one series in the World Test Championship calendar, in which Virat Kohli's men, currently in the "pink form", can steamroll the rag-tag opposition well inside four days.

In fact, on paper, it is difficult to imagine how Bangladesh, without Tamim Iqbal and the suspended Shakib Al Hasan, will even be able to compete in a format, which has been their weakest till date.

Having crushed South Africa in their last series, this Indian team, with arguably their greatest-ever pace unit till date, will definitely be too hot to handle for a side whose best batsman — skipper Mominul Haque — has less than 10 Test hundreds (eight).

Although Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad are committed cricketers but in the longest format, they aren't exactly formidable names.

Compare that to India's premier willow wielders — Kohli (26 hundreds), Ajinkya Rahane (11), Cheteshwar Pujara (18). They have 50 plus runs collectively and it will be one hell of a task for Mustafizur Rahaman, Tajjul Islam and Mehidy Hasan Miraj to stop this line-up.



India pacer Ishant Sharma bowls at nets during India's practice session ahead of 1st Test against Bangladesh

India vs Bangladesh  
Live from 9:30am IST  
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

And before these three even come into play, Bangladesh will have to deal with openers Mayank Agarwal and the indomitable Rohit Sharma, who can make mincemeat of their bowling attack.

Add to it, India's bowling unit with 800-plus scalps, this is one contest where the 'David' looks incapable of slaying the proverbial 'Goliath'.

Not to forget that Bangladesh, in their last Test match under the

mercurial Shakib's leadership, lost to Afghanistan in a one-off game.

The Indians, however, do not want to take anything for granted.

"Bangladesh is a very good team. We played very well against South Africa but that's past now. With (World) Test Championship, every match is equally important. We like to take one game at a time which is Indore now," vice-captain Rahane said.

"We completely respect the

Bangladesh team and we are going to play to our strength rather than thinking about theirs," he added.

The track at the Holkar stadium has always been a batting paradise with ridiculously short side boundaries but there is bounce on offer.

Mohammed Shami and Umesh Yadav are certain in the pace line-up while Ravindra Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin are expected to make the squad.



Virat Kohli, Wriddhiman Saha, Ravindra Jadeja, Shubman Gill and Umesh Yadav

INDIA-BANGLADESH IN TESTS				
Venue	Played	Ind won	Ban won	Drawn
In B'desh	8	6	-	2
In India	1	1	-	-
Total	9	7	-	2

HIGHEST INNINGS TOTALS		
India:	687-6 dec at Hyderabad	2016-17
B'desh:	400 at Bangabandhu Stadium, Dhaka	2000

HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SCORES		
India:	248* Sachin Tendulkar at Dhaka	2004
B'desh:	158* Mohammed Ashraf at Chittagong	2004

BEST BOWLING IN AN INNINGS		
India:	7-87 Zaheer Khan at Mirpur, Dhaka	2004
B'desh:	6-132 Naim-ur-Rhman at Dhaka	2000

BEST BOWLING IN A MATCH		
India:	11-96 Irfan Pathan at Mirpur, Dhaka	2004
B'desh:	7-174 Shakib Al Hasan at Chittagong	2010

FAISEL FEATURES

Kohli indicated that Ishant Sharma will be playing as the third seamer instead of an additional spinner.

"Yeah that seems pretty likely looking at the pitch. Also because of the way Umesh has bowled, Shami obviously has been brilliant. Bumrah isn't fit yet, Ishant's probably been our most consistent bowler in the last two years and a big reason for our success in Test cricket is his ability to just keep bowling in the same area and the others come and pick up wickets," he said. "But also he has picked up 4-5 wickets on many occasions when he's gone through a great spell. So I think his experience will always be handy for the team."

For Bangladesh's young guns, the 'biggest test' in the Test will be to stretch this Indian team to

the fifth day which looks unlikely at the moment.

## SQUADS

**India (12):** Rohit Sharma, Mayank Agarwal, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli (captain), Ajinkya Rahane, Ravindra Jadeja, Wriddhiman Saha (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Mohammed Shami, Umesh Yadav, Ishant Sharma, Kuldeep Yadav. **Reserves:** Shubman Gill, Hanuma Vihari, Rishabh Pant.

**Bangladesh:** Mominul Haque (captain), Imrul Kayes, Mushfiqur Rahim (wk), Mahmudullah Riyad, Mohammed Mithun, Liton Kumar Das, Mehidy Hasan Miraj, Mustafizur Rahaman, Naem Hasan, Saif Hasan, Shadman Islam, Tajjul Islam, Abu Jayed, Ebadot Hossain, Al Amin Hossain.



Virat Kohli checks out the new pink ball as he interacts with umpires after batting in the nets

## Kohli interested to see how old pink ball behaves

PTI ■ INDORE

The pink ball swings more than the red one but how it would behave after getting old, especially when dew will be a factor, is keeping India skipper Virat Kohli intrigued ahead of team's historic day-night Test.

The pink ball Test is still a few days away but Kohli, on the eve of the series-opener, was busy answering questions related to the second Test starting November 22.

"I think it's a new way to bring excitement to Test cricket. The pink ball I played yesterday (on Tuesday), I felt it swings a lot more as compared to the red ball because there's extra lacquer (quote of paint) on the ball which doesn't go away too fast. And the seam holds upright quite a bit," the skipper's initial observation seemed in sync with what his deputy Ajinkya Rahane had assessed.

Kohli said they are yet to figure out how the old ball will behave during November evenings in Kolkata.

"If the pitch has extra help for the bowlers, then they will be in the game, especially fast bowlers throughout the course of the Test match. I don't know how the old ball behaves because with the dew and the lacquer going off, it will be interesting to see how much the old ball does," the skipper said.

However he made it clear that for a pink ball to be effective, it is important to have lively tracks.

"With the pink ball having enough life in the pitch will be very important factor."

The Indian team did not practice with the pink ball under lights but did take a few throw-downs on Tuesday to adjust to the colour of the new ball.

## Captaincy will not affect my batting: Mominul

**INDORE:** He is new to captaincy but Bangladesh skipper Mominul Haque is confident that the added responsibility will not affect his batting, which will be crucial to his team's chances of upstaging an accomplished India in the Test series.

The 28-year-old Mominul has replaced Shakib Al Hasan as five-day format skipper.

"I am not feeling pressure just because I have been appointed captain. The way I batted before captaincy, I will bat in the same way now," said the left-hander, who is also the team's premier batsman with eight hundreds.

"I always try to think about the positive aspects. There are a few positives in being captain as well. Your knowledge about the game increases. You tend to become more responsible as a player. So I think, it will help me improve my performance," he added.

Mominul feels that since expectations from his side are not particularly high, the pressure is also a bit less.

Asked about India's pace bowling might, Mominul said: "India is such a team that they can challenge different opponents in different ways."



"May be they will challenge us with spin attack. We are ready to face both spin and pace attack challenge from India. Definitely, it will be tough for us. But we are preparing to face it."

Asked what has changed in Bangladesh cricket in nearly two decades from the time they first played a Test in 2000, Mominul pointed at the attitudinal shift.

"I think the mentality of players has changed. Players have become more disciplined. Also they are more eager to play five-day games as well," he said.

While Virat Kohli termed Mustafizur Rahaman as a threat, Mominul didn't disclose whether the pacer will be a part of playing XI. "We have not planned about the team and the playing eleven has not been selected yet. You will know tomorrow (today) if he plays," he said.

Asked about missing Shakib and Tamim Iqbal, Mominul said others are more aware in the absence of the two stalwarts.

"I think three players are missing because Shakib bhai is equal to two players. Yes, it will be challenging. But there is no scope of thinking about it too much now," he said. **PTI**

## Important to play attacking game as opener in T20s: Dhawan

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

The first six overs in a T20 game is considered the most crucial as both the batting and bowling team look to grab early advantage and with the World T20 in Australia less than a year away, India opener Shikhar Dhawan is very clear that for him it will be all about attacking from the word go Down Under.

Dhawan said that even as every team and every individual is playing with an eye on the showpiece event, he doesn't really have any special plan. All he wants to do is keep it simple and start on the attack before settling down and providing the middle order the perfect platform to finish with a flourish.

"The plan is to play a nice attacking game as an opener in the first six overs and build a good total. I like to play aggressive and if some wicket is slow or if the ball is stopping on it, then obviously the plan changes accordingly. If we can manage to get say



Shikhar Dhawan in a file picture

50-55 runs in the first six overs, then the momentum is there for a good finish. My job will be to primarily start well and then score big. Smart and attacking game is my mantra for the T20 format," he smiled. Asked if it will be about one between him and Rohit Sharma playing anchor as the other attacks, Dhawan answered in the negative.

"Play as per the situation. If some day Rohit is attacking and I am not being able to connect well, then that is different. But otherwise, I don't believe that only one batsman can attack. If your game is to attack, then you must stay natural. Also, when you attack from both sides then the pressure is on the opposition," he explained.

While Indian teams over the years have been all about its batsmen, the current team has some of the best bowlers and Dhawan feels that is the reason why this team has won consistently both at home and on foreign soil.

"It is matter of tremendous pride that we have a team of bowlers who actually put the opposition batsmen on the backfoot. I feel the bowling line-up is one of the major reasons that we are winning consistently and also along with the pace bowling attack, we also have the experience to adapt. They train as professionals and know their job very well," he explained.

While he is one of the first names when the playing XI for the limited-overs team is announced, lack of form has seen him miss the bus in the longer format. But Dhawan isn't ready to give up and wants to return with a bang.

"Absolutely looking to get back. I am always on for Test cricket and when I get the opportunity (in domestic cricket) I will be playing. I will play Ranji Trophy when I am free. I will not sit at home. When I am not playing all the three formats, I will definitely play domestic cricket," he said.

Dhawan also said that Team India will be one of the favourites to win the trophy come the World T20 next year.

"We are strong contenders. From now onwards we will play so many T20s that we will get refined and be ready for the World T20. I am sure that we will do really well there," he said.

## Harbhajan nemesis for me throughout career: Gilchrist

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australian legend Adam Gilchrist has described Harbhajan Singh as his "nemesis", saying the Indian off-spinner and Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan were the two toughest bowlers that he faced during his international career.

Talking about his illustrious career's milestones and memorable moments, the wicketkeeper recalled the 2001 away Test series against India where Harbhajan starred with the ball.

"He (Harbhajan) was a bit of a nemesis for me right throughout my career. I found him and Murali probably the two hardest bowlers to face," Gilchrist told *Cricbuzz* in their "The Unplayable Podcast".

The 2001 series, considered one of India's finest, saw the hosts break Australia's 16-match win streak in Tests.

While the visitors won the first Test by 10 wickets,

## SINGLES

**PBL 5 TO BEGIN ON JAN 20**  
**NEW DELHI:** Some of the top shuttlers including World Champion PV Sindhu will be in action when the fifth edition of the Premier Badminton League (PBL), featuring eight teams, gets underway on January 20. The upcoming season which concludes on February 9 will be staged this time in Chennai, Delhi, Lucknow, and Bangalore. The league owned by Badminton Association of India (BAI) and organized by Sportzive, offers a total purse of ₹6 crore with the winner taking home a cheque of ₹3 crore.

**POORAN SUSPENDED FOR BALL-TAMPING**  
**DUBAI:** West Indies wicketkeeper-batsman Nicolas Pooran was on Wednesday handed a four-match suspension after admitting to ball-tampering in the third ODI against Afghanistan, an offence for which he also issued a public apology. He will now miss the next four T20 International games for the West Indies and will have five demerit points added to his record. The game in question took place in Lucknow on Monday.

## PERRY PLANS RECORD-BREAKING SHOW

**SYDNEY:** American popstar Katy Perry announced on Wednesday she will be performing at the final of the Women's Twenty20 World Cup in Melbourne next March before an expected record crowd on International Women's Day. "Aussie Aussie Aussie Oi Oi Oi!" Perry said in an *Instagram* post using the Australian sporting chant. "Let's break some records — join me in Melbourne on March 8, 2020 for the ICC @T20WorldCup Women's Final. We'll Roar in support of these awesome women on International Women's Day!" The International Cricket Council said Perry would perform both before and after the final in "what is anticipated to be the biggest women's cricket match of all time."

## BOULT TO PLAY FOR MI, RAJPOOT FOR RR

**NEW DELHI:** New Zealand fast bowler Trent Boult will play for Mumbai Indians in next year's Indian Premier League while domestic pacer Ankit Rajpoot will represent Rajasthan Royals after they were successfully traded by their respective franchises. According to an IPL statement, Boult will play for Mumbai Indians after being traded by his current team Delhi Capitals, while Rajpoot has been traded successfully by Kings XI Punjab. Boult made his IPL debut in 2014 and played for Delhi Capitals in the 2018 and 2019 season. He has 38 IPL wickets from 33 games. Rajpoot, a right-arm fast bowler who joined KXIP in 2018, has played 23 IPL matches and has 22 wickets in his kitty.

## 2019 WORLD KABADDI CUP FROM DEC 1 TO 9

**CHANDIGARH:** The 2019 World Kabaddi Cup, to be organised by the Punjab government, will be held from December 1 to 9, state's Sports Minister Rana Gurmit Singh Sodhi said on Wednesday. He also said that this year's tournament would be dedicated to the 550th birth anniversary of Sikh guru, Guru Nanak Dev ji. Sodhi said nine teams — India, USA, Australia, England, Sri Lanka, Kenya, New Zealand, Pakistan and Canada — are expected to take part in the tournament. He, however, informed that Pakistan and Canada are yet to get clearance from the Indian government. The inauguration of the event would be held on December 1 at Guru Nanak Stadium, Sultanpur Lodhi and four matches would be held that day. The closing ceremony would be held at the Shaheed Bhagat Singh Sports Stadium in Dera Baba Nanak.

## JUVENILE HOMES LEAGUE LAUNCH TODAY

**NEW DELHI:** Football Delhi is all set to launch a Juvenile Homes Football League at Jawaharlar Nehru Stadium from November 14 to December 15. This league is part of the Juvenile Homes Football Programme, launched by Football Delhi in collaboration with the Department of Child and Women's Development, Government of Delhi. Eight Juvenile Homes are part of this football programme and 6 teams will be participating in the tournament.

## 6 MEDALS ASSURED IN ASIAN YOUTH BOXING

**ULANBAATAR:** India were assured of a bagful of medals at the Asian Youth Boxing Championships after six of the country's pugilists advanced to the semis with dominating victories on Wednesday. Soy Selay (49kg), Aman (+91kg), Arikat Narwal (60kg), Naorem Chanu (51kg), Jasmine (57kg) and Vinka (64kg) made the last four stage. Selay defeated Philippines' Flint Jara 5-0, while Aman (+91kg) out-punched Taiwan's Kai-Hsung Wang in a bout that didn't go the full distance. Narwal was also up against a Taiwanese in Yu Lin and the Indian prevailed 5-0. In the women's draw, Chanu claimed a 5-0 triumph over Korea's Eunsu Sun. Jasmine and Vinka were both rewarded for domination with early closure. While Jasmine got the better of Japan's Kimura Mona, Vinka sailed past Taiwan's Hsueh-Tzu Tsui. **AGENCIES**