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LUCKNOW, WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 20, 2019; PAGES 16 ₹3



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**CIRO IMMOBILE
SHINES IN
AZZURRI'S WIN
15 SPORT**

CAPSULE

OWAISI SLAMS DIDI FOR 'MINORITY EXTREMISM'
Kolkata: A day after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee warned against "minority extremism" in an obvious attack on the AIMIM, Asaduddin Owaisi hit back on Tuesday, saying Muslims in the TMC chief's State are ranked "worst" on development indicators.

SELFISHNESS IS BAD: BHAGWAT ON BJP-SENA
Nagpur: In a veiled reference to the recent BJP-Shiv Sena fallout over differences on Government formation in Maharashtra, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat said that both sides will face loss if they "are going to fight over a matter". "Everyone knows that selfishness is a bad thing but very few people give up their selfishness," he added.

12-YEAR-OLD STOPPED ON WAY TO SABARIMALA
Sabarimala: A 12-year-old girl from Pudukchery, who had come for darshan to Lord Ayyappa temple here along with her father, was not allowed to proceed to the shrine from Pamba on Tuesday morning.

AILING NAWAZ LEAVES FOR LONDON FOR TREATMENT
Lahore: Pakistan's ailing former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday left for London in an air ambulance to seek medical treatment for multiple diseases, days after a court here allowed him to travel abroad.

SUPERSTARS PACT IN OFFING IN TAMIL NADU?
Chennai: Superstar Rajinikanth on Tuesday said he would join hands with Kamal Haasan for the welfare of people of Tamil Nadu if such a situation arose.

Yogi hikes perks for medics; more poor to get coverage

Income limit of ₹ 24k for BPL families raised to ₹ 56 K for availing medical benefits

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In an attempt to ensure better health services to the poor, the Yogi Adityanath government has extended medical benefits to BPL families from the existing ₹ 24,000 income level to ₹ 56,000 level in urban areas under the Arogya Nidhi. The poor families left out in the 2011 census will be covered under Mukhyamantri Jan Arogya Scheme.

The government has also hiked the wages of contractual faculty members in the state-run medical colleges and approved letters of comfort for UPEIDA, which has sought bank loan for construction of Bundelkhand Expressway.

The decisions were taken in the state cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath here on Tuesday.

State government spokesperson Sidharth Nath Singh told reporters in Lucknow that the cabinet has scrapped the cap of ₹ 24,000 income for BPL families to avail medical facilities under the Arogya Nidhi. Now in rural areas, the new income limit for availing medical facilities will be ₹ 46,000 per family while in urban areas, it will be ₹ 56,500.

"Besides, the BPL families are now entitled to treatment in all medical colleges, district hospitals along with superspecialty



hospitals like SGPGI, KGMU and BHU," the spokesman said.

In another decision, the government approved a list 10.12 lakh poor families who can get medical facilities under Mukhyamantri Jan Arogya as they were not included in the Pradhanmantri Jan Arogya Scheme. "A scrutiny has shown that around 1.68 families have their names in both the state and Central schemes and after discarding them from the state list, we can add fresh numbers to this list," Singh said.

The central scheme only gives benefit to the families included in the 2011 census.

The government also approved medical facilities for the 37 SC/ST families in Umbha village of Sonbhadra district under Mukhyamantri Jan Arogya Scheme. These families were not included in Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011.

Wages: In another decision, the government hiked the wages of contractual doctors teaching in medical colleges. Now, a professor will get ₹ 1,35,000 per month as honorarium in place of ₹ 90,000, an associate professor ₹ 1,20,000 per month in place of ₹ 80,000, assistant professor ₹ 90,000 in place of ₹ 60,000, and lecturer ₹ 75,000 in place of ₹ 50,000. However, the payscale of permanent doctors is one-and-a-half times more than that of the contractual ones. There are 542 posts vacant in 13 medical colleges.

Tax benefits: The cabinet gave its nod for letters of comfort to seven industries to avail government sops, including in tax, registration and stamp duty. Companies including M/s Haldiram Snacks Pvt Ltd (Gautam Budh Nagar), M/s JK Cement Ltd (Aligarh), M/s Silverton Pulp and Papers Pvt Ltd (Muzaffarnagar), M/s SLMG Beverages Pvt Ltd (Barabanki), M/s R Pulp and Paper Ltd (Shahjahanpur), M/s Greenly Industries Ltd (Hardoi, Sandila) and M/s Nikita Papers Ltd have been issued letters of comfort. Total investment made by these companies is ₹ 286.70 crore. The companies are expected to give jobs to 7,592 people.

Bundelkhand Expressway: The government has approved letters of comfort and guarantee

for bank loans amounting to around ₹ 7,000 crore for the civil construction of Bundelkhand Expressway. Under the agreement, the government will pay the interest of the loan amount for three years till UPEIDA starts collecting revenue through toll. The Bank of Baroda consortium will give the loan for the expressway, which will be built between Chitrakoot and Etawah.

Vehicles: The government has approved the proposal of the Estate department to purchase 16 new vehicles in place of old vehicles auctioned for ₹ 77 lakh. The Estate department will purchase 15 Fortuner and one Innova Crysta vehicles at the expense of ₹ 4.75 crore.

The cabinet approved demolition of an old building in Agra Medical College for construction of a central library and also took cognisance of the progress report of Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, whose entire land will be acquired by December and the work will start from January next year.

The government has also hiked the honorarium of two media advisors of the Information department — Salabh Mani Tripathi and Rais Singh. They will now get ₹ 1 lakh per month as against the existing ₹ 40,000. Besides, their HRA has also been hiked from ₹ 10,000 per month to ₹ 25,000 per month.

ED attaches assets in NH-74 scam

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Assets worth ₹ 21.96 crore were attached under the anti-money laundering law in an alleged corruption case related to the widening of the NH-74 in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, the ED said on Tuesday.

The provisional order for attachment of the assets was issued under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the agency said.

The attached properties belong to special land acquisition officers, land owners, farmers and middlemen.

The assets include agricultural and industrial land, commercial plots and buildings located in Dehradun and Udham Singh Nagar districts of Uttarakhand, and Rampur district in Uttar Pradesh.

Deposits in 11 bank accounts and mutual funds have also been attached, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said.

The central probe agency said it initiated the probe under the PMLA in the case on the basis of an FIR and charge sheet filed by the Uttarakhand Police against Dinesh Pratap Singh, revenue officials, farmers and middlemen.

Singh and Anil Shukla, officials working in the capacity of competent authority of land acquisition then, entered into a conspiracy with other public servants, farmers and middlemen for misappropriation of government funds by granting compensation at non-agricultural rate, the ED said.

House rises to Delhi pollution challenge



TMC MP Kakoli Ghosh wearing a pollution mask arrives at Parliament in New Delhi on Tuesday

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A debate on Delhi's alarming pollution level kicked off in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday on the second day of the Winter Session with Congress MP Manish Tewari suggesting a standing committee on pollution and climate change.

Trinamool Congress' (TMC) Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, who wore a mask during her speech in the Lok Sabha, called for a Swachh Hava Mission. She said Delhi is staring at mass asphyxia.

Many MPs reasoned that it is unfair to blame only farmers for stubble burning, while keeping a blind eye to major polluters like industry,

vehicles, civil constructions in Delhi. They criticised the Delhi Government for its failure to provide clean water.

Initiating the debate, Tewari pointed out how Beijing recovered from the hazardous pollution by curbing industrial and thermal wastes. He urged the Centre and the Delhi Government to resolve the issue with integrated actions.

Tewari said stubble burning is not a major pollutant in Delhi and adjoining areas, hence small farmers should not alone be blamed for the present situation in Delhi.

Participating in a discussion on "pollution and climate change", BJP MP from West

Continued on Page 4

JNU protesters booked for rioting; students demand no legal action

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Tuesday filed two FIRs against the students of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) for damaging public property, rioting and obstructing public servants from discharging their duty during the protest against the hostel fee hike. Police action came after the clash between police and students during the protest march by the protesters on Monday.

However, the JNU Students' Union (JNUSU), on Tuesday demanded that no administrative or legal action should be taken against the students protesting against the hostel fee hike.

JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh said they had a meeting with the Joint Secretary of the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry, GC Hosur, and requested him to ensure no administrative action was initiated against the students for the protest.

Hundreds of JNU students had swarmed the street on Monday, bringing several parts of the city to a halt. The students took out a protest march opposing the recent fee hike



JNU students who got injured in police lathicharge shout slogans during a Press conference in New Delhi on Tuesday

against which an agitation has been going on for over three weeks.

Some 30 police personnel and 15 students were injured in the scuffle during the eight-hour agitation. Police said that one FIR has been registered at South West Delhi's Kishangarh police station, and another at South Delhi's Lodhi Colony police station.

According to Atul Kumar Thakur, the Deputy Commissioner of Police

(DCP), South District, a case under sections 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 332 (voluntarily causing hurt to deter public servant from his duty), 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) of the IPC has been registered at the Lodhi Colony police station.

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Cong dominates Rajasthan urban bodies' elections

PTI ■ JAIPUR

The ruling Congress on Tuesday secured control over 20 local government bodies out of the 49 where elections were held last week in Rajasthan, with the BJP reaching the majority mark in only six.

The Congress won 965 out of the 2,105 wards in the urban local bodies, leaving the BJP trailing at 736, according to the results declared by the state election office.

The Bahujan Samaj Party won 16 wards, the CPI(M) got three and the Nationalist Congress Party two in the elections held on Saturday, the first municipal polls since the Congress came to power in the State last December.

Altogether, 385 independents won in the polls conducted across 24 of Rajasthan's 33 districts.

The results translated into clear majority for the Congress in 20 of the 49 ULBs. The BJP crossed the halfway mark in six urban bodies and the inde-



Congress workers celebrate their victory in the municipal elections in Jaipur on Tuesday

pendents form the majority in 23. Both the Congress and the BJP claimed they could muster support from independents to control nine or 10 other municipalities, apart from the ones where they emerged as clear winners.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said the results were as expected. "It is a matter of happiness that people have given a mandate considering the performance of the Government," he told reporters.

Continued on Page 4

Criticism spurs V-P to order review of marshals' uniform

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Following criticism by some ex-Army officers and remarks of Opposition leaders, Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday ordered a review of the new military-style uniform of marshals in the House.

The uniform was restyled from traditional Indian attire comprising turbans to dark navy blue and olive green military-style outfits with caps. Naidu mentioned in the House that the Secretariat of the Rajya Sabha had come out with a new dress code for marshals. However, there have been suggestions and comments by politicians and well-meaning individuals on the same, he said.

"I have decided to ask the Secretariat to revisit the same," Naidu said. On Monday, when the marshals came wearing the new uniform together with aiguillette, some members commented if "marshal law was being imposed".

Customarily, the presiding officer of the House is flanked by two marshals who march ahead of the chairman to announce the commence-



A marshal in the new uniform at Parliament during its ongoing Winter Session in New Delhi on Tuesday

ment of proceedings and also assist the chair in organising the desk and bringing up order papers. Marshals earlier wore safari suits during summer and Indian bandgalas during the winter along with turbans.

The turbans were viewed by some as colonial legacy, leading to review of the uniform. On Monday, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh had sought to raise a point on the marshals' new uniform. "Sir, the marshals..." he began only to be interrupted by Naidu.

Ramesh, however, insisted that there has been "a very significant change" in their attire. "Okay. You always make significant point at an insignificant time," Naidu had remarked on Monday. Some former Army officers have also criticised the new uniforms for marshals, terming them illegal.

Former Indian Army chief Ved Malik too objected to the new uniform of Rajya Sabha marshals, and called it "illegal and a security hazard".

Continued on Page 4

Rising sea threatens watery grave for Indian coastal cities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the last 50 years, sea level along the Indian coast has risen by 8.5 cm with the decade between 2003 and 2013 showing the annual average rise at a greater speed.

On an average, the sea level along the Indian coast is considered to be rising at about 1.70 mm/year, but during the last decade (2003-2013) (till the time the reading was made) it experienced a rise at a rate of 6.1 mm/year, the Centre informed the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.

Union Minister Babul Supriyo, however, said since no long-term data on land subsidence or emergence are available the rate of increase of sea level due to climate change cannot be attributed with certainty. He was responding to a

question on whether several cities will be submerged as temperatures are rising due to global warming.

"However, the coastal areas that might get inundated due to the rising sea level need to be evaluated based on their elevation above mean sea level. Since no long-term data on land subsidence or emergence are available for these locations, the rate of increase of sea level due to climate change cannot be attributed with certainty," he said.

"For example, the higher rate of sea level increase at Diamond Harbour is also due to the larger land subsidence happening there. The same may apply to Kandla, Haldia and Port Blair as well," Supriyo told the Rajya Sabha.

The Minister further said that the rising sea levels can

The most vulnerable areas are in Japan, China, Bangladesh and India

exacerbate the coastal inundation along the low lying areas during extreme events such as tsunami, storm surge, coastal flooding and coastal erosion.

The Government's observation comes close on the heels of statement from UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres who has described climate change as the biggest threat to sustainability as he voiced deep concern over the rising level of oceans.

"The most vulnerable areas are in Japan, China, Bangladesh and India," Guterres said speaking to reporters in Bangkok after attending the ASEAN Summit.



Workers create a floating boundary to make it safe for sea bathers in Kanyakumari on Tuesday

A report of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) too had warned that global sea levels are set to rise by at least 1m by 2100 if carbon emissions go unchecked, submerging hundreds of cities, including Mumbai and Kolkata, and in some cases entire countries.

"Extreme sea level events that used to happen once a century will occur every year in many parts of the world by the middle of the century because of global warming," the panel has warned.

The IPCC also warned that glaciers will continue to decline around the world, losing more than a third of their mass by 2100 under worst case emissions scenarios, with some disappearing entirely. Such losses pose "unavoidable consequences for river runoff and

local hazards", and will cause problems for the billions who rely on the water for drinking supplies and irrigation.

He cited a recent report by a research center that said the level of the oceans is rising much faster than what was forecasted because of climate change. The UN chief stressed that unless nations are able to reverse this trend, because climate change for the moment is running faster than actions being taken by Governments, the research forecasted that 300 million people will be flooded by sea water in the world by 2050.

"Dramatically, the most vulnerable areas are exactly in Southeast Asia, in Japan, China, Bangladesh and India," he said adding that Thailand risks to have 10 per cent of its population in flooded areas by the sea.

Unnao violence politically motivated: Mahana

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The UP government said that the violence by farmers in Unnao against land acquisition for Trans-Ganga City was politically motivated and forces inimical to farmers' interest and development were behind the incident.



tion by farmers."

Farmers had staged violent protests demanding higher compensation of land acquired by the government for Trans-Ganga City industrial-cum-residential project in Unnao on November 17 and 18.

"The 1,144 acres of land for Trans-Ganga City project in Unnao was acquired during the previous Samajwadi Party regime and all farmers and Rs 237 crore was paid to affected farmers," said Industries minister Satish Mahana in Lucknow on Tuesday.

"That the stir is politically-motivated, is evident from the fact that of the 14 people arrested in this connection, only one was a farmer whose land was acquired while the rest 13 were outsiders," claimed the minister.

Mahana further claimed, "The project was a non-starter during the previous Akhilesh regime. When the BJP government initiated the execution of the project, farmers were instigated to ask for a bigger compensation that led to the agita-

tion by farmers." Explaining the theory further, the Industries minister said, "The BJP government added to the profile of the project by proposing the construction of a new bridge on Ganga river linking Sarsaiyya ghat of Kanpur with Trans-Ganga City. This will add to the profile and land prices in the project area was likely to skyrocket, even higher than posh areas of Kanpur. Some mischievous elements instigated the farmers to demand higher compensation for their land acquired for the project."

Mahana said that at the time of land acquisition, farmers were paid Rs 1.51 lakh per bigha as compensation and were later paid Rs 5.51 Lakh per bigha more. An additional Rs 7 Lakh per bigha as gratuity was paid to the farmers during the previous Akhilesh regime.

"Each farmer was thus compensated at the rate of Rs 12.51 per bigha and a total of Rs 237 crore has already been paid to them. Hence there was no justification for the stir," argued the Industries minister. Mahana said that the project was formulated and was being implemented by State Industrial Development Authority (SIDA) since 2014-15. "Tenders for infrastructure development were started during the previous SP regime but contractors were prevented by farmers. The BJP government later cancelled the tenders and FIRs were lodged against several contractors and developers," he said.

"As many as 1,784 persons had applied for allotment of residential plot at Trans-Ganga City. Due to the delay in execution of project, 780 persons sought refund of their money. The SIDA refunded but deducted 25 percent of the amount. The BJP government not only repaid that amount but also paid 6 percent interest on the amount deposited by plot seekers," said Mahana.

The Industries minister said that the BJP government was committed to completing the project as it was in the interest of overall development of both Kanpur and Unnao districts.

Chief Minister orders probe into fire incident

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath reacted strongly to the gutting of important documents related to bungling in the muster roll of home guards in Gautam Buddha Nagar (Noida). The attendance log of Home Guard personnel since 2014 were allegedly damaged in a fire at the District Commandant's office late on Monday night.

On Tuesday morning, the Chief Minister ordered Noida officials to ensure immediate arrest of culprits involved in the incident. He also sought a detailed report from Principal Secretary and Director General of Home Guards by Tuesday evening.

"The Chief Minister instructed the District Magistrate and SSP of Noida to ensure the arrest of the culprits by Tuesday evening. He has also asked officials to deploy forensic teams at the site for a threadbare probe," a government spokesperson said in Lucknow on Tuesday.

The fire at the office of District Commandant (Home Guard), Noida came at a time when a probe was underway into fraudulent withdrawal of salaries of numerous Home Guards in the district.

"The lock of the office of District Commandant, Home Guard (Noida) at Surajpur area was broken to gain entry into the room and then a locker containing muster rolls (attendance and salary logs) of Home Guard personnel was vandalised and torched by unidentified miscreants," SSP of Noida, Vaibhav Krishna told media persons on Tuesday.

"Station House Officer of Surajpur police station and Fire Safety Officer



found that a big box containing salary muster rolls (attendance logs) was in a burnt state with the rolls burnt down," Krishna said.

The SSP said that an FIR was registered in the case and thorough probe was ordered.

"A district-level special investigation team under SP, Noida Vineet Jaiswal has been set up to probe the matter. Prima facie it has come to light that the box had salary muster rolls of personnel deputed in different police stations and government offices in Noida since 2014," Vaibhav Krishna

"THE CHIEF MINISTER INSTRUCTED THE DISTRICT MAGISTRATE AND SSP OF NOIDA TO ENSURE THE ARREST OF THE CULPRITS BY TUESDAY EVENING. HE HAS ALSO ASKED OFFICIALS TO DEPLOY FORENSIC TEAMS AT THE SITE FOR A THREADBARE PROBE"

said. Earlier in July, it surfaced that salaries of scores of Home Guards deployed at various places were withdrawn despite them reporting for work only half of the days in May and June.

This prompted a probe into the matter. The amount of fraud was pegged at several crore rupees. An FIR was lodged against Home Guard officials for fraud and forgery on November 13.

Home Guards are not paid fixed monthly salary and instead given honorarium based on the number of days of duty. There are about 375 Home Guards, including 10 women personnel, deployed in Noida. A maximum 50 of them are attached with Traffic Police, while 10-15 Home Guards are deployed at each of the 23 police stations across Noida and Greater Noida.

CM to inaugurate Munderwa Sugar Mill tomorrow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will inaugurate the newly-established Munderwa Sugar Mill of UP State Sugar Corporation Limited in Basti on November 21. The new mill will have a capacity of 5000 TCD and will generate 27 Mega Watt of power.

Principal Secretary, Cane Development, Sanjay R Bhoosreddy said that Munderwa sugar mill will work at full capacity in the 2019-20 crushing season.

"Around 30,000 cane farmers of the mill area will be benefited by supplying their produce to the mill," he said.

In the 2019-20 crushing season, an approximate crushing of about 60 lakh quintals of cane was expected which would produce 6.25 lakh quintals of sugar. The project would provide direct and indirect employment to about 8,500 persons. Besides, electricity will also be exported from the co-generation plant, due to which sugar mill was likely to get a revenue of about Rs 30 crore every year.

"The establishment of the new sugar mill in Munderwa (Basti) will prove to be meaningful in increasing economic prosperity of cane farmers of the region and doubling their income," said Bhoosreddy. Cane minister Suresh Rana said that the Chief Minister will also launch the new crushing season on November 21 and the function will start at 10 am.

Dedicated policy needed to check pollution: Maya

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati stressed the need for dedicated policy for curbing pollution and said that air pollution was a dreaded problem which was not only threatening Delhi, but the entire country including densely populated Uttar Pradesh.

Mayawati said that there was a need to frame a concrete policy to tackle pollution and ensure its strict implementation in public interest.

Urging those in power to take immediate steps to deal with the menace, the BSP chief said that it was important to understand the root causes of pollution.

"Understanding the root causes of pollution and focussing on solving them is necessary. It would be better if the government paid immediate attention on this issue," she said.

In a related tweet, Mayawati posted, "Due to government negligence, pollution has become a widespread problem and people have been forced to take to the streets against it."

"Therefore, after a discussion on pollution in Parliament, there is a need to frame a concrete policy and ensure its strict implementation in public interest," she tweeted.

Probe report against ex-DMs tabled

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government accepted the probe report of Meerut Divisional Commissioner against two former district magistrates of Ghaziabad for their alleged role in acquisition of land for Delhi-Meerut Expressway.

The report suggested a CBI probe into the matter along with action against then DM of Ghaziabad, Vimal Kumar Srivastava and Nidhi Keserwan along with other officers.

The report was tabled before the cabinet in Lucknow on Tuesday. State government spokesperson Srikant Sharma said that former Meerut Divisional Commissioner Prabhat Kumar, in his report on September 29, has claimed that there were several anomalies in acquisition of around 71.1495 hectares of land in four villages, including Dasna, at the old rate of compensation even after a new Compensation Act came into force.

"Due to the arbitration moved by farmers, the land could not be acquired leading to a delay in the project," the report said recommending stringent action against the



Ministers posing for the shutterbugs after the Cabinet Meeting at Lok Bhawan in Lucknow on Tuesday

erring officials, including the DM. The cabinet instructed that compensation for land acquired by the government for

projects should be paid as per the new Act.

After the probe report suggesting that farmers should

get the new compensation rate, the total amount of compensation would be Rs 486.98 crore.

Undertrial stops over at hotel with cops to meet lover, caught

PTI ■ GORAKHPUR

A murder accused was caught with his lover in a hotel room here and three constables, who were escorting him for a court hearing, were found enjoying a meal in the adjoining room during a police raid on Monday, officials said.

Kameshwar Singh had been brought from Hardoi Jail to Deoria district for a hearing in the chief judicial magistrate's court. He and the constables had come here to catch a train, they said.

The family members of Singh's lover, who are opposed to the relationship between the two, informed the police on Monday that he had checked into a hotel at Station Road, said senior superintendent of police, Gorakhpur, Sunil Kumar Gupta on Tuesday.

A raid was carried out at the hotel and Singh was found in a room with his lover. The constables who were escorting him were found having food in the adjacent room, he said.

Shivpal softens stand, says not aspiring for CM post

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a visible softening of stand, Shivpal Yadav said he was not aspiring for the post of Chief Minister and was ready to join hands with his nephew Akhilesh Yadav and support him for the race to office after 2022 UP Assembly polls. Shivpal broke away from the Samajwadi Party (SP) and formed Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohiya) and the outfit also contested the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

"I have no aspiration to become the Chief Minister and I hope the two parties will move together for the UP Assembly elections in 2022. We should take this pledge on November 22 - the birthday of Mulayam Singh Yadav," said the PSP chief.

"We are ready to join hands with Akhilesh once again and help him become the Chief Minister. I hope the two parties move ahead for unity. Our priority is Samajwadi Party since we have worked with Netaji (Mulayam Singh Yadav) for a very long time and our ideology is also similar," Shivpal said. "We are making efforts in this direction. Akhilesh will



be able to form the government if he agrees to join," said Shivpal.

Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh are scheduled in 2022. Earlier, Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav had tried to bring the estranged uncle-nephew duo together following poor performance of both the parties in 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Akhilesh, however, has time and again maintained that the SP will contest the 2022 Uttar Pradesh polls alone.

Earlier in September, Samajwadi Party had said that it would consider withdrawing

its application filed with UP Assembly Speaker seeking disqualification of Shivpal Yadav from the membership of the Assembly, if he agreed for a merger with the Samajwadi Party. On September 13, the SP had moved the application seeking Shivpal's disqualification from the Assembly under the Anti-Defection Law. Shivpal Yadav was elected from Jaswantnagar Assembly segment on an SP ticket in 2017 Assembly elections. In 2018, he floated Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) after falling out with his nephew and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav.

UPSTF arrests man for impersonating police constable

GORAKHPUR: The Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force on Tuesday arrested a man who impersonated a police constable in Khajni Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) office here.

Ajay Kumar Chaturvedi was arrested by Gorakhpur field unit of the STF. Inspector SP Singh said. A police uniform, name plate, batch (UP police), cap, shoes, khaki socks belt and two sets of winter police uniform, two ATM cards, driving license, mobile phone sets, Rs 59,500 cash and Aadhaar card were recovered from his possession, Singh said.

The accused is a resident of Lahura Deva in Sant Kabir Nagar district. He was living at Ghosh Company area in Kotwali police station limit here, police said. The STF was tipped off about Chaturvedi fraudulently working as constable. After investigation, it was found that he was doing duty with SDM Khajni. He was arrested from Khajni tehsil under section Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 171 (wearing garb or carrying token used by public servant with fraudulent intent), 419 (punishment for cheating by personation) and 420 (cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property), the Inspector said. During the interrogation, Chaturvedi told that he is not a constable and in 2014 he told SDM Danghata in Sant Kabir Nagar district that he was on duty and he is a constable and started doing duty and in 2015 the SDM got transferred. When people came to know about him, he went away from there and in 2017, he started working again with SDM Rudauli in Faizabad district. The accused used to take money from people on the pretext of getting their work done.

GOVERNMENT OF UTTAR PRADESH DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & TRAINING JAWAHAR BHAWAN, 6th FLOOR ASHOK MARG LUCKNOW

No: ME-1/2019/0518 Dated 14 November, 19

E-TENDER CORRIGENDUM

The E-Tender notice invited by Principal, Medical College Prayagraj by letter no. E-Tender/Housekeeping/2019/14676, dated 20 September 2019 select the service provider agency for housekeeping and sanitation at government Medical College, Prayagraj. This two bid system invited E-tender is hereby extended further due to some unavoidable circumstances. The dates are now as follows.

- 1- Date of submission of bid and providing hard copy-05-12-2019 at 5:00 pm.
- 2- Date of opening of technical bid-06-12-2019 from 3:30 pm onwards (DGME, U.P. Lucknow)

The rest of tender conditions will remain same.

(K.K. Gupta)
UP- 145655 Date 18.11.2019 विज्ञान वेबसाइट www.upgov.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है। Director General

Office of the Executive Engineer, Construction Division-3, P.W.D., Jhansi

No.-2288/प्रिडा/19 Dt.-14-11-2019

Very Short Term E-Procurement Notice (2nd Invitation)

1. The Executive Engineer, Construction Division-3 U.P.P.W.D. on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites the percentage rate bids online from the eligible and approved Contractors registered for road works UP PWD, as per Col No-10. Bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 4 of the Instructions to Bidders to qualify for the award of the contract.

S. No.	Dist. No.	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs. in Lac)	Bid Security (Rs. in Lac)	Cost of stationery & tender inclusive all taxes (in Rs.)	Address of Executive Engineer executing the work	Address of Superintending Engineer	Address of Chief Engineer	Category of Contractor
1	Jhansi	Supply of material for filling of potholes and patch repair for Various roads of C.D.-3 P.W.D. Jhansi	20.00	2.00	500 + 300 = Rs. 800.00	C.D.-3 P.W.D. Jhansi	Jhansi Circle P.W.D. Jhansi	Jhansi Zone P.W.D. Jhansi	A, B, C And D
2	Jhansi	Filling of potholes and Patch repair work of Various roads of CD 3 PWD Jhansi	30.00	3.00	500 + 300 = Rs. 800.00	C.D.-3 P.W.D. Jhansi	Jhansi Circle P.W.D. Jhansi	Jhansi Zone P.W.D. Jhansi	A, B, C And D

3- Time allowed for completion of work is 03 Months including rainy season.
4- Bid Documents can be downloaded form date 21-11-2019 to 27-11-2019 at 12:30 PM and bid can be submitted online before 27-11-2019 at 12:30 PM. The technical bids will be opened online on date 27-11-2019 at 4:30 PM.
5- All terms & conditions can be seen on website http://etender.up.nic.in

(Er. B.L. Singh)
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
CONSTRUCTION DIVISION-3
P.W.D., JHANSI

U.P.: 145629, Date : 18.11.2019
विज्ञान वेबसाइट www.up.gov.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है।

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Mystery shrouds man's death

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Forty-five year old Shiv Dayal alias Pappu, a resident of Gondha village in Malihabad area, died under the mysterious circumstances. His body was found near local Janata Inter College around 7 am on Tuesday. In a complaint lodged in the afternoon, Ajit Kumar Rawat, the son of the deceased, suspected that it could well be a conspiracy. However, he neither explained the reason, nor names any suspect. The police registered a case in this connection. Shiv Dayal had gone missing on November 16. Ajit, along with his relatives and neighbours, initially tried to search for his father when he did not return home on Saturday night, but to no avail.

On Sunday afternoon, Rawat lodged a complaint regarding his father's mysterious disappearance.

Shiv Dayal was a farmer and had some land which to make ends meet for his family comprising six members. One

of the deceased's relatives told the investigating officer that he might have been killed at the behest of some local muscle-men eying his land. He alleged that the deceased was constantly being pressured to sell the land to them.

Investigating officer Awadhesh Yadav said that the emphasis of the probe would be on the motive for killing.

Meanwhile, a 15-year-old student of local Government Secondary School under Kakori police station was fatally knocked down by a speeding truck (UP30 A5586) in Jetha village around 9 am. He was identified as Anurag Yadav, son of Pappu Yadav, a resident of Meerakhedha Kheda in Jetha village. The police said the deceased was going to his school on a bicycle in the morning when he was hit by a speeding truck from behind. He died on the spot. The errand driver sped off soon after the incident. The father of the deceased lodged a complaint at the police station stating that

his son was fatally knocked down by a speeding truck.

23-YR-OLD DRIVER KILLED, 8 INJURED IN ROAD MISHAP

A 23-year-old private taxi driver was killed while eight others injured in a road accident near RR School on Lucknow-Sitapur highway under Bakshi-Ka-Talab police station in the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday. The deceased was identified as Faizal. Rais Ahmed, Tehmina, Fatima, Ali Ahmed, Saifuddin, Salem, Nazia and Shoeb were among those injured in the mishap. Police said the taxi (UPES 2768) was going to Itaunja from Lucknow when it overturned in a bid to avoid colliding head-on with a speeding roadways bus around 1.30 am. The injured victims remained unattended for at least an hour.

Incidentally, beat inspector Santosh Kumar noticed the injured persons while he was passing through the road

around 3 am. They were rushed to a nearby nursing home. The driver succumbed to injuries at the hospital while others were referred to KGMU Trauma Centre where the condition of Tehmina, Nazia and Shoeb was said to be critical. Doctors said others would be discharged in a day or two.

The police said all those injured were related to each other and came to the state capital to attend a function hosted by their friends on Monday evening. The mishap occurred when they were returning to their houses located at different area in Itaunja. With the help of Rais Ahmed, the police passed on the information about the mishap to their family members in the wee hours on Tuesday.

Interestingly, several heavy vehicles passed via the road but the injured persons remained unnoticed till they were helped by the police. A complaint was lodged by Virendra Kumar Chauhan, a wardboy of the hospital, on Tuesday morning.

UPCC chief fires fresh salvo at govt

PF SCAM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Facing a defamation notice for his remarks on large-scale irregularities in Provident Fund scam in UP Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL), UP Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu on Tuesday fired a fresh salvo at Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath accusing him of not only sheltering Power Minister Shrikant Sharma but also all senior officials involved in the scam. "The CM should clarify that when officers involved in the PF scam during the previous regime were behind the bars, why similar action was not taken against chairman of UPPCL Alok Kumar, chief managing director Sanjay Agarwal and other managing directors posted during BJP regime, who channelled huge sums into the defaulting DHFL company," asked Lallu while producing bank transaction details that the trail of money to DHFL account continued after Yogi took over reins on March 17, 2017.

Addressing mediapersons in Lucknow on Tuesday, Lallu alleged that over Rs 2,300 crore have been transferred into DHFL account between October 7, 2017 and December, 2018 during which Yogi Adityanath was the Chief Minister. He sought to know as to why the government was not taking responsibility of the scam and trying to accuse the previous SP regime.

UPPCL employees boycott work

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow: Employees of the Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL) continued their 48-hour strike for the second day on Tuesday against the alleged provident fund-DHFL scam. "About 45,000 power employees staged peaceful demonstrations all over the state for the second day today reiterating the demand for issuance of a notification by the government taking responsibility for safe return of their money, invested in DHFL by the Uttar Pradesh Power Sector Employees' Trust," convener of the Vidyut Karamchari Sanyukt Sangharsh Samiti (VKSSS), Shilendra Dubey said.

However, the units generating power have been exempted from the protest to prevent grid failure. Dubey, whose VKSSS, a joint forum of power employees and engi-



neers, is leading the dharna programme said that the core committee meeting of the Samiti will be held on Wednesday to chalk out the future course of action. "The core committee meeting of the Sangharsh Samiti has been convened tomorrow after the

successful 48 hour work boycott and an announcement for future struggle programme for justice will be made," Dubey said. In Lucknow, the striking employees converged at the Shakti Bhawan while they held protest meetings in other districts also.

Kalbe Jawwad to get honorary PhD at KMCU convocation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Maulana Kalbe Jawwad Naqvi will be conferred with an honorary PhD degree at the fourth convocation of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Urdu-Arabi-Farsi University on November 21. Addressing mediapersons on Tuesday, Vice-Chancellor Mahrukh Mirza said Saidur Rahman Azami and Indresh Kumar will be conferred honorary DLitt degrees and Maulana Kalbe Jawwad Naqvi and Swami Sarang Mohile honorary PhD degrees at the convocation ceremony. He said 65 medals will be given to 55 meritorious students. The number of gold medal is 29 which will be given to 18 boys and 11 girls while 12 boys and six girls will receive 18 silver medals. Eighteen bronze medals will be given away to 10 boys and eight girls. A total number of 386 students will be given away degrees and 317 of them have secured first division.

Masood Ahmad of BA (Arabic) will receive Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Medal,



Vice-Chancellor Mahrukh Mirza informing mediapersons about the KMCU convocation to be held on November 21

Abhishek Verma of BCA Chancellor's Medal and Abhijeet Kumar of BCA Vice-Chancellor's Medal.

For the first time, the KMCU 'Kulgeet' written by Vice-Chancellor Mahrukh Mirza & Murtaza Faheem and KMCU 'Tarana' written by Fakhre Alam from department of Urdu will be recited at the convocation ceremony.

Mirza told mediapersons that all teachers of the university will wear khadi and handwoven clothes during the convocation. He also said that the

dress code for this convocation is maroon khadi sarees for female teachers, and beige shawani & white chudidar for male teachers. The girl students will wear white salwaar-suit with maroon dupatta and boys will wear white kurta-pyjama at the convocation. As per the directions of Governor Anandiben Patel, 50 students (25 girls & 25 boys) from primary schools will be invited to the convocation ceremony. The university has also decided to give away sweaters and writing kits to these students.

EDP training for horticulture entrepreneurs

Lucknow (PNS): The first Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) training is being organised at CISH for horticulture entrepreneurs for mango and guava. This is a residential training and the certificate course to qualify by the candidate as one of the requirements for getting financial support by farmers from National Horticulture Board (NHB).

This is a totally different well-structured training programme which takes care of entrepreneurship development as most of the trainings being conducted in horticulture lack this aspect. Post training, hand-holding through the institute will help them in successful implementation. Several activities like regular agro advisory and technological updates will be given to the trainees to help them in their endeavour.

CISH director Shailendra Rajan said that farmers from Telangana and Maharashtra are attending the training. Various components of entrepreneurship and leadership development programme were finalised as modules after a lot of exercise.

Tremors felt in city

Lucknow (PNS): With an earthquake shaking Nepal with a magnitude of 5 on the Richter scale, tremors were also felt at the state capital around 7 pm on Tuesday. People working in their offices stepped out soon after experiencing the tremors. People in homes also experienced the tremors. However, there were others who were completely oblivious Manoj Sharma, a retired employee, said he was on an evening walk when he felt the tremors. However, Natasha, a student in Indira Nagar, said she did not feel anything. The tremors lasted only for a few seconds. People in highrises panicked and were on tenterhooks fearing aftershocks. "I actually felt that my desk and computer were shaking," an employee said. Met officials maintained that the quake occurred in Nepal. However, they did not confirm if the tremors were felt in the state capital.

'Cure of breast cancer is possible, early detection important'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

To address the lacunae in breast cancer management at state level, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) organised a regional consultation on breast cancer in Lucknow on Tuesday. Speaking at the meeting, member of CII UP State Council Anuj Agarwal said it is necessary to create awareness at mass level so that prevention, early diagnosis and treatment can be made possible.

Convener of SGPGI Breast Health Programme Dr Gaurav Agarwal from department of Endocrine and Breast Surgery said the cure of breast cancer is possible and the most important pre-requisite is awareness. "Platforms like Ayushman Bharat should be made use of in spreading awareness of available breast cancer management options like clinical breast examination. Primary and secondary health agencies should be trained and equipped to examine cases," he said.

Dr Anand Kumar Mishra from department of Endocrine Surgery, King George's Medical University, mentioned that oncoplastic surgery is a favorable option for patients as it is painless. "Radiotherapy, on the other

hand, should be used in a restricted manner as it can impact lungs and heart in case the left breast is affected," he added. State programme officer Dr Nadeem Akhtar said that there should be ongoing research and strengthening of capacity building in breast cancer along with current initiatives by the government.

The objective of the regional roundtable was to capture insights and suggestions from various stakeholders at state level. In India, the burden of breast cancer is increasing due to various factors. The meet was attended by more than 50 participants, including practitioners, subject experts, academicians, NGOs and govt representatives. Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer among Indian females with the incidence rates being as high as 25.8 per 1,00,000 women and mortality of 12.7 per 1,00,000 women. There are multiple reasons for this late detection, including lack of awareness, shyness on the part of patients, social stigma, and ignorance at primary and secondary healthcare level. Early detection is best way to reduce mortality.

FORM No. - 5
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL AT LUCKNOW
600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow - 226007

(Jurisdiction-Part of U.P.)
SUMMONS FOR FILING REPLY & APPEARANCE BY PUBLICATION

O.A. No. 234 of 2019 Date 16.11.2019
(Summons to defendant Under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to the Bank and Financial Institution Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal Procedure Rules, 1993)

UNION BANK OF INDIA ...APPLICANT
Prag Narain Road Branch

VERSUS ...DEFENDANTS
NARENDRA KUMAR TIWARI AND OTHERS

Defendants:
1. Narendra Kumar Tiwari s/o Sri Ram Bilas Tiwari r/o 19, Nazeerganj, Daliganj, Near SBI, Lucknow.
2. Mrs. Pooja Tiwari w/o Sri Narendra Kumar Tiwari r/o 19, Nazeerganj, Daliganj, Near SBI, Lucknow.
3. Ashok Tiwari s/o Sri Chandrika Prasad Tiwari r/o Nazeerganj, Daliganj, Lucknow.
4. Abhishek Dixit s/o Late Sudheer Kumar, r/o House No. 1/73, Sector-

In the above noted application, you are required to file reply in Paper Book form in Two sets along with Documents and Affidavits, (if any) personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 05.12.2019 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

REGISTRAR
Debts Recovery Tribunal, Lucknow

एनीमिया मुक्त भारत

प्रजनन आयुर्वर्ग की महिलाएं वाहिए स्वस्थ शरीर और तेज दिमाग?

सुरक्षित मातृत्व
स्वस्थ शिशु
सुशहल बचपन
स्फूर्तिवान किशोर
निर्दोषित परिवार
सम्मानित वृद्ध

एनीमिया मुक्त भारत

आयुर्वन युवत आहार खाने में लें

आई.एफ.ए. साथ में एक स्वस्थ गोली हर हफ्ते एक एल्बेण्डाजोल पेट के कीड़े मिटाए एक गोली साल में दो बार

आई.एफ.ए. व एल्बेण्डाजोल की गोली सरकारी, आँगनवाड़ी और हेल्थ एवं वेलनेस सेंटर से नि:शुल्क प्राप्त करें।

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ROAD SAFETY - LIFE SAFETY

ROAD SAFETY WEEK (18 - 24 NOVEMBER, 2019)

BE RESPONSIBLE - DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE

TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, UTTAR PRADESH

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112 108 EMERGENCY

TSA mapping entire network of canals

Lucknow (PNS): Turtle Surveillance Alliance, in a joint effort with the Forest department, is mapping the entire network of canals in Uttar Pradesh to see which are the points where the crocodiles and dolphins are coming in close quarters with the human habitat. Shaileendra Singh, who heads Turtle Surveillance Alliance, said the objectives of this exercise are health assessment of dolphins rescued from canals in Uttar Pradesh, evaluation of survival of dolphins and crocodiles rescued from canals in the state, identification of high-risk areas for entrapment of dolphins in canals in the Ganga basin and awareness raising to improve response to dolphin canal entrapment issue in India.

He said that this problem increases post monsoon because a number of crocodiles and dolphins that flow in the canal due rain water cannot go back into the river.

"These crocodiles and dolphins continue to linger in the regions because of the change in the hydrological regimes with the water either drying earlier or late, and hence the animals are stuck at the same point," he pointed out.

He said they are taking into

account the spots where these incidents have taken place and points in the vast canal network of the state. "We are mapping canals to know where these conflicts are occurring. We have received information about these conflict situations in Sitapur and in Deva and our teams have resolved situations at these places," he said. He further pointed out that this kind of mapping will help in the coming days when they have information about where these incidents had taken place in the past and make preparations accordingly to rescue, monitor and carry out veterinary Health Assessment of Ganges River dolphin trapped in canal systems in India" he said.

He said that the activities will include developing mobile veterinary service based at Lucknow zoo, providing training to key veterinarians to conduct health assessments during rescues, developing laboratory capacity to analyse samples collected during rescues. He further pointed out that the Kukrail Breeding Centre will be giving the red crowned roof turtle to the Bronx zoo in New York through Lucknow Zoological Gardens.



UPCC chief Ajay Kumar Lallu paying floral tributes to former PM Indira Gandhi at party headquarters in Lucknow on her birth anniversary

Pioneer

Awareness programme on piles at KGMU today

Lucknow (PNS): The department of Surgery, KGMU, is organising a piles awareness programme on the occasion of World Piles Day on Wednesday. Dr Arshad Ahmad said there will be a poster competition and a discourse regarding prevention of piles.

"Piles is a very common problem and every second or third person suffers from it at some point of time. There are so many misleading advertise-

ments which confuse people. This programme is meant for bringing awareness among people and anyone can participate in it," he said. The common symptoms are bleeding, swelling, pain or itching.

"The problem is more prevalent among the elderly but it's quite common in young people as well. The precipitating factors are constipation, sedentary life style, lack of fluid and fibre in diet," he said.

Dr Ahmad pointed out that prolonged sitting in toilet is also a risk factor.

"By adopting a healthy lifestyle like taking more fluids, fibre-rich food and doing regular exercise, one can prevent the symptoms to a large extent. It is observed that when people have symptoms related to piles, they usually resort to self medication and even seek advice of quacks instead of consulting a qualified doctor. This

is partly due to hesitation and fear and partly due to misleading advertisements. This should be discouraged as sometimes this practice can harm the patient," he added.

"Only few patients need surgery. The purpose of the awareness programme is to bring awareness regarding preventing measures and to discourage people from following misleading advertisements and self medication," he added.

World Heritage Week kicks off



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) organised the opening ceremony of World Heritage Week (November 19-25) at General Wali Kothi in Lucknow on Tuesday. A photo-exhibition showing world heritage monuments of India and those under Lucknow circle of ASI and recent conservation works was also inaugurated on the occasion. The exhibition will remain open for visitors up to November 25.

ADG of UP Police Vijay Kumar was the chief guest on the occasion while Umar Kamaluddin, head of Persian department, and Amar Singh from department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Lucknow University, were the special guests. The programme was presided over by RC Tripathi, former director general of Archaeological Survey of India. Superintending archaeolo-

gist, ASI, Indu Prakash honoured the guests with shawls and mementos. Drawing, essay writing and quiz competitions were organised by the Lucknow circle of ASI in which students of Lucknow Public College, RK Senior Secondary School and Seth MR Jaipuria participated. In essay writing, Ananya Yadav from Lucknow Public College stood first while Navneet Mittal of the same college came second. Rishabh Shukla from RK Secondary School bagged the third spot while Priti Verma and Abhay Singh from the same school got consolation prizes. In drawing, Eva Singh of Lucknow Public College walked away with the first prize while Sarika Kushwaha from RK Secondary School stood second. The third prize was secured by Yushra Fatima from MR Jaipuria School. Hemant Maurya and Arman Srivastava from MR Jaipuria School received consolation prizes.

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

On behalf of the President of India acting through Chief Administrative Officer/Con., North Eastern Railway, and Gorakhpur invites the following E-works Tenders: S. No. 1. E-Tender No.: DYCE-CON-HQ-GKP-24-2019, Name of work: Transportation and loading/unloading of various P. Way materials, rails, sleepers, fittings, bridge girders, slabs etc. for Chhapra - Ballia doubling and various other projects under Dy.CE/Con/HQ/NER. Approximate Value: ₹ 61790795.00. Earnest Money (Rs.): 459000.00. Cost of Tender Form (Rs.): 10,000/-, Completion period: 06 (Six) Months. Bidding Start date - 28.11.2019. Last date of submission of above E-Tender up to 15.00 hrs on 12.12.2019. Date of opening of above E-Tender 15.30 hrs on 12.12.2019. Detailed tender notice, eligibility criteria, terms & conditions is available on web site www.irps.gov.in in case any disparity arises between Hindi and English version of tender notice, English version will hold good and will be followed. Shri S.K. Singh, XEN/Con/Balia Mob. No. 9794845260. Dy. Chief Engineer/Con/HQ CPROW-271, N.E. Railway, Gorakhpur. About any passenger amenity complaint SMS on Mob. No. 09794845955. Do Not smoke Bid/Cigarette in train.

SCHOOLSCAN

GEOFEST INT'L CONCLUDES

The five-day International Geography Olympiad 'Geofest International-2019', jointly organised by City Montessori School, Jopling Road and Rajajipuram II campuses, came to a close with a prize distribution and closing ceremony at Kanpur Road auditorium on Tuesday. The young geographer from India and abroad vowed to keep the Earth green and clean.

Dr Shailendra K Saxena from KGMU inaugurated the programme and later gave away prizes to the winners of different contests. The students of CMS presented several colourful educational-cultural items. A number of dances highlighted the spirit of unity in diversity in India. The participants from Russia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and various states of India enjoyed Indian songs and music.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

HOUSE RISES TO...

Delhi Pravesh Verma slammed the AAP Government for passing the buck to neighbouring States where stubble burning is an annual phenomenon around this time every year. The BJP MP alleged that the AAP Government had spent ₹70 crore on publicising the odd-even road rationing scheme but did not take steps to increase the number of public buses. People are using personal vehicles due to inadequate and poor public transport facilities in Delhi, he said. He alleged ₹600 crore was spent by the Delhi Government on advertisements but little was done to curb pollution. Earlier Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal

used to cough, but now the entire city and members of Parliament are coughing, he said sarcastically. Verma claimed the pollution level in Delhi has reached a saturation point and that is why many residents want to leave the city. He questioned the usefulness of the purchase of 50 lakh masks by the City Government. Verma alleged that by blaming villagers for pollution, Kejriwal was only widening the urban-rural divide. The Speaker reminded Verma not to take the name of Kejriwal, but he went on attacking the Delhi CM. Verma also called upon the MPs to donate ₹2 crore from their Members of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) fund for setting up pollution control towers in Delhi as they spend over 200 days of the year in the city. Pinali Misra (BJD) too said stubble burning is not a major contributor to pollution in Delhi and the farmers should not be vilified. However, he suggested utilising stubble for bio gas to incentivise farmers against burning it. Misra urged for combined efforts of the Centre and States in curbing the rising pollution levels of water and air. Meanwhile, the Parliamentary Committee on air pollution in Delhi is scheduled to meet on Wednesday after most of its members and senior officials were absent at its last meeting. Their absence from the meeting had triggered outrage and raised questions about their seriousness in fighting the menace. Panel's head and BJP MP Jagdambika Pal had written to the Speaker over the matter, expressing his "displeasure" at the absence of Government officials who were scheduled to brief MPs on the pollution crisis, especially in Delhi. It is understood that Speaker Om Birla had asked MPs to attend the meeting promptly. Earlier Rajya Sabha chairperson Venkaiah Naidu also expressed displeasure on the absence of MPs from Committee meetings. An official message communicated to panel members stated that representatives of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Central Pollution Control Board will brief them on the role of MCD, DDA, NDMC, CPWD and NBCC -- all Central agencies -- in "reducing air pollution in Delhi".

The strong reactions invited by their absence, including the lone BJP MP from the national Capital in the panel -- Gautam Gambhir -- is likely to result in the presence of most parliamentarians and officials in the meeting on Wednesday. Only four MPs of

a 28-member parliamentary panel attended a key meeting to discuss the air pollution crisis in Delhi-NCR on November 15. Besides Pal, the three other MPs who attended the meeting were BJP's CR Patil, AAP's Sanjay Singh and Hasnain Masoodi of the National Congress.

CONG DOMINATES...

Apart from 20 urban bodies which went to the Congress, it claimed it is in a position to form the boards in about 10 more with the help of independent candidates. "This is a resounding victory of the Congress in the urban local bodies election. Out of 49, the Congress will form boards in about 30 municipalities," Deputy Chief Minister and Pradesh Congress Committee president Sachin Pilot said.

"Our leaders and workers worked tirelessly for the last seven months and its result is that people have reposed their faith in the Congress," he said. He said BJP leader believed that their party has strong roots in urban areas. "But now that myth has been broken," he added. BJP State president Satish Poonia said his party would control nine ULBs in addition to the six where it scored a majority. "This is not a major victory of the Congress. We are in a position to form boards in about 15 municipalities, including six where we have a clear majority," Poonia said. In Jhunjhunu district's Pilani nagar palika, independent candidates won 30 of the 35 wards. The 49 urban local bodies include three municipal corporations, 18 nagar parishads and 28 nagar palikas. Fourteen candidates were already elected unopposed. Altogether 71.53 per cent of the registered voters exercised their franchise. There were 7,942 contestants, including 2,832 women. Elections to the posts of chairmen and deputy chairmen of the local bodies will be held next Tuesday and Wednesday.

JNU PROTESTERS...

"IPC sections 147 (punishment for rioting), 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapon), 149 (every member of unlawful assembly guilty of offence committed in prosecution of common object), 151 (knowingly joining or continuing in assembly of five or more persons after it has been commanded to disperse), 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) and section 3 of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act were also added to the FIR," said the DCP. Opposition members in Lok Sabha on Tuesday described as "suppression of

voice" the alleged baton-charge by police on JNU students demanding total rollback of hostel fee hike.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Saugata Roy (TMC), TN Prathapan (Cong) and Danish Ali (BSP) accused the Government of using force to suppress the voice of students. Meanwhile, the JNUSU, which has been leading the agitation against massive hostel fee hike for three weeks, said the strike would not be called off until their demands were met.

The students' union alleged that the Registrar of the University refused to meet the members of the HRD Ministry-appointed panel for mediating between the agitating students and the administration and recommending ways to restore the normal functioning of the University. "We have got to know that the registrar refused to meet the HRD Ministry-appointed panel to mediate between us and the University. See their high-handedness. When they can refuse to entertain Government representatives, how can they be expected to talk to us," Ghosh said.

Earlier on Monday morning, demanding complete rollback of the proposed hostel fee hike, hundreds of students of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) carrying placards and chanting slogans, marched towards Parliament on the first day of the Winter Session.

Section-144 was imposed outside the JNU campus ahead of the protest. Delhi Police personnel and Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) stopped the students on the Baba Gangnath Marg, around 600 metres from the North gate of the University but the students jumped over the barricades. Initially on Monday afternoon, the barricades outside JNU's gates were removed and the students were allowed to march towards Parliament but were again stopped on road outside the Safdarjung Tomb near Jor Bagh. The students sat on the road which leads to long traffic snarls on Aurobindo Marg and it soon spread to other arterial roads as the cascading impact was felt till C-hexagon, the Indian Gate roundabout. The police detained around 100 protestors, including JNUSU president Aishwarya Ghosh, secretary Satish Chandra Yadav and former JNUSU president N Sai Balaji. The marching students were finally prevented from moving further outside the Safdarjung Tomb, where, they alleged, the police baton-charged them, an allegation which was denied lock stock and barrel for the Delhi Police top brass. Earlier, a FIR was

registered against unidentified persons on Saturday last, over an incident of "defacement" of the JNU's administration block and the same is being investigated, said a police officer.

CRITICISM SPURS...

Malik, who was the Indian Army chief during the Kargil conflict, took to social media to raise concerns over the new look of the Rajya Sabha marshals. Tagging Rajya Sabha chairman M Venkaiah Naidu and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in his tweet, Malik said he hoped that the Defence Minister would "take early action [sic]".

CENTRAL ORGANISATION FOR RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION
1, Nawab Yusuf Road, Civil Lines, Allahabad-211001

E-TENDER NOTICE Dated: 18.11.2019

No. CORE-SnT-Ten-Sig-7007A

(i) Name of work with its location and completion period: Signalling modification for Gr.212 (Ahmedabad-Rajkot), Gr. 217 (Samkhiali-Gandhidham-Kandla Port-Mundra Port), Gr. 223 (Surentranagar-Pipavav) & Gr.225 (Rajkot-Sikka-Okha) for Signalling work in connection with 25 KV AC Railway Electrification.

Completion period: 06 Months.

(ii) Approximate cost of the work: ₹ 17,86,92,744.43 (Rs. Seventeen Crore Eighty Six Lacs Ninety Two Thousand Seven Hundred Forty Four and paisa Forty Three) only.

(iii) Earnest money to be deposited: ₹ 10,43,500/- (Rs. Ten lacs Forty Three Thousand Five Hundred) only.

(iv) Due date and opening of tender: 10.12.2019 up to 15.00 hrs for submission of tender through www.irps.gov.in and the Tender shall be opened online using IREPS portal any time after closing of tender.

(v) Website particulars: www.irps.gov.in. (Where details have been uploaded).

(vi) Office address: Office of PCSTE/CORE, 1, Nawab Yusuf Road, Civil Lines, Allahabad.

NOTE: Only e-Bid shall be accepted against above tender.

No. : PR/114/19 Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer/Project/ CORE/Allahabad
R.D. Adv FOR & ON BEHALF OF PRESIDENT OF INDIA

"Serving Customers with a Smile"

MADHYANCHAL VIDYUT VITRAN NIGAM LIMITED

HEAD OFFICE 4-A, GOKHLE MARG LUCKNOW. TENDER NUMBER-MEDCO/2454 / 2019 CORRIGENDUM/ In continuation to earlier corrigendum published vide letter no. 221 dated 04.11.2019, the following dates of tender are extended as below :- Bid submission End dated (Online & offline) : 09.12.2019, Envelop-A & Technical Proposal (Envelop-B) opening date : 10.12.2019. Any further amendment regarding above tender shall be made available on U.P. Government e-tender website; e-tender up.nic.in as well as MVVNL website www.mvnl.in. (Vivek Srivastava) Superintending Engineer (Commercial), No. : 226, Date : 19.11.2019, MVVNL Helpline No. 1800-1800440, "Save Electricity in nation interest, Use LED in place of Bulb"

U.P. Rajya Vidut Utapadan Nigam Limited 2x600 MW JAWAHARPUR THERMAL POWER PROJECT

Malawan, Etah (U.P) E-Tender 1- E-Tender No- 06/CCC-III/JTTP/Etah/2019-20, Office: Superintending Engineer, CCC-II, 2x600 M.W Jawaharpur Thermal Power Project, Malawan Etah (U.P) Work: Construction of Shed for 05 Nos. RO Plant including Suitable Bore Submersible Pumps and Electrical Control Panel. Complete at Different Location of Village Malawan, Nasirpur Babraut, Ayar, Nigoh Hasanpur & Brishingpur, Etah. Earnest Money: Rs-84,000.00 (Rs-Eighty Four Thousand Only) (Refundable), Tender Cost: Rs. 590.00 (Non Refundable) in from of NEFT/RTGS only in favour of Jawaharpur Vidut Utapaddan Nigam Limited, Bank : Punjab National Bank, Etah. A/c: 2789002100007763, IFSC: PUNB0364300, Extended Bid Submission end Date & Time of Part I : 29.11.2019 at 16:00 Hrs. Part II : 03.12.2019 at 16:00 Hrs. For Participation and detailed information log in to website- <http://etender.up.in>. 2- Tender No- 01/EPD-II/JTTP/Etah/2019-20, Office: Superintending Engineer, E&MCC-II, 2x600 M.W Jawaharpur Thermal Power Project, Malawan Etah (U.P). Supply: Supply of "400 KVA, 11/0.433KV Distribution Transformer" for JTTP, Malawan, Etah. Earnest Money: Rs-12,000.00 (Rs- Twelve Thousand Only) Tender Cost: Rs. 1000.00 Vat 18% Date of Opening Part I: 16.12.2019, Part II: 18.12.2019. For Participation and detailed information log in to website- <http://etender.up.in>. अधिशासी अभियन्ता जलपद निर्माण खण्ड - II जलवायुविज्ञान मंत्रालय, एटा No. 740 Date 16.11.2019 "Save electricity in the interest of Nation."

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY E-Tender Notice

On behalf of the President of India, acting through Chief Administrative Officer/Con., North Eastern Railway, Gorakhpur invites the following E-works Tenders: S.No-1 :- E-Tender No. DYCE2BSB-2019-25, Dated 15.11.2019. Name of Work: Fabrication, assembly insitu G-3/L type glued insulated joint for broad gauge 60Kg/52Kg with all contractor's material as per RDSO Specification in Aunrihar-Ghaziपुर connection to Aunrihar-Ghaziपुर Doubling Project in Varanasi Division of N.E. Railway. Approximate value: ₹ 12228507.54, Earnest Money: ₹ 211200/-, Cost of Tender Form : ₹ 5000.00, Completion Period : 12 (Twelve) Months. S.No-2 :- E-Tender No. DYCE2BSB-2019-26, Dated 15.11.2019. Name of Work: Miscellaneous track works in connection with different projects of Dy.CE/Con/II/BSB units. Approximate value: ₹ 26050997.92, Earnest Money: ₹ 280300/-, Cost of Tender Form : ₹ 10000.00, Completion Period : 12 (Twelve) Months. Bid Start date - 27.11.2019. Last date of Submission of above E-Tender up to 14.30 hrs on 11.12.2019. Date of opening of above E-Tender 14.30 hrs on 11.12.2019. Detailed tender notice, eligibility criteria, terms & conditions is available on website <http://www.irps.gov.in> in case any disparity arises between Hindi and English version of tender notice, English version will hold good and will be followed. Shri D.P.Singh, XEN/Con/MAU. Mob. No. 9794844287. Dy Chief Engineer/Con/II CPROW-273 Varanasi. About any passenger amenity complaint SMS on Mobile No. 09794845955. Never travel on roof and foot boards

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF N.C.T. OF DELHI OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (CENTRAL)-I, NEAR UGR & BPS RAMLILA GROUND JLN MARG, NEW DELHI-110002.

Short PRESS NIT NO. 47 (2019-20)

S. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost in Rs.	Date of release of tender on e-procurement solution	Last date/time for receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1.	Providing and laying of 500 mm dia DWC pipe from 3551 Kutub Road to T-Point Idgh Road Kasabpura Ward under EE (Central)-I, AC-22. (Re-invite)	₹ 26,96,496.00	18/11/2019 03:00 PM onwards	28/11/2019 upto 3:00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>

ISSUED BY P.R.O (WATER) Sd/-
Advt. No. J.S.V. 541/2019-20 EE (Central)-I

RECRUITMENT OF MERITORIOUS SPORTS PERSONNEL (MEN/ WOMEN) IN CENTRAL INDUSTRIAL SECURITY FORCE-2019

Applications are invited from Male/Female Indian citizens for filling up the temporary posts of Head Constable (GD) under Sports Quota-2019 in the Central Industrial Security Force.

2. The discipline wise vacancies of Head Constable (GD) under Sports Quota-2019 are as follows which may increase or decrease at any time or stage of recruitment :-

S.No	Discipline / Events	Vacancy	
		Men	Women
1	Athletics (various events)	44	47
2	Boxing (Different weight category)	07	04
3	Basketball	08	--
4	Gymnastics	04	--
5	Football	06	--
6	Hockey	12	--
7	Handball	09	--
8	Judo (Different weight category)	10	07
9	Kabaddi	08	12
10	Shooting (Rifle & Pistol)	23	09
11	Swimming (Different category)	14	--
12	Volleyball	08	--
13	Weightlifting (Different weight category)	17	15
14	Wrestling (Different weight category)	20	--
15	Taekwondo (Different weight category)	16	--
Grand Total		206	94

For complete details please see the advertisement / notification in the Employment News /Rozgar Samachar dated 16.11.2019 or visit CISF website i.e. <https://www.cisfrectt.in>.
davp 19113/11/0003/1920

No progress in Sena-NCP-Cong Govt formation efforts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The exercise for Government formation in Maharashtra made no headway on Tuesday with the scheduled meeting between the leaders of the Congress and NCP to thrash out niggling issues called off due to the former's "pre-occupation with late former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's birth anniversary events".

But then, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi did chair a meeting with senior party leaders Mallikarjun Kharge, AK Antony and Ahmed Patel, who have been tasked to hold the discussions with the likes of Praful Patel, Sunil Tatkare, Ajit Pawar from the NCP.

Despite of several rounds of talks between leaders of the three parties in Mumbai and Delhi, possibility of a Sena-led Government still remains at a nascent stage. NCP president Sharad Pawar held a meeting with Congress chief Sonia Gandhi in Delhi on Monday who later said if the NCP-Congress have to take a view on Government formation, they have to first discuss it between themselves.

In the meeting Congress

decided to hold another round of talks with NCP in New Delhi to finalise the draft common minimum programme (CMP) while Kharge will lead the talks along with Party General Secretary K C Venugopal and state leaders.

AICC sources said that Congress leadership will rest with Speaker's post and the rotational arrangement for the Chief Minister post between Sena and NCP. The deliberations on power sharing will be finalised by the high-powered committee for the three parties in this week and the final stamp will be put by the leaders of all the three parties.

As per the deal negotiated till the end of Sonia-Pawar meeting, sources said Congress will rest with Speaker's post and a Deputy Chief Minister post in the Government while NCP will get post of legislative council chairman. All three parties are likely to get an equal share in the Council of Ministers.

"The parties are negotiating for portfolios and the grand old party is seeking Home and Revenue while NCP desires to sit over Finance and Cooperatives. The Ministry of Cooperatives is Maharashtra is

Tug-of-war between BJP-Shiv Sena turns bitter

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The ongoing war between the erstwhile saffron alliance partners turned most bitter on Tuesday, as the Shiv Sena likened the BJP to an ungrateful 12th century Muslim invader Muhammad Ghori, who defeated and executed legendary Hindu king Prithviraj Chauhan through foul means, and castigated the Amit Shah-led party for removing it from the NDA summarily without even issuing a notice or giving it hearing. Miffed with the BJP's announcement about its "summary removal" from the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) made on the seventh death anniversary of its late chief Bal Thackeray "who founded the very NDA", the Shiv Sena demanded to know in an editorial published its mouth-piece "Saamana": "Was the meeting of NDA constituents

perceived a important portfolio," said a senior Congress leader closely monitoring the Maharashtra developments adding that Congress wants finalisation of the CMP before

moving forward to an official announcement. The UPA alliance partners have deputed leaders for holding talks on a possible alliance with the Shiv Sena, a party

arbitrariness. We are saying this deliberately. The decision taken by the BJP in the land of Chhatrapati Shivaji will definitely boomerang on the party itself". Parliamentary Affairs Minister and BJP leader Pralhad Joshi, it may be recalled, had announced on Sunday that the Shiv Sena had ceased to be a part of the NDA after its move to align with the Congress and NCP to form a government in Maharashtra, and said: "So it is natural that they will be allotted seats on the opposition side in both houses". Drawing parallels between the BJP and Muhammad Ghori (1149-1206), an invader who laid foundation for Muslim rule in the country, the Sena editorial stated: "Of the total 18 small and big battles he fought with the Muslim invader, legendary Hindu king Prithviraj Chauhan defeated Mohammed Ghori 17 times. Every

Friday to be chaired by Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray. In the last month's assembly polls, the NCP and the Congress, pre-poll allies, won 54 and 44 seats, respectively in the

Bhagwat warns BJP, Sena over break-up

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As long-time allies BJP and the Shiv Sena remain unrelenting on their stance with the latter choosing to break the alliance, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Tuesday had a word of caution and advise for the two sides without naming them. "Everyone knows that selfishness is a bad thing but very few people give up their selfishness. Everybody knows that both of them will face loss if they are going to fight over a matter," he said.

The head of the RSS to whom both the BJP and the Shiv Sena show their ideological adherence to, warned them of the adverse impact of fallout of their tug-of-war for power in Maharashtra. Bhagwat, without naming the two former partners of the

previous alliance Government in Maharashtra, warned that "both will face loss" if they fought over any matter. "Everyone knows that selfishness is a bad thing but very few people give up their selfishness. Take the example of the country or of individuals," Mr Bhagwat said at an event in Nagpur on Tuesday, news agency ANI quoted him as saying.

"Everybody knows that both of them will face loss if they are going to fight over a matter," he said. The Sena's insistence of sharing Chief Ministership with the BJP had led both falling apart on the issue of Government formation in Maharashtra with former making friends with political rivals Nationalist Congress Party and the Congress in its bid to wrest power in the State.

288-member assembly where the majority mark is 145. Shiv Sena has 56 seats in its bag BJP emerged largest at 106 seats.

CRPF writes to States, UTs on new security protocol for Gandhi family

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CRPF has written to States and Union Territories about the new protocols for Congress president Sonia Gandhi and her family members' security and will soon seek Government nod for raising one more battalion for securing them.

But in the meantime, the Congress has given a notice to move an adjournment motion in the Lok Sabha against the withdrawal of SPG cover of the Gandhi family. Describing the move as "arbitrary", the Congress in the notice said the security cover was withdrawn ignoring the existing and probable threats to the Gandhi family.

The Union Home Ministry central Government earlier this month replaced the Special Protection Group (SPG) security cover given to Sonia Gandhi, her son Rahul Gandhi and daughter Priyanka Gandhi Vadra by the 'Z-plus'

category security of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

Officials said the paramilitary force will seek sanction from the government for procurement of specialized armoured vehicles to secure the new protectees including former prime minister Manmohan Singh besides the Gnadhi family.

Informing the States and the UTs, the CRPF has articulated that the Gandhi family has been accorded an advance security liaison (ASL) protocol and this will require the "support" of their intelligence, police and administrative machinery prior to any of the five new protectees -- Sonia Gandhi, Rahul, Priyanka, Manmohan Singh and his wife Gursharan Kaur -- reaching their jurisdictions on official or personal tours.

Former PM Manmohan Singh's SPG security cover was withdrawn by the Centre in August.

As part of the ASL drill, a special CRPF team will travel at least 24 hours in advance to the location to be visited by these protectees and liaise with local authorities to sanitise the venue and isolate the areas that the VVIPs will visit.

Through the official communication, the five protectees will need to be given all administrative and police support along with route plans and travel maps.

In the Lok Sabha, the Congress on Tuesday gave a notice to move an adjournment motion against the withdrawal of Special Protection Group (SPG) cover of the Gandhi family.

Describing the move as "arbitrary", the Congress in the notice said the security cover was withdrawn ignoring the existing and probable threats to the Gandhi family. An adjournment motion is moved to stop the proceedings of the House to take up the issue raised in the motion.

IITs, NITs will find solutions to air pollution: Prez

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday exuded confidence that the IITs and NITs, with their specialisations, will be able to find solutions to address the problem of air pollution as well as create sensitivity among students and researchers.

He was addressing the annual 'visitor's conference' at the Rashtrapati Bhawan, attended by directors of 23 Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), 31 National Institutes of Technology (NITs) and Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology (IIEST), Shibpur.

"This is that time of the year when the air quality of the national capital as well as of many other cities worsens beyond all norms. Many scientists and futurologists have painted doomsday scenarios. On days of smog and poor visibility in our cities, we fear the future might already be here," Kovind said. "We are facing a kind of challenge here that we have never faced before. Hydrocarbon energy changed



President Ram Nath Kovind addresses Directors of IITs, NITs and IIEST, Shibpur, during a conference at the Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi on Tuesday PTI

the face of the world in the last couple of centuries, but now it is threatening our very existence. The challenge is compounded for nations battling to bring substantial sections of populations out of poverty.

Yet, we will have to find alternatives," President Kovind said. He expressed confidence that institutions like IITs, NITs with their various specialisations, would take care to create a sensitivity and awareness

among students and researchers towards our common future," Kovind said. "I am sure that your institutes, with your various specialisations, will find a solution and take care to create a sensitivity and awareness among students and researchers towards our common future," he added.

The conference was the part of regular interactions of the President with such institutions in his capacity as a visitor to 152 Central Universities and institutions of higher learning. The president said that after the government's efforts to improve India's ranking on the Ease of Doing Business Index, the aim is now to improve the Ease of Living for all citizens.

"How can we move forward in that direction, and make life easier for all, especially those at the margins of society? Later this week, Governors of states will be here in Rashtrapati Bhawan and this will be one of the major points of deliberation in their conference. I am sure there are solutions in the area of Governance," he said.

BJP PARLIAMENTARY PARTY MEETING

Ministers brief MPs on PM's foreign visits

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP Parliamentary Party meeting on Tuesday focused on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "successful" visits to several countries as well as his participation in events such as the UNGA and BRICS meetings, and India's refusal to join RCEP in "national interest". Modi did not attend the meet.

Foreign Minister S Jaishankar and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal briefed BJP MPs on the issue in the first meeting of the Winter Session of Parliament and what it meant for India.

Interestingly, in the Lok Sabha BJD leader Bhartruhari Mahabadi, during the day, sought to know during the zero hour as what were the gains for the country by joining BRICS vis-à-vis China who he said has favourable trade deficit and had emerged an economic power.

Jaishankar told MPs that refusal of India to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) had secured country's interests.

He spoke in detail about Modi's participation in the United Nations General Assembly meeting in the US in September and the 'Howdy Modi' rally, attended by thou-

Refusal of India to join the RCEP had secured country's interests

sands of people of Indian origin (PIO), which was attended by US President Donald Trump. The Prime Minister's participation in the BRICS and ASEAN meetings besides his trips to Russia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Bhutan were also spotlighted, with Jaishankar telling the ruling party's lawmakers that Modi brought the

issue of terrorism to the fore and found support from most countries. The Foreign Minister mentioned the decision of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain to accord their highest civilian honour to Modi.

In his briefing on India's decision to keep out of the RCEP, Goyal said it was in national interest as joining the grouping would have widened India's trade deficits with some countries and harmed its domestic industry, sources said.

Goyal said the UPA government favoured joining the RCEP but the Modi government has stood for the country's interest by keeping out of it.

Onion output in kharif, late-kharif seasons may fall 26% to 52L tonne, says Paswan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Onion production in kharif and late-kharif seasons of 2019-20 is estimated to fall 26 per cent to 52.06 lakh tonne, putting pressure on supply and prices, Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said on Tuesday.

The all-India average retail price of onion stood at ₹60.38 per kg on November 15, compared with ₹22.84 per kg on the same date last year.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, he said onion is a seasonal crop with harvesting period of rabi (March to June), kharif (October to December) and late-kharif (January-March). During July to

October, the supply in the market comes from stored onions from rabi season.

"During 2019-20, there was a 3-4 weeks delay in sowing as well as decline in sown area of the kharif onion because of late arrival of monsoon. Further, untimely prolonged rains in the major growing States of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh during the harvesting period caused damage to the standing crops in these regions," Paswan said. As a result, the Minister said the production of kharif crop was affected.

The rains during September-October also hit

transportation of crop from these producing regions to consuming centres, he said.

"This led to limited availability of kharif onions in the market and has put pressure on its prices," Paswan said.

During the current year, the production of kharif and late-kharif is estimated to be 52.06 lakh tonne, which is about 26 per cent lower than the previous year's production of 69.91 lakh tonne in the same seasons, the Minister said.

Paswan said the Government has banned onion exports and imposed stock limits to boost domestic supply and check prices.

FROM THE PARLIAMENT

J&K: 765 stone pelters arrested since Aug 5

Kashmir's administration had informed, a total of 34,10,219 tourists, including 12,934 foreigners, visited in last 6 months and an income of ₹25.12cr was earned

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Tuesday informed Lok Sabha that security forces had arrested 765 people in connection with stone pelting cases and incidents of stone pelting has declined in J&K since the abrogation of Article 370. "Since August 5, 2019 to November 15, 2019, 765 people have been arrested in 190 cases registered relating to stone pelting/law and order.

From January 1, 2019 to August 4, 2019, 361 such cases were registered," said Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy, replying to a written question in the Lok Sabha.

"Investigation has revealed that various separatist organisations and activists, which are part of the Hurriyat, have been behind the incidents of stone pelting in the Kashmir valley. The NIA has chargesheeted 18 persons in terror-funding cases so far," he said.

Reddy said the Government had adopted multi-pronged policies to check the stone pelting menace and had succeeded in curbing it to the extent that a large number of troublemakers, instigators and mob mobilisers were identified and various preventive measures taken against them,

including detention under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA) and preventive arrests.

Replying to another question, Reddy said the J&K administration had informed that a total of 34,10,219 tourists, including 12,934 foreigners, visited J&K in the last six months and an income of ₹25.12 crore was earned through tourism during this period. The Minister said after the abrogation of Article 370, initially, attendance of students was thin in the schools of J&K, which gradually picked up and at present, stood at 99.7 per cent during the ongoing examination.

On a question related to use of pellet guns since August 5, the Minister said pellet guns were used with abundant caution, only to deal with severe law-and-order problems to

avoid civilian casualties.

Regarding Left Wing Extremism, the Minister said violence dropped by 43 per cent between May 2014 and April 2019 compared to the five years before that, the Centre said on Tuesday, and disclosed that only 10 districts accounted for two-third of the incidents. Reddy said that the steadfast implementation of policy has resulted in consistent decline in violence and in the geographical spread shrinking.

"Only 10 districts account for 2/3rd of Left Wing Extremism violence. The LWE related incidents of violence between May-2014 to April-2019 have been 43 per cent lesser while compared with the preceding five years period," he said in response to a written question.

Birla warns members over sloganeering

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday warned that he will be forced to take action against members protesting in the Well as Congress and other Opposition parties, including DMK and TMC, indulged in sloganeering.

The Speaker also took note of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's absence from the House and said he had wanted to give a chance to the former Congress president during Question Hour as the latter's name being listed for a question on 'PM Gram Sadak Yojna' in Kerala.

From the word go, Lok Sabha again witnessed, for the second-day, scenes of sloganeering with Congress-led opposition trooping in the well of the house, shouting against the Modi-Government. This followed Congress,

DMK and TMC seeking to raise their respective issues during the question hour but were disallowed by the Speaker. Birla, however, did permitted them to speak soon after the question hour which was forced to be undertaken in the loud din created by the opposition MPs.

There were around 20 MPs from the Congress who had collected in the well of the house shouting "Tanashahi nahin chalogi". Besides the Congress, members from the National Conference were also in the Well.

Birla repeatedly requested the protesting members to go back to their seats as the questions were about farmers' issues. He asked Congress and DMK MPs to speak on the farmers issue which was being taken up in the house.

As the protests continued and seemed coming closer to his chair, an indignant Speaker warned that action would be taken against members and he may even name them.

"There might have been precedents of protesting in the Well. From today onwards, no (member) will protest in the Well. If not, I will be forced to take action," he said. At one point of time, the Speaker also said that he would give a chance for protesting members to ask supplementaries if they go back to their respective seats.

The members continued with their noisy protests until the commencement of the zero hour when they spoke on their respective issues including police action against JNU students, and thereafter staged a walk-out.

Congress members sought to raise various issues, including the withdrawal of SPG

security cover of party president Sonia Gandhi, her son Rahul Gandhi and her daughter Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

The Speaker took note of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's absence from the Lok Sabha saying he had wanted to give a chance to the former Congress president during Question Hour.

"His (Rahul Gandhi's) question was listed for the Question Hour and I wanted to give him a chance had he been present," Birla remarked when K Suresh, Congress MP from Kerala, got up to speak during Zero Hour from Rahul's seat. The speaker asked Suresh to move to his designated seat and continue. As per the Lok Sabha schedule, question number 28 was listed against the name of Rahul.

The question pertained to Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana for Kerala.

Mamata, Owaisi call each other RSS agent

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A day after Mamata Banerjee charged the BJP and All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen for conspiring to lure the Hindu and Muslim population of Bengal into political extremism, war of words intensified between two sides with AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi charging the Chief Minister with playing a host to the saffron outfit in the State while the Trinamool Congress hitting back by insisting that Hyderabad party was a paid agent of the RSS.

Slamming Banerjee, the AIMIM chief and one of the most noticeable minority faces in the country tweeted, "if Didi (read Mamata Banerjee) is worried about a bunch of us from Hyderabad then she should tell how BJP won 18/42 seats from Bengal."

By displacing the Left Front as the main Opposition party in Bengal the BJP wrestled 18 out of 42 seats in this year's parliamentary elections. The TMC won 22 and the Congress bagged two seats. What was more in at least three other seats the margin of victory for the Trinamool was between five thousand and fifty thousand.

Telling reporters that Banerjee owed an explanation on the rise of the BJP in Bengal Owaisi on Tuesday said, the Chief Minister's nervous comments on the presence of AIMIM in her State was itself an admission in favour of his party's growing prowess her backyard.

"By making allegations against me you (Banerjee) are



Slamming Mamata, the AIMIM chief and one of the most noticeable minority faces in the country tweeted, "if Didi (read Mamata Banerjee) is worried about a bunch of us from Hyderabad then she should tell how BJP won 18/42 seats from Bengal"

Hitting back at Owaisi for his "outrageous statement against Mamata didi who is like a mother of crores of people," a senior Trinamool leader and Minister from South Kolkata on Tuesday said "those who are thinking of taking place of Mamata Banerjee in Bengal are living in a fools' paradise"

giving the message to Muslims of Bengal that AIMIM has become a formidable force in the State," Owaisi added, "Mamata Banerjee is showcasing her fear and frustration by making such comments."

Addressing a meeting in North Bengal town of Coochbehar bordering Assam the Chief Minister had on Monday made veiled reference to Owaisi and his party saying that there was a party from Hyderabad which was

hand-in-glove with the BJP and was in its payroll.

She said a trap was being laid down by some Hindu and minority parties (from Hyderabad) "who are taking money from the BJP to spread extremist ideas in Bengal."

She said, "there is a political party which is trying to make inroads in Bengal by fanning a communal divide. Just like there are some extremists in Hindus, same with minorities. They take money from BJP. They stay in Hyderabad. They don't stay here. They come here and say I'll give you protection. Don't fall into this trap of my minority brothers."

Hitting back at Owaisi for his "outrageous statement against Mamata didi who is like a mother of crores of people," a senior Trinamool leader and Minister from South Kolkata on Tuesday said "those who are thinking of taking place of Mamata Banerjee in Bengal are living in a fools' paradise. Both the Hindus and Muslims worship her and a rank outsider, who is a filthy rich person not having broken bread with a poor man is dreaming to making inroads in this State. The people will not let him cross Dum Dum Airport."

JD(S) leader: All chances of our party backing BJP Govt if it falls short of numbers

Bengaluru: Senior JD(S) leader Basavaraj Horatti on Tuesday reaffirmed that there are "all chances" that his party may support the BS Yediyurappa-led BJP Government, if it falls short of numbers after the December 5 bypoll results.

The MLC who met the Chief Minister felt that MLAs across political parties do not want mid-term polls.

"Kumaraswamy and Deve Gowda have said they will not let the Government collapse.

On the basis of their statement I have said in case the BJP falls short of numbers there are all chances that JD (S) may support until his three and half year term ends, I still stand by it," Horatti said.

He said, no MLA from the three political parties -- the BJP, the Congress and JDS -- are ready to pull down the government as no one wants mid-term polls.

"Let any government be in power, our MLA post should remain for remaining three-

and-half years, is the feeling among MLAs," he added.

In what is being perceived as JD(S) softening of stand on the BJP, JD(S) patriarch H D Deve Gowda -- not wanting mid-term polls in Karnataka -- had said he wants the government to complete its term as it would give him time to build his party. His son and former Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy too had recently said JD(S) would not try to dislodge the government.

Fifteen out of 17 assembly constituencies represented by disqualified Congress-JD(S) legislators, whose resignation and absence from trust vote had led to the collapse of the Kumaraswamy-led coalition government and paved way for BJP to come to power in July, will go to bypolls on December 5.

The BJP that has fielded disqualified MLAs as its candidates in 13 constituencies, will need to win at least six of those 15 seats to remain in power. PTI

Dec 5 K'taka bypoll crucial to BSY-led minority Govt

KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU

December 5 bypolls to fifteen constituencies in Karnataka are a litmus test to Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa who is heading a minority Government in the State. This election is also crucial for Leader of the Opposition of the Congress, Siddaramaiah who is facing internal and external rebellion.

Both the politicians are betting high stake in proving a point need no explanation. For the lingayat strongman Yediyurappa, he has to prove to the high command that he is indispensable in Karnataka politics and also consolidate himself to face political heat within the party. For Siddaramaiah, who is leading the Congress, being an outsider has to consolidate himself against the weakened high command.

Monday being the last day for filing of nominations, a total of 248 candidates including those belonging to the



Congress-JD(S) legislators, which led to the collapse of H D Kumaraswamy headed coalition government of JDs and the Congress and paved way for BJP to come to power. Seventeen legislators were subsequently disqualified by the then Speaker K R Ramesh Kumar, however the Supreme Court that heard MLAs' petition challenging the disqualification, last week allowed them to contest the by-elections.

All of them have joined the saffron party and now 13 of them are contesting the bypolls setting the stage for their re-entry into the poll fray.

Bypolls to 15 of 17 seats represented by disqualified MLAs -- 14 of the Congress and three belonging to the JDS -- will be held on December five. Bypolls in the remaining two segments -- Maski and R R Nagar -- have not been declared due to the ongoing election-related cases in court. The strength of the assembly will be 222, post the bypolls.

Madras HC verdict in temple land case soon

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The Madras High Court is all set to pronounce verdict on the August 30 order issued by the Tamil Nadu Government to facilitate the sale and transfer of missing lands owned by the temples in the State administered by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department.

A Bench consisting of Justices M Sathyanarayanan and N Seshasayee completed on Monday the hearing of petition filed by TR Ramesh, president, Temple Worshippers Society, questioning the legality of the order which empowers the Government to issue pattas to the encroachers of the temple lands for a nominal amount.

More than 50,000 acres of prime land valued at thousands of crore rupees and owned by the temples under the HRCE Department has been missing for long. In February 2018, Justice R Mahadevan of the Madras High Court had asked



the HRCE Department to trace the missing lands and update the details in the website of the department.

But the Government and the HRCE Department remained unperturbed by the court verdict and came out with an order to bypass the February 2018 verdict.

The lands were donated to the temple for their upkeep and also for ensuring the welfare of the devotees coming under the jurisdiction of the

temple land could be sold to the government and which could not be when all temple lands were actually private properties that had been given away by their owners for the benefit of temples and now belong to the deities of the temples concerned.

"The HECE Department was created to protect the temple lands and not to seal them away," said the judges.

Ramesh said that the whole episode speaks about "criminal dereliction of duties and responsibilities by the staff of the HRCE Department". There exists a criminal axis between the HRCE staff and encroachers which we could convince the court," said Ramesh. This is the eagerly awaited verdict by the temple worshippers and is equal in importance to the Ram Janmabhumi case, he said.

The Madras High Court is

hearing a number of petitions related to the misappropriation of temple properties by individuals in connivance with the officials of the HRCE officials. Jebamani Mohanraj, a former CBI official has filed a case in the MHC in December 2018 challenging the move by the trustees of the centuries old Agastheeswar Temple at Nungambakkam in Chennai to sell the entire temple property to a private group.

The famous Kapaleeswarar Temple in the city is also in a controversy as the trustees are trying to sell off the leased land of the temple to private individuals. The Madras High Court is hearing this case too.

Ramesh told this newspaper that if the observations made by the court in the Government Order case are any indication, chances are that the officials of the HRCE Department are in for trouble for their failure in maintaining the data associated with the properties owned by the temple.

TO BRING DOWN STAKE BELOW 51% IN CPSEs

Union Cabinet likely to consider proposal soon

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet will soon consider a proposal to bring down Government stake in central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) to below 51 per cent even while retaining the State control, sources said.

Besides, the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to take a call on the merger of public sector general insurance companies.

The Budget for 2018-19 had proposed the merger of three public sector general insurance companies and subsequent listing of the merged entity on stock exchanges.

Last week, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the Government would move forward on the merger of the three State-owned general insurance companies -- National Insurance Company, United India Insurance and Oriental Insurance Company -- as announced in the previous Budget.

In her Budget Speech of 2019-20, Sitharaman had announced the Government had been following the policy of disinvestment in non-financial public sector undertakings maintaining the Government's stake not to go below 51 per cent.

"The Government is considering, in case where the



undertaking is still to be retained in Government control, to go below 51 per cent to an appropriate level on a case-to-case basis. The Government has also decided to modify present policy of retaining 51 per cent Government stake to retaining 51 per cent stake inclusive of the stake of the Government controlled institutions," she had said.

Such a move is possible by amendment to Section 241 of the Companies Act.

Sources said the Government envisages that the Government can bring down its stake in a public sector undertaking by roping in other

State-owned entities to retain the public sector nature.

For example, the sources said, if LIC picks up stake which lowers the Government holding below threshold level of 51 per cent, the companies still are majority controlled by the Government.

The Government fixed an ambitious disinvestment target of ₹1.05 lakh crore for the current financial year, up from ₹90,000 crore projected in Interim Budget 2019-20 in February.

In 2018-19, the Government raised ₹84,972 crore from CPSE disinvestment, while in 2017-18, the figure was ₹1,00,056 crore.

Avoid comments on Guv-Mamata Govt verbal spats: BJP to Bengal unit

Kolkata: The West Bengal BJP unit has been asked by its Central leadership to refrain from getting into the frequent verbal spats between the State Government and Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar, a senior party leader said.

There is a general perception that the Governor and the saffron party "complement" each other through their statements, he said.

A verbal directive in this regard has been communicated to the State leadership from the top echelons of the party, the senior BJP leader said.

"We have been asked by our Central leadership to refrain from commenting on the war of words between the state Government and the governor. Henceforth, none of our state

leaders will make any comment on the verbal spat," he said.

According to party sources, the move is aimed to allay charges that the BJP is using the governor to "pinprick" the state Government.

"Whenever there has been a verbal spat between the state Government and Raj Bhawan, for obvious reasons, we have spoken in favour of the governor, be it the present governor Jagdeep Dhankhar or his predecessor K N Tripathi," he said.

The tussle between Dhankhar and the TMC Government reached Parliament on Monday when its Rajya Sabha MP Sukhendu Sekhar Roy raised the issue of the governor "exceeding his brief and trying to run a parallel administration" in the State. PTI

SC Ayodhya case verdict by no means complete justice, says MIM chief

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi on Tuesday claimed that the Supreme Court's verdict on the Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhoomi land dispute was by no means "complete justice" that the powers under Article 142 are required to be used for.

Article 142 of the Constitution deals with the apex court's power to exercise its jurisdiction and pass order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it.

"The Supreme Court's judgement in the Babri Masjid title suit is by no means the complete justice that the powers under Article 142 are required to be used for. It is at best incomplete justice or at worst complete injustice, he tweeted.

Owaisi was responding to media reports on the Ayodhya verdict and whether judicial discretion and the resultant directions guarantee complete justice.

The SC, in its verdict in the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi title case on November 9, said the entire 2.77 acres of disputed land should be handed over to the deity Ram Lalla, who was one of the three litigants.

The five-judge Constitution bench also directed the Centre to allot a five-acre plot to the Sunni Waqf Board in Ayodhya to build a mosque. PTI

Rajini: Ready to join hands with Kamal if situation arises

Chennai: Superstar Rajinikanth on Tuesday said he would join hands with actor-turned politician Kamal Haasan for the welfare of people of Tamil Nadu if such a situation arose.

Rajinikanth, who has announced he would launch his political party to contest the State Assembly elections due in 2021, was responding to questions from reporters on Haasan's remarks earlier on Tuesday that he (the latter) would join hands with him for Tamil Nadu's welfare. "If a situation arises wherein me and Kamal have to join hands for the welfare of people of Tamil Nadu, we will surely come together," Rajinikanth said in a brief interaction with media at the airport here.

While backing Rajinikanth's comments on Chief Minister K Palaniswami which have drawn the ire of ruling AIADMK, Haasan said he would "travel together" with his contemporary for Tamil Nadu's welfare.

However, Haasan gave no indications of the two aligning politically. PTI

New State coordinator yet to join, NRC Authority headless

Guwahati: Newly appointed NRC State Coordinator Hitesh Dev Sarma, who is embroiled in a row over his alleged social media posts criticising the updation work of the National Register of Citizens, has not joined office, official sources said on Tuesday.

Sarma, an Assam Civil Service officer, was appointed on November 9 as the NRC State Coordinator in place of Prateek Hajela who was released from his duties two days later.

The office of the NRC Authority is headless for more than a week.

"The new State Coordinator has not joined yet. We have not received any official communication regard-

ing his date of joining," an official at the NRC Authority told PTI.

Sources said Sarma has not stepped into the office of the NRC Authority here after his new appointment. He had earlier served as its executive director from 2013 to 2016.

"We are clueless about when he will join. We have come to know from media reports that he is on a month-long leave," the official said.

Repeated calls to the Commissioner of the Personnel Department which is responsible for appointments of government officials, remained unanswered.

At present, NRC Authority Executive Director Chandana

Mahanta is the in-charge of the NRC Authority and looking after the day-to-day affairs since Hajela, the previous State Coordinator, was released.

Hajela, an IAS officer, was transferred to his home state Madhya Pradesh following a direction from the Supreme Court which supervised the updation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Published on August 31, the updated final NRC, which validates bonafide Indian citizens of Assam, has left out over 19 lakh applicants.

Sarma has his task cut out as those who have been excluded from the NRC have 120 days to appeal against it at Foreigners Tribunals. PTI

Pak in no way friend of J&K people, it has only brought destruction: Police chief

Srinagar/Jammu: Jammu & Kashmir police chief Dilbag Singh on Tuesday asserted that Pakistan is in no way a friend of the people of the Union territory and said the neighbouring country has only brought death and destruction to them.

He also said Pakistan's proxy war against India is not over yet and the police force will continue fighting the enemy to ensure the nation's safety.

Singh made the remarks in an official statement after a visit to Handwara town of Kupwara district and Ganderbal district.

During his visit, the director general of police (DGP) reviewed the law and order situation in different areas, interacted with the respective jurisdic-

ditional officers and also addressed 'darbars' of police personnel.

"Pakistan is in no way a friend of the people of Jammu & Kashmir as it has brought death and destruction, and disrupted the peace and order here," Singh said. The proxy war that Pakistan is waging against India is not over yet and "we will continue our fight to defeat the enemy for the security and integrity of our nation," he said.

He also called on officers and jawans to foil the "wicked acts or designs" of elements inimical to the peace and prosperity of Jammu & Kashmir.

"Subversion and terrorism are to be uprooted so that the general masses can live in a

peaceful atmosphere, which is our priority," Singh said.

Lauding the police force for maintaining peaceful atmosphere in Jammu and Kashmir, he said during the previous years, particularly in 2010 and 2016, police had faced a tough situation on the law and order front.

"This time around the force has worked with extreme professionalism in maintaining law and order," the DGP said, in an apparent reference to the security challenges that followed the abrogation of certain provisions of Article 370 by the Centre on August 5.

Singh said police and other security forces had contributed in one way or the other in maintaining normalcy and defeating the designs of anti-national elements. PTI

Manipur: 18-hour strike against CAB cripples life

Imphal: Normal life was crippled in Manipur on Tuesday in an 18-hour shutdown called to protest against the proposed Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) which is likely to be introduced in the ongoing winter session of Parliament.

The shutdown was called jointly by Manipur People Against Citizenship Amendment Bill (MANPAC) and North East Forum for Indigenous People (NEFIP) and there was no report of any untoward incident during the strike, which ended at 6 pm Tuesday, the police said.

Official sources said all business establishments, shops, vendors, hotels, motels, entertainment houses and oil depots were closed in response to the call for the shutdown. No educational institutions functioned during the bandh, the sources said.

Attendance in Government offices was thin despite the strict orders of the State chief secretary to Government employees and education institutions to carry out normal duties or face action.

Inter-State and inter-district buses did not play. Taxis and autorickshaws too kept off the road.

Manipur police arrested MANPAC convenor Yumnamcha Dilipkumar along with three other associates from Manipur's Imphal West district during the bandh.

Police also arrested three women leaders of Khwairamban Keithel, the biggest women market of the country which had remained closed during the day. PTI

LORD AYYAPPA TEMPLE

Over 30K offer prayers, 12-yr-old girl barred

PTI ■ SABARIMALA (KER)

Around 32,000 devotees offered prayers at the Lord Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala on Tuesday, even as police prevented a 12-year-old girl from Pudukcherry to proceed to the hill shrine from Pamba.

While two women in the barred age group of 10-50 years were stopped by police on Monday from visiting the shrine, on Saturday, when the temple opened, at least 10 young women from Andhra Pradesh were sent back.

Approximately 32,000 devotees offered worship on Tuesday, Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) sources said.

There was a dip in the arrival of pilgrims against the heavy rush seen since November 16 evening, when the shrine was opened.

There was heavy rain in the afternoon, causing difficulties to the pilgrims.

Unmindful of the heavy

showers, policemen standing on the 18 holy steps, helped the devotees climb and offer prayers.

A total of 9.6 lakh devotees have made virtual Q booking for darshan till 10 am this morning, sources said.

The 12-year-old had come with her father to offer prayers at the shrine.

The age of the girl, with "irrumudikettu" (offerings to Lord Ayyappa) had been shown as 10 in the virtual Q booking.

When women police personnel checked her Aadhaar card it was found that she was 12-years-old following which they did not allow her to proceed further from Pamba to the temple complex, police said.

After those accompanying the child were informed about the current situation in Sabarimala, her father and other relatives proceeded to the temple.

Supporting the shrine's tra-



dition, a nine-year-old Keralaite girl, who came to the temple complex from Karnataka on Monday, had a placard around her neck inscribed with the words "Ready to wait. Will visit the shrine after attaining 50 years."

The Pamba base camp is at

the foothills of Sabarimala, about 5 km from the shrine.

The Ayyappa temple had opened on November 16 evening for the two-month long Mandala-Makaravilakku puja.

A UDF delegation, which visited Pamba and Nilackal

base camps on Tuesday to have a first hand experience of the facilities for the pilgrims, said they were inadequate.

The delegation led by Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan and P J Joseph said parking facilities were not enough and the LDF government had failed to provide enough facilities for pilgrims.

Radhakrishnan said the arrival of devotees may be increase, but facilities like toilets and drinking water were lacking at the base camps.

During the two-month long pilgrimage season, the Kerala Water Authority has decided to provide 130 lakh litres of water daily.

While at Pamba 60 lakh

litres would be distributed 70 lakh litres would be supplied at Sannidhanam, a KWA press release said.

The state and temple precincts had witnessed protests by right wing outfits and BJP workers last year after the LDF government decided to implement the Supreme court's verdict of September 28, 2018 allowing women of all age groups to offer prayers at the shrine.

Though the apex court did not stay its earlier order allowing entry of women in the Lord Ayyappa temple, the LDF government in Kerala this time said the shrine is not a ground for activism and made it clear that it would not encourage women who want to visit the temple for publicity.

A five-judge bench of the Supreme Court had referred to a larger bench the matter related to entry of women into the hill temple and other issues related to various faiths.

Vehicle parking will not be permitted on roads from Nilackal to Pamba: HC

PTI ■ KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Tuesday made it clear that vehicle parking shall not be allowed on the roadside from Nilackal to Pamba during the Sabarimala pilgrimage season as the Government informed that light vehicles of 12-seater capacity will ferry devotees till Pamba.

A division bench of Justices C T Ravikumar and N Nagesh said the police can take appropriate action against unauthorised parking.

The State Government informed the court that 12-seater capacity light vehicles can take passengers till Pamba, which is five km from the shrine, and they have to return to Nilackal for parking.



The court also permitted the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation to employ 1386 drivers temporarily from the Public Service Commission list during the Sabarimala season.

The order was issued on an application filed by KSRTC seeking permission to appoint experienced drivers for 504 buses during the season.

The court permitted KSRTC to employ drivers from PSC list from November 16, 2019 to January 31, 2020.

Several schools reopen in Srinagar, life inching towards normalcy in Kashmir

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

Several schools reopened here on Tuesday after remaining closed for over three months due to the unannounced shutdown following the Centre's decision to abrogate Article 370 provisions, even as life was inching towards normalcy in Kashmir, officials said.

The move by several private schools to resume classes came as public transport has started to ply in the Valley and life was fast returning to normalcy, they said.

The managements have decided to open the schools from 10 am to 1 pm and students have been asked to come without wearing the uniform, the officials said.

The city and most areas elsewhere in the valley saw a significant improvement in the movement of public transport on Monday. The officials said the intra-district as well as the inter-district connectivity has improved significantly.

Auto-rickshaws and inter-

district cabs have been plying for a while now, but in the last few days, the movement of intra-district cabs across the valley has also increased, they added. The officials said the private transport was plying unhindered. On Sunday, the rail service from Srinagar to Banihal also resumed.

The train service in the valley was suspended due to security reasons on August 3 - days before the Centre abrogated the Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370 of the Constitution and bifurcated the state into two Union territories.

The Centre's decision on August 5 led to an unannounced shutdown in the valley even as authorities imposed severe restrictions which were later gradually eased out.

While the shutdown continued in some areas, markets at most places have been following a new pattern of functioning - opening early morning till around the noon.

The shopkeepers down

their shutters in the afternoon - at some places in the late afternoon - to join the protest against the abrogation of the special status of the state, the officials said, adding a few shops in the civil lines of the city remained open throughout the day on Monday.

Pre-paid mobile phones and all internet services in the Valley continue to remain suspended since 5 August.

Most of the top level and second rung separatist leaders have been taken into preventive custody, while mainstream leaders including two former chief ministers - Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti - have been either detained or placed under house arrest.

The government has detained former chief minister and sitting Lok Sabha MP from Srinagar Farooq Abdullah under the controversial Public Safety Act, a law enacted by his father and National Conference founder Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in 1978 when he was the chief minister.

PTI

Drass shivers at minus 11.5° as mercury dips in J&K, Ladakh

Jammu: Drass emerged as the coldest place in Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh, recording a low of minus 11.5 degrees Celsius, as the mercury dipped in most parts of the two Union Territories on Tuesday, a Meteorological (MeT) department spokesman said.

The weatherman has predicted light to moderate rain or snow in plains and moderate snow over higher reaches of the two Union Territories on Thursday and Friday with possibility of temporary disruption of traffic on Srinagar-Jammu and Srinagar-Leh highways.

Drass town, popularly known as the gateway to Ladakh, recorded a minimum of minus 11.5 degrees Celsius, making it the coldest recorded place in the region, the spokesman said.

He said Leh town of Ladakh continue to freeze at a low of minus 6.8 degrees Celsius, while Kargil town recorded a night temperature of minus 3.2 degrees Celsius.

PTI

PMC case: 'Depositors can approach RBI for emergency withdrawals'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Depositors of the crisis-hit Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank can approach the Reserve Bank-appointed administrator for withdrawal up to Rs 1 lakh in case of medical emergencies, the RBI told the Bombay High Court on Tuesday.

In an affidavit filed in the HC in response to petitions challenging the fund withdrawal restrictions, the RBI has mentioned the withdrawal ceiling at Rs 50,000 for scenarios like marriage, education, livelihood and "other hardships".

RBI counsel Venkatesh Dhond told a division bench of Justices S C Dharmadhikari and R I Chagla that the depositors facing hardships can approach the RBI-appointed administrator and seek withdrawal up to Rs one lakh.

Such withdrawal restrictions were necessary to safeguard the interests of the bank and its depositors, the affidavit stated. The apex bank also stated

that a largescale wrongdoing has been found in the PMC bank. On September 23, the RBI had imposed regulatory restrictions on the PMC Bank for six months over alleged financial irregularities.

"To mitigate the hardship of the depositors, the RBI has enabled entertaining on merit any application for withdrawal beyond the stipulated amount on hardship grounds like medical treatment, marriage, education, livelihood and other hardships, subject to a ceiling of Rs one lakh on medical ground and Rs 50,000 in all other cases," the affidavit stated.

The bench after perusing the affidavit posted the petitions for further hearing on December 4.

The withdrawal limit for account holders was initially Rs 1,000 per each customer for six months, which was later raised to Rs 10,000 and is now presently at Rs 50,000.

The crisis at the bank is attributed to the loans allocated to realty firm the Housing Development Infrastructure Ltd

(HDIL) without scrutiny. These loans later turned into non-performing assets (NPAs).

The petitions were filed by persons claiming to be depositors and account-holders of the bank seeking withdrawal of restrictions imposed by the RBI.

Meanwhile, lawyer of one of the petitioners, Pradnya Talekar, told the bench that depositors should not bear the brunt of wrongdoings done by senior officials of the PMC bank, and that the RBI cannot impose such withdrawal restrictions.

To this, the bench said the depositors cannot say that their rights are superior to that of the banks. "How can this court say that the action initiated by RBI is contrary to public interest or the depositor's interest?" Justice Dharmadhikari asked.

While the bench was perusing the RBI affidavit, hundreds of PMC bank depositors gathered outside the HC building in south Mumbai and raised slogans against the apex bank in afternoon. They were not allowed to

enter the court premises by police personnel.

The Mumbai Police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW), which is probing the alleged Rs 4355-crore PMC bank scam, had arrested nine persons including four top bank officials and two promoters of HDIL - Rakesh and Sarang Wadhawan, apart from auditors.

On Saturday, the EOW arrested one of the PMC directors Rajneet Singh, son of former-BJP MLA Sardar Tara Singh.

The EOW suspects a nexus between some of the accused and the realty group HDIL, whose mammoth loan defaults are said to have caused a liquidity crisis at the bank, leading to appointment of administrator by the RBI and restrictions on withdrawal of funds.

The EOW had earlier told a sessions court that prima facie a nexus between some of the accused and HDIL group companies has been made out by the investigators who suspected a "deep-rooted conspiracy".

Osmanabad farmers turn to soap making to survive

PTI ■ AURANGABAD

Even as farmers in the drought-hit district of Osmanabad have fallen on hard times, 'Osmanabadi goat' has provided livelihood to 250 families in the region, who have started making soaps using goat milk.

With the help of a local non-government organisation, farming families in 25 villages of Maharashtra's Osmanabad district have turned to making soaps.

This project is aimed at helping families of farmers who have committed suicide or have fallen on hard times, CEO of Shivar Sanstha Vinayak Hegana said.

"Rather than providing financial help to suffering families, we decided to teach them a way of earning their livelihood. We taught them how they

could profit by taking care of Osmanabadi goats rather than selling them in the market," Hegana said.

An agriculture graduate, Hegana has conducted an extensive research about the benefits of goat milk.

"Rich in vitamins A and E, selenium and alpha hydroxy acids, goat's milk can cure skin ailments, Hegana said, adding that the organisation had registered a patent in July and immediately started production of these soaps.

As the organisation does not have an industrial plant, a workshop is set up at one of the farmers' home, where the whole operation takes place, he said.

"We pay the farmers Rs 300 for a litre of Osmanabadi goat's milk, and they earn Rs 150 for each day's work," Hegana said.

No challenge to us in J'khand polls: BJP

PTI ■ PATNA

Opposition parties in Jharkhand are a divided lot, busy fighting among themselves than posing any challenge to the BJP in the upcoming assembly polls, a senior saffron party leader said.

He also exuded confidence that the BJP will comfortably come back to power in Jharkhand, achieving the target of winning 65-plus seats in the 81-member assembly.

"Vipaksh khand-khand mein bata hua hai (the opposition is severely divided) and they are fighting among themselves than posing any challenge to the BJP," state BJP co-incharge Nand Kishore Yadav told PTI on Tuesday.

Yadav said the JMM, Congress and RJD have formed an alliance while the Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (Prajantrik) - which was part of the coalition in the Lok Sabha polls - is contesting alone.

"Besides, there are many other fringe players who would harm each other more than us," Yadav, who is a minister in Bihar, said.

Sena equates 'ungrateful' BJP with Muhammad Ghor's 'treachery'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Shiv Sena on Tuesday likened its one-time ally BJP to 13th century invader Muhammad Ghor who killed Prithviraj Chauhan despite the legendary king sparing his life several times.

In a hard-hitting editorial in its mouthpiece Saamana, the Sena said it would "uproot" the BJP as the latter had dared to "challenge us", claiming the ruling party's "leaders were kids" when the Sena's support helped form the NDA.

The two parties, which fought Assembly polls together in Maharashtra and came up with 161 seats jointly in the 288-member House, fell out on the sharing of the chief minister's post and have since been attacking each other.

The Sena is in talks with the Congress and the NCP cur-

rently to form a non-BJP government in the Maharashtra.

In the editorial, the Sena said, "Muhammad of Ghor, said to have laid the foundation of Islamic rule in India, fought several battles with Hindu king Prithviraj Chauhan and the latter always spared him (after defeat). But when the invader won a battle, he killed Prithviraj Chauhan."

"Even in Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena has spared such ungrateful people several times and now they are trying to back-stab us," the editorial said, without mentioning the BJP by name.

The editorial also lashed out at Sena being allotted seats on the opposition side in both houses of Parliament, as announced by Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi on Sunday.

Joshi had said the decision was made as the Sena's minis-

ter - Arvind Sawant - had resigned from the Union government and the party was "working out" an alliance with the Congress and the NCP to form the government in Maharashtra.

"Who decided our sitting arrangement when there was no meeting of the NDA held for the same? Earlier, Lal Krishna Advani was the chief of the NDA and George Fernandes was its convener. Who is the chief and convener of the NDA today?" the Sena asked in the editorial.

It also asked if other constituents of the NDA were informed before the Sena was shown the door, claiming such decisions were earlier taken after all parties arrived at a consensus.

The party pointed out that the date chosen to move the Sena to the opposition benches coincided with the seventh

death anniversary of party founder Bal Thackeray (November 17).

"This haste will result in some serious accident for sure," the editorial warned.

"It is the beginning of the end of politics of arrogance. We promise you we will uproot you one day as you have challenged us. The heads of the party (BJP) today would have been kids when the Sena supported the BJP to form the National Democratic Alliance," it said.

The tirade continued with the editorial questioning whether the BJP had sought permission from the NDA before allying with Mehbooba Mufti's PDP in Jammu and Kashmir earlier or with Nitish Kumar's JD(U), despite it being well known that the Bihar chief minister had severely criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY Notification No.138/2019				
Important Notice for the Rail Passengers				
It is notified for information of the general public that in view of operational difficulties due to dense foggy conditions, the cancellation, partial cancellation, reduction in frequency and diversion of following trains between 16-12-2019 to 31-01-2020 will be as under:-				
(A) Full Cancellation				
S. No.	Train No.	From Station to Station	Dates of cancellation from originating station	
			FROM	Up To
10	12550	Anand Vihar-Muzaffarpur	Thursday	Dec.-19- 19,26 Jan.-20- 02,09,16,23,30
11	12523	New Jalpaiguri-New Delhi	Tuesday	Dec.-19- 17,24,31 Jan.-20- 07,14,21,28
12	12524	New Delhi-New Jalpaiguri	Wednesday	Dec.-19- 18,25 Jan.-20- 01,08,15,22,29
13	15705	Katihar-Delhi	Thursday	Dec.-19- 19,26 Jan.-20- 02,09,16,23,30
14	15706	Delhi-Katihar	Friday	Dec.-19- 20,27 Jan.-20- 03,10,17,24,31
15	15054	Lucknow Jn.-Chhapra	Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday	Dec.-19- 17,19,21,24,26,28,31, Jan.-20- 02,04,07,09,11,14,16,18,21, 23, 25, 28,30
16	15053	Chhapra-Lucknow Jn.	Wednesday, Friday, Sunday	Dec.-19- 18,20,22,25,27, 29 Jan.-20-01,03,05,08,10, 12,15,17,19,22,24,26,29,31
17	12571	Gorakhpur-Anand Vihar	Wednesday, Friday	Dec.-19- 18,20,25,27, Jan.-20-01,03,08,10,15,17, 22,24,29,31
18	12572	Anand Vihar-Gorakhpur	Thursday, Saturday	Dec.-19- 19,21,26,28, Jan.-20- 02,04,09,11,16, 18,23,25,30, Feb.-20- 01
19	12595	Gorakhpur-Anand Vihar	Monday	Dec.-19- 16,23,30 Jan.-20-06,13,20,27
20	12596	Anand Vihar-Gorakhpur	Tuesday	Dec.-19- 17,24,31 Jan.-20-07,14,21,28
21	12226	Delhi-Azamgarh	Wednesday, Saturday	Dec.-19- 18,21,25,28, Jan.-20-01,04,08,11,15, 18,22,25,29
22	12225	Azamgarh-Delhi	Thursday, Sunday	Dec.-19- 19,22,26,29, Jan.-20-02,05,09,12,16, 19,23,26,30
23	11124	Gwalior-Barauni Jn.	Monday, Thursday	Dec.-19- 16,19,23,26,30 Jan.-20-02,06,09,13,16, 20,23,27,30
24	11123	Barauni Jn.-Gwalior	Tuesday, Friday	Dec.-19- 17,20,24,27,31 Jan.-20-03,07,10,14,17, 21,24,28,31
Partial Cancellation of Mail/Express trains from 16-12-2019 to 31-01-2020				
S. No.	Train No.	From Station	To Station	Partial Cancellation between
01	15007	Varanasi City	Lucknow Jn.	Varanasi City-Mau Jn.
02	15008	Lucknow Jn.	Varanasi City	
Diversion of trains during foggy weather from 16-12-2019 to 31-01-2020				
(1) Train No. 13237/13239 (Except Friday) Patna-Kota-Patna Exp. leaving Patna Jn. on & from 16-12-2019 to 31-01-2020 will be diverted via Kanpur-Farrukhabad-Kasganj-Mathura-Achhnera-Bharatpur Scheduled route of Kanpur-Tundla-Agra-Mathura-Bharatpur.				
(2) Train No. 13238/13240 (Except Saturday) Kota-Patna Exp. leaving Kota on & from 16-12-2019 to 31-01-2020 shall be diverted via Bharatpur-Achhnera-Mathura-Kasganj-Farrukhabad-Kanpur-Lucknow scheduled route of Bharatpur-Mathura-Agra-Tundla-Kanpur.				
CPRO/T-60 Chief Pass. Trans. Manager, Gorakhpur				
About any passenger amenity complaint SMS on Mob. No.: 09794845955				
Never travel on roof and foot boards.				

Student uprising

The JNU fee hike could be reasonably negotiated but using force on students means undoing what we teach them to do



Student movements have had transformative and revolutionary power in world history, from 13th century Paris to the climate activism of Greta Thunberg. That's how our societal and education systems have raised our young to be, question the status quo if it is unjust, create a liberal order, chase passions and ideals that are yet uncorrupted by politics and do so with a "can do" spirit that has not yet been bartered away to compromise. That's why students have overturned regimes

across the world, because all they need is a generational contiguity to override everything else and generate a populist swell. At home, the Nirbhaya and Jessica Lal vigils, Dalit or gay rights would not have changed outcomes had the students not taken the lead. And they have all begun as non-violent, peaceful sit-ins and marches till retaliation was forced by State repression. However, one must cite the college students versus Government protests in Iran of 1999 during which Ayatollah Khamenei had to instruct the police to restrain itself even if it meant that students burnt his posters or tore them apart. This was remarkable in a regime intolerant of any kind of alternative discourse or dissent but Khamenei was aware that student activism had freed itself from State fear and politics and in the long-term could be a challenge if not accommodated. Suppression would only beget harsher rejection and counter-reaction. Therefore, such pragmatism should have also dawned on authorities in New Delhi before they used the police to literally beat up protesting JNU students wanting to march to Parliament and be heard on a surprise fee hike. Cracking down on them mercilessly has not only emboldened them further but shown up the Modi Government as a bulldozer of what JNU stands for, an institution of excellence and learning that attempts classlessness in thought and action, encourages free and radical thinking and a convergence of ideas fearlessly. The ostensible row over a fee hike has taken a back seat due to such mishandling. The Modi Government has clearly overlooked the practicality of raising fees and used it as a ruse to suppress what it really wants, take over and crush a seat of Left-leaning liberalism, one that its proponents dismiss as a despicable clan called "JNU type." Particularly, malign a university that bears the name of India's first Prime Minister. The Government is making a classic mistake of resorting to symbolism. Negotiations could have taken care of much of the problem. But the suddenness of the fee hike was clearly meant to provoke students and make them look like perennial trouble-makers who needed to be taught a lesson. The students' angst over the almost 300 per cent hike is understandable as it's astronomical and insensitive, instead of being graded and phased out as all transitions to a new protocol should be. For long, JNU has been offering succour to the poorest of families, who could not afford a respectable education for their children due to the hefty fees charged by other eminent institutions. It is also a fact that JNU had been operating under a differential fee regime compared to its counterparts. A room rent of just ₹20 per month for a single-seater or ₹10 per month for a double seater, that, too without any utility or service charge, is a dream in the heart of Delhi. This is the reason why students prolonged their stay at the hostels, enrolling in course after course while working part-time. Old students overstaying led to a chronic hostel shortage for newcomers. In this sense, it is welcome that the varsity has finally woken up to the dangers of big subsidies. Yet it must be accepted that a steep hike, coming after 19 years, is an injustice when not reasonably executed. No consultations were made with the stakeholders or the management council to arrive at a common ground. The partial rollback, again swiftly ordered, was cosmetic, according to students. And clamping them down with police action frankly gives more credence to their story of persecution than issues that matter.

Going by the recent past, students have won — those at Jadavpur University forced their Vice-Chancellor to resign, FTII students challenged the appointment of chairman Gajendra Chauhan and women students across the country began the Pinjra Tod movement when Jamia Millia Islamia cancelled late nights for its girl hostellers. The Government may want to compartmentalise every part of our public life, saffronising education being a big part of it. Even if we were to follow the spirit of Vedanta truly as it wants, then we would realise that "each man is the power. There is no king. I see everybody equally the same." That's why Professor Firoz Khan of Banaras Hindu University may be a celebrated Sanskritist, who received awards in his subject, but is now considered untouchable.

Hong Kong crisis

Protests here have intensified and most citizens are in support of the young activists. Beijing is in a quandary



When the People's Republic of China (PRC) took over the administration of Hong Kong in 1997, it laid to rest a painful chapter of colonialism on the Chinese mainland. The UK had sought and won certain rights for the citizens of Hong Kong. The Chinese Government had promised "One country, two systems" for the city-state, which still maintained its judicial, economic and cultural identity. It even competes at global sporting meets independent of the PRC. Initially, the system worked well. Officials in Beijing had a tough

time grasping the concepts of free speech and expression in Hong Kong. They realised that the city and its vibrant stock markets and access to the Western capital allowed huge fund inflows into the PRC. Indeed, the PRC's massive growth in the decade following Hong Kong's return was fuelled by money that was routed through the city. However, things have taken a dark turn here under China's new strongman Xi Jinping, who wants the "Sinification" of the city to progress much faster than the promised 50 years. Instead of Hong Kong hoping that some of its free and open culture will be imbibed by China, Xi wants it to be under his thumb. He wanted to achieve this by essentially subverting Hong Kong's unique judicial system to that of China. Easy, peasy he must have thought, but he had not accounted for the citizens, particularly the students. They were loathe to give up the freedoms they have become accustomed to. Even under the heavy hand of the Hong Kong police, who used some of the latest facial recognition technology, the students have continued to resist. Xi's predicament has worsened because of Hong Kong's vibrant and free media, making the city's crisis a public relations nightmare for Xi and his minions.

Letting the students have their way would be akin to admitting defeat by Xi. However, he should learn that compromise is sometimes the best policy as is keeping one's promises, no matter how much one may not like them. Hong Kongers are proud to be citizens of the PRC as well but they were promised two systems and they want that much and no further. The sight of teargas shells being lobbed at students will not serve Xi well in the long run and might even make his economic diplomacy goals such as the rehabilitation of Huawei and selling the Belt and Road Initiative much more difficult.

Power shift in Colombo

Sri Lanka's new President Gotabaya has vowed to maintain neutral but friendly relations with foreign powers. He must be judged by his deeds, not words



ASHOK K MEHTA

Gotabaya (Gota) Rajapaksa's decisive victory in the presidential election was not entirely surprising though it has shocked the liberals in Colombo, becoming the most ethnically polarised verdict. Gota has shown that presidential elections can be won without the ethnic minority vote. Ever since the Mahinda Rajapaksa regime was voted out of power in 2015 and following the passage of the 19th Amendment, Gota's choice was natural as 19A had ruled out a third term for the President and raised the bar for age to 35 years, thus rendering Mahinda and his son Namal Rajapaksa ineligible for contesting the presidential election.

For an Army Colonel, Gota's decade as the Defence Secretary to elder brother and former President Mahinda Rajapaksa facilitated the straightening of many wrinkles in defence and national security, though many of his Army colleagues and friends had turned adversaries. By the time Gota became a presidential hopeful, he was accused of corruption, human rights violations during the war, "white van" disappearances, murder of the editor of a newspaper and linkages to a Buddhist extremist group targeting Muslims. But his image as a war hero endured.

Gota won exclusively on the plank of national security. The catastrophic Easter Sunday bombings by radical Islamists linked to Islamic State (IS) were the result of infinite bungling by an incumbent Government already charged with lackadaisical performance. The clamour for return of the Rajapaksa, who had ushered in a decade of peace, began to pick up. Gota sensed his moment. He blamed the Government for dismantling the intelligence apparatus he had established across the country for surveillance and early warning. The bombings were a clear systemic failure.

As President, Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, Defence Minister or whichever portfolio he assigns to himself, Gota's first task will be to ginger up the intelligence network and reinstate the intelligence grid and to eliminate the residual sleeper cells of the IS linked to radicalised Muslims in Sri Lanka. The reorganisation of higher defence management, which had become esoteric under his predecessor, is bound to be revamped. The post-Easter Sunday appointments of the chief of national intelligence, Inspector General of Police and Defence Secretary, who report directly to the President, will be reviewed.

Gen Shantha Kottegoda, whose term as Army Commander was prematurely terminated in mid-2000 to accommodate Gen Sarath Fonseka, is current Defence Secretary. The extended term of Chief of Defence Staff, Admiral Ravi Wijegunaratne, a war hero who had to go to jail, ends next month and he may get an extension. Army Chief, Lt Gen Shavendra Silva, another war hero



whose appointment in August attracted Western criticism on account of alleged human rights violations, will certainly get an extension beyond December.

As pledged, Gota will likely arrange the release from jail of military intelligence officials under trial. Similarly, he will end speculation over any domestic or international investigation about alleged war excesses and also close the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) resolution dated January 30, 2015, co-sponsored with the US — which has already quit the council — on post-war transitional justice and reconciliation. Most of the military is jubilant about Gota's return. So excited was the Army that it reportedly endorsed Gota's presidential candidature in a newspaper advertisement.

Simultaneous with alterations in defence and security architecture, Gota will use his executive and persuasive powers to change the Government and make Mahinda the Prime Minister. This can happen in two ways: First by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and his Cabinet resigning in the aftermath of his party's electoral defeat. Ministers aligned with the presidential loser Sajith Premadasa have already resigned and have urged

Wickremesinghe to quit, who said he will consider. A snap election could follow.

Second, according to the 19th Amendment, the President can dismiss the Government four-and-a-half years into its term, which is sometime in February 2020 to pave the way for a new Parliament by August 2020.

Either way, Mahinda will now certainly be the next Prime Minister. And as he recently told a Tamil newspaper: "PM is the real power." The last and only time two brothers have been President and Prime Minister together was a decade ago in Poland with twins — the Kaczynskis. By abolishing the 19th Amendment with a two-thirds majority, the Rajapaksa and the Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP) may rule, preferably by taking minorities along, till kingdom come.

Gota must also attend to the declining economy crippled by the IS-linked terrorist attacks. Soon after the war, the economy was zipping at eight per cent growth. The central bank bonds scam under the Wickremesinghe Government was the proverbial last straw that broke the people's confidence in the Government.

Multi-lateral financial agencies are uniformly predicting GDP slipping below the

International Monetary Fund's (IMF) growth forecast of 3.5 per cent for 2019.

The Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka has warned of a Greece-like crisis unless deep structural reforms are implemented. Colombo's total indebtedness to Beijing is unknown but is estimated at 60 per cent of all foreign borrowings. Mahinda had given very generous concessions to China, resulting in both Hambantota and the Colombo Port City projects being leased to Chinese companies for 99 years. China and Sri Lanka decided last month to establish an international financial centre — to rival India's planned international financial centre in Gandhinagar — halfway between Dubai and Singapore. Notwithstanding its viability, the financial centre will give China another foothold in Sri Lanka.

Where does the landmark regime change in Sri Lanka leave India given that it was instrumental in dislodging Mahinda in 2015? This time around, India's non-interference is impeccable. With the Rajapaksa redux, it is easy to paint doomsday scenarios. The Rajapaksa's indebtedness to Beijing started during the war when New Delhi rejected several requests from Colombo for

military hardware to fight the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). It was China and Pakistan, who bailed them out. Upon which India had mocked Lanka for approaching these countries when it was willing to supply only non-lethal stores in deference to domestic political compulsions in Tamil Nadu. The strategic cost of India's hedging lingers though that constraint is gone. Gota famously described New Delhi's non-interference in the war as "management" of India. China's ingress in Sri Lanka predates Rajapaksa. Hambantota was offered twice to India. The rest is history.

It will be unwise to go by the track record of a feisty wartime defence secretary, who as part of the famed *troika* with brother Basil and Secretary to President Lalith Weeraratna, dealt with an intransigent India. Now President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who has said he will be "neutral but friendly" in foreign relations, must be judged by his deeds not words. Like Nepal, geography and history militate against Sri Lanka being hostile to India.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander IPKF South, Sri Lanka and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff.)

SOUNDBITE

I am sure that IITs and NITs, with their specialisations will be able to find solutions to address the air pollution problem.



President — Ram Nath Kovind

I want to strike a balance between films and web. I haven't given much thought about working more on streaming platforms.



Actor — Emraan Hashmi

The US is gravely concerned about deepening unrest and violence in Hong Kong. The Government must take clear steps to address public concern.



US Secretary of State — Mike Pompeo

Everyone knows that selfishness is a bad thing but very few people give up their selfishness. Take the example of the country or of individuals.



RSS chief — Mohan Bhagwat

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What a U-turn?

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Dealing with a new Lanka" (November 19). In 2015, voters seemingly *en masse* voted to defeat a supposedly corrupt Rajapaksa regime, which was blamed for many negatives, including nepotism of the highest degree. This, with utter disregard to the fact that it was the very same leader, who along with the defence guidance of his own brother, had been responsible for the defeat of the most feared terrorist organisation.

Five years on, people apparently sought the very people to salvage the country from the abyss it is said to find itself in. Sri Lankans feel that Gotabaya Rajapaksa is their saviour and they pinned new hopes from the new President.

Jayatheertha SA
Hyderabad

Tread with care

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Dealing with a new Lanka" (November 19). India's relations with neighbouring countries have

A whiff of Assam movement

The Asom Songrami Mancha, a platform of civil society leaders and activists, has threatened the BJP that it will launch a massive stir if it goes ahead with the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in Parliament. It has strictly warned the Centre of a great movement bigger than the 1980s' Assam students' agitation. The Bill proposes to grant citizenship to refugees from minority communities like Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians. Muslims have been excluded from the scheme of things. This goes against the basic principles of "secularism" as enshrined in the Constitution, particularly Articles 14 and 15, which guarantee equality before the law and forbid discrimination on grounds of religion.

Indigenous people in the State are apprehensive and vociferous about granting citizenship to such a huge number of migrant refugees because this may alter the State's demography. It is also a fact that India has always welcomed and given asylum to all those who have been persecuted. But considering the number of refugees and migrants will be huge, it will send the already slowing economy into a tailspin. If the BJP is still adamant, the Union Government must rehabilitate the migrants in other States, too. The All Assam Students Union (AASU)-led

always remained wanting. One can understand the thorny historical issues with those in the landlocked arc of the Northwest to the Northeast, the gateway of our invaders. There was no reason for the recurrent indifferent ties with Sri Lanka.

We were naive to be over involved in the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) operation. This peace-keeping exercise not only alienated our own Tamil sentiment but also earned the displeasure of the Sinhalese. Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi

paid the ultimate price.

Things may look better today. But in the election of Gotabaya Rajapaksa as the Sri Lankan President, we have a proponent of majoritarianism, much like our own present dispensation and, thus, they could vibrate well.

TK Nandanam
Chennai



agitation was a mass movement against the influx of foreigners, especially from neighbouring Bangladesh. It started in 1979 and ended with signing of the 1985 Assam Accord. The Union Government must take stock of the situation and discern the consequences of their zeal to legislate the Citizenship Bill instead of acting hastily. It must refrain from introducing the Citizenship Amendment Bill as it is bound to heap untold miseries on the people.

That said, the dormant Tamilian schism, both at home and in Sri Lanka, may well find cause for resurgence. This is where we need to tread with care lest we repeat history.

R Narayanan
Navi Mumbai

Troubling times ahead

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Dealing with a new Lanka" (November 19). The election of Gotabaya Rajapaksa as the Sri Lankan President will have serious repercussions back home. It is the political shift that is a cause of worry. If Mahinda Rajapaksa becomes the Prime Minister, the Tamil and Muslim populations over there will suffer the most.

But it will be better for the Rajapaksa brothers to focus on issues plaguing the country, most importantly the economy. India, too, needs to pay close attention to the developments in the island nation and protect the interests of the Tamil population there.

Shivansh
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Being systematic has its benefits

Putting in money regularly through SIPs rather than trying to time a lump sum investment can help one become a more disciplined investor



HIMA BINDU KOTA

A Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) is an investment option offered by mutual funds to people where they can put in small amounts periodically instead of lump sums. They can do this by directly debiting a fixed amount of money from their bank accounts and investing in a specific mutual fund and allocating several units according to the current Net Asset Value (NAV). The frequency of investment could be anywhere from weekly, to monthly or quarterly.

There is no fixed period of investment in a SIP and it could range from as small as six months to forever. However, the shorter the investment period in equity mutual fund SIPs, the higher the potential gain. However, this is not without a higher risk. Research shows that there is a 16 per cent chance of losing more than 20 per cent in an equity mutual fund over a six-month horizon, whereas, there is a 90 per cent chance of positive returns in an average equity fund SIP of three years or more, making long-term investments more desirable.

Although most investors associate SIPs with equity mutual funds, investments into debt SIPs can be as effective. One of the fundamental principles of investing is to make money work as soon as possible. An investment needs time to grow, so the longer the money is in the market, the more chance one has of achieving one's goals. An SIP is an option for small investors who want to take advantage of investing for a longer-term but cannot put in a large amount or a lump sum. Surprisingly, sometimes making regular and small investments in the form of SIP can work in the favour of small investors, because of a concept known as "Rupee Cost Averaging."

Rupee Cost Averaging is an approach in which a person invests a fixed amount of money at regular intervals. This, in turn, ensures that they buy more shares when the prices are low and less when they are high. Let's take an example. Suppose Ram has a lump sum of ₹10,000 that he wants to invest in a particular stock or fund, valued at ₹100. He has two options: First, he can invest the full ₹10,000 in one go, buying 100 shares, at ₹100 each. But by doing this Ram is fully exposed to the movements of the market and the value of his investment will rise and fall in line with any share price changes. His second option is to invest his money gradually and Ram may choose to invest ₹1,000 a month over 10 months. If the stock price stays the same, he will be able to buy 10 shares each month at ₹100.

However, since share prices fluctuate frequently, regular investments by Ram will increase his buying power when the share price falls and he ends up buying more stocks and vice versa. With a drop in the share price to ₹90, he can buy 11 shares, whereas if it rises to ₹110, Ram will end up with nine.

Hence, by regular, small and pre-determined value of investments, Ram would be in a position to buy more shares when the price falls, thereby bringing down the average cost of purchase. When the stock price recovers to ₹100 in the last month, Ram's original investment would be worth ₹10,300. This means Ram would be ₹300 richer by investing regularly, compared to a lump sum investment in the first month by buying 100 shares.

However, there is a flip side to it as well. Ram could also lose money if the share price moves up and he ends up purchasing at a higher price for most of the months. However, we all know that stock markets rarely move in a straight line and price fluctuations are the norm rather than an exception.

By systematic investments over some time, one can invest across a range of prices and effectively end up paying the average price over a fixed period, which can help smooth out market volatility. Trying to buy an asset when it is considered cheap, which is known as market timing, is tricky even for the most experienced investors. Just because a share has already fallen steeply in value, doesn't mean it won't drop further. Because of many market forces at play, nobody can predict perfectly how and when the price would change.

The decision to invest should be based upon market conditions and putting in money regularly through SIPs rather than trying to time a lump sum investment, can help one become a more disciplined investor and earn better returns in the long run. SIPs help in hedging the risk of getting the market timing wrong. They are also a good option for people with a regular income who want to allocate a fixed amount for mutual funds every month. Further, the choice of mutual funds should be based on one's risk appetite and investment objective.

(The writer is Assistant Professor, Amity University)

ARVIND KEJRIWAL MUST NOMINATE A REPRESENTATIVE TO TEST DELHI WATER SAMPLES AGAIN. WE CHOOSE PRAMOD TIWARI AND J ROYCHOWHURY FROM BIS.
 — CONSUMER AFFAIRS MINISTER
RAM VILAS PASWAN

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



WE CAN GET WATER TESTED BY ANY INDEPENDENT AGENCY. STRANGELY, THE CONSUMER AFFAIRS REPORT BELIES THAT OF JAL SHAKTI MINISTRY.
 — AAP MP
SANJAY SINGH

A man-made crisis

Authorities were aware of the impending environmental hazard but instead of a well thought out long-term strategy to tackle air pollution, our approach appears to be a classic case of ad-hocism



KK PAUL

The London smog of November 1952 is considered to be the worst-ever such case of environmental hazard which led to the death of a few thousand people. Winston Churchill, who was the Prime Minister at that time, himself suffered a bronchial attack due to the toxic air. Even though the Clean Air Act came up only in 1956, stringent action had been initiated by the local authorities well before that, bringing in a dramatic improvement in the state of the environment in the city.

Back home, even though the National Green Tribunal (NGT), in the case of Ganga Lalwani vs Union of India (2015), had made burning of crop stubble a penal offence and additionally, formulated a National Policy for Management of Crop Residue, the result of the enforcement effort has been rather half-hearted and its dismal and disastrous results are being experienced by all of us in the form of a health emergency being declared in the Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR). According to medical experts, air pollution in Delhi-NCR is no longer just a health risk, it has become a hazard. Everyone in Delhi, particularly asthma patients, infants, children and the elderly are affected by this pollution. It doesn't matter whether a person is a smoker or not, the toxic air people are breathing in is equivalent to smoking 15 to 20 cigarettes a day.

Except for the States of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, where some seriousness has been shown in combatting air pollution, the enforcement of the NGT's orders and follow-up on the policy in some of the other States, particularly in Punjab and to some extent in Haryana, has been very poor.

However, according to an affidavit filed by the Central Government in the Supreme Court (SC), stubble burning has gone up by seven per cent in Punjab and gone down by 17 per cent in Haryana. In order to address this problem, a new Central scheme, "Promotion of Agricultural Mechanisation for In-Situ Management of Crop Residue in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and NCT of Delhi," was approved in 2018.

This provided for subsidising machinery required for in-situ management of the biomass, for which a sum of ₹1,151.80 crore has been allocated for the period of 2018-2023. Out of this provision, Punjab has got the largest share. The objective of the scheme was to procure agricultural machinery and equipment for in-situ management of crop residue, create farm machinery banks and conduct multi-media awareness campaigns.

Delhi, leading the NCR with a combination of adverse factors, has already broken the world record for Air Quality Index (AQI), making the headlines bold and telling. But perhaps waking up will take some time. There is no dearth of authorities who are, and were aware of the impending environmental hazard, but instead of a well thought out long-term strategy or some short-term relief our approach appears to be a classic case of ad-hocism. For instance, it is now known that the burning of stubble is respon-



sible for about 37 per cent of the pollution, which is more or less of a seasonal nature. For the remaining, it is understood that two-wheelers, whose number in Delhi alone is 88 lakh, happen to be the source of about 33 per cent of the pollutants, while four-wheelers, whose number is about 35 lakh are responsible for just about 15 per cent of it.

In these circumstances, forcing some four-wheelers to be off the roads is bound to have just a marginal impact.

On the other hand, as is well known, the two-stroke two-wheelers and three-wheelers emit a far more hazardous mixture of hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides, some of which like benzene are known to be carcinogenic, but their numbers continue to increase.

In respect of automobile emissions, complete combustion within the engine is essential to reduce the extent of pollutants. The four-stroke engine is cleaner because it burns pure petrol; the two-stroke engine, on the other hand, burns a combination of lubricating oil and petrol and a fair amount of the oil is emitted as unburnt vapour.

Some 94 per cent of the two-and three-wheelers in India are powered by two-stroke engines that are simple and compact in design, cheap and easy to maintain. But the conventionally-designed two-stroke engines produce high levels of hydrocarbons in exhaust emissions — 5,500 parts per million (ppm), compared to 850 ppm from four-stroke engines. According to a research at the Indian Institute of Petroleum at Dehradun, four-stroke engine-powered motor cycles have been observed to emit just one-sixth to one-tenth of the hydrocarbons emitted by two-stroke engines. In addition, their fuel economy is better by 20 to 50 per cent. However, manufacturers prefer two-stroke engines because they are more powerful and

EXCEPT FOR THE STATES OF ODISHA, ANDHRA PRADESH AND TAMIL NADU, WHERE SOME SERIOUSNESS HAS BEEN SHOWN IN COMBATTING AIR POLLUTION, THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE NGT'S ORDERS AND FOLLOW-UP ON THE POLICY IN SOME OF THE OTHER STATES, PARTICULARLY IN PUNJAB AND TO SOME EXTENT IN HARYANA, HAS BEEN VERY POOR

greater power pick-up. In the long run, electricity-powered two-wheelers could be a suitable alternative. The latest figures available for usage of public transport in Delhi indicate that the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) and Delhi Metro carry just 12 and 10 per cent respectively of the entire commuter traffic.

This is an extremely low proportion and obviously leading to a much greater usage of highly polluting two-wheelers. Obviously, we have to create conditions for encouraging greater ridership on public transport. At the same time we must ensure a larger number of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fuel stations so as to reduce the waiting time, since mostly these cater to public transport vehicles or taxis.

Last year a group of industries had conducted a pilot project in two districts of Punjab covering an area of 16,000 acres of farm land, where 25,000 tonnes of rice straw were processed and converted into fibre-based cellulosic products. The details of the project need to be analysed to enlarge its scope.

The apex court has pulled up the Government of India as well as the Delhi Government for "passing the buck" even as Delhi and nearby areas face a public health emergency due to the severe air pollution.

Further, the Centre has been asked to call environmental experts including those from the Indian Institutes of Technology so that their views on the current situation could be taken into account for suitable directives. It can thus be easily observed that a rational public policy based on scientific inputs needs to be operationalised while ensuring its stringent implementation and monitoring.

(The author is a former Governor and a Senior Advisor at the Pranab Mukherjee Foundation)

What lies ahead for Sri Lankan Tamils?

The new President, known as 'terminator' for his role in wiping out the LTTE a decade ago, has faced lawsuits in Lanka and in the US over allegations of staged killings of Tamil separatists, critics and journalists during the civil war



KALYANI SHANKAR

Sri Lankan People's Front candidate Gotabaya Rajapaksa, younger brother of former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, has now taken over as the country's President. A retired Lieutenant-Colonel, who presided over the country's Defence Ministry for a decade during his brother's tenure (2005-2014), Gotabaya swept the polls in the Sinhala-majority districts, while his main opponent Ranasinghe Premadasa, garnered most of the votes from the Tamil-dominated north and east of the country.

Gotabaya's victory would mean the return of the powerful Rajapaksa family as he is expected to appoint his brother Mahinda as the Prime

Minister, sooner than later.

The new Sri Lankan President, known as "terminator" for his role in wiping out the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) a decade ago, has faced lawsuits in Sri Lanka and in the United States (US) over allegations of staged killings of Tamil separatists, critics and journalists during the civil war.

In a fascinating interview with this journalist in 2014, Gotabaya revealed many things, including how he then government finished off the LTTE. Giving a graphic description of what happened in the last days of the LTTE War IV, (the name given to the fourth phase of the armed conflict between the Sri Lankan military and the separatists), he pointed out that the biggest advantage was that his brother had full trust in him and the then Army chief Sarath Fonseka. Mahinda had the political will to neutralise the LTTE.

Second, the leadership agreed with the defence assessment that a large-scale expansion was needed within a very short period. "We briefed the President. It was not an easy thing to achieve. You need to recruit people, train them and also

equip them. But, we did it," he said. Giving more details, Gotabaya said that the President also created a core group to cut down red tape.

"From our side it was Basil Rajapaksa, Lalith Chandrakumar Weeraratunga, who was the President's Permanent Secretary and me. From the Indian side it was their National Security Advisor MK Narayanan, Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon and Defence Secretary VJ Singh, who were in the loop. We coordinated everything. We went to India and they came to Sri Lanka. And we discussed everything, even the operational plan and intelligence inputs."

Gotabaya also exposed the double face of the then Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi, who put tremendous pressure on the Manmohan Singh Government to stop the war on the LTTE, while the ruling DMK adopted a strategy of run-



ning with the hare and hunting with the hound.

Shivshankar Menon in his book, titled *Choices: Inside the making of India's Foreign Policy*, confirms that New Delhi was in "intense" and "constant" touch with Colombo.

"I vividly remember the atmosphere of the crisis during that period and repeated visits from and to Colombo in the first five months of 2009," Menon notes in his book, adding that by mid-January 2009, the Sri Lankan Army and leadership were convinced that they had the measure of the LTTE and the victory would be theirs. As a strategy, the Sri Lankan Army strongly occupied the north and the south so that the Tigers were kept away and were stopped from procuring military supplies.

As for the last phase of the Eelam War IV, Gotabaya noted, that even at the last minute

Thiruvankadam Velupillai Prabhakaran, the founder and leader of the LTTE, broke from the line and went into the small island with his bodyguards.

Kandasamy Pathmanabha, a Sri Lankan Tamil rebel, founder of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front and the LTTE's financier, spoke to Prabhakaran in January 2009 over the phone asking him to escape. We intercepted the conversation. Prabhakaran refused to hide at that time. Two weeks before the war ended KP spoke to him again and asked him to escape. The LTTE Tiger again refused," he said.

Gotabaya pointed out that, "Do you think that such a person will come out holding his hands up and surrender?"

The then Army chief Sarath Fonseka, in an interview to this journalist also observed that the strategy was to take on the LTTE in the jungles. "By May 17, 2009 the troops cornered the LTTE within an area of 400X400 metres. That night when they tried to escape they were prevented from doing so, by all three lines of defence put up by the Army.

"On the night of May 18, the top LTTE leadership divided itself into three groups. They attacked the Army's forward defence line along the Nandikadal lagoon and did manage to break through. Jeyam, Pottu Amman and Soosai led these three groups. Prabhakaran and his closest guards thought they would manage to escape but in reality all these LTTE fighters (around 250) had got trapped between the Army's first and second line of defence. "After fierce fighting that night, almost the entire leadership of the LTTE was eliminated in that area. "We discovered Prabhakaran's body on the morning of May 19. I got the news of his death around 11 AM. I got a phone call from the Commander who gave me the information. Looking back, I was confident. I said I would finish the LTTE in three years and I did it in two years and nine months," Fonseka said.

Those were different times but today it is a time for peace and as President how will Gotabaya deal with the Tamil minorities in Lanka now? The fact that the Tamils did not vote for him reveals their apprehensions. (The writer is a senior journalist)



FOREIGN EYE

THE WORLD IS WATCHING CHINA

Since 1989, when it crushed the pro-reform protests that began in Tiananmen Square and witnessed the beginning of the end for the Soviet Union, Beijing has calculated that bloody suppression should be avoided if possible — but not by offering concessions. It will angrily dismiss any criticism, as it has that from Britain. Ignored or not, foreign leaders have a duty to remind China that they are watching the action in Hong Kong. (The Guardian editorial)

(The Guardian editorial)

Trair to wait for telcos to report revised pricing

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The telecom regulator will wait for operators to report their new tariffs to the authority before taking a view on whether the revised pricing is within the regulatory framework, according to a Trair source. Confronted with intense competition and unprecedented statutory dues, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea on Monday announced a hike in mobile phone call and data charges from December saying the increase was warranted for viability of their business. The two, however, did not quantify the increase in rates but said that the hike will be effective beginning next month.

A senior Trair official told PTI that the regulator will wait and watch to see the finer details of the announcement. "Let them report the tariffs, and we will see. Also, the tariffs are under forbearance," the official said. Another official said that as things stand now there is no move to initiate any consultation on floor price.

On Monday evening, Vodafone Idea, in a statement, announced plans to raise tariffs for the first time in 3 years only to be followed by a similarly-worded statement from



utes later from Airtel. Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel, the two large telecom operators, last week had reported a combined loss of Rs 74,000 crore for the second quarter ended September 2019, mainly on account of statutory dues arising from the recent Supreme Court order on adjusted gross revenue (AGR).

The apex court has upheld the government's position on including revenue from non-telecommunication businesses in calculating the annual AGR of telecom companies, a share of which has to be paid as licence and spectrum fee to the exchequer. The ruling over statutory liabilities had prompted a rush for provisioning by telecom companies.

While Vodafone Idea posted a loss of Rs 50,921 crore —

the highest-ever quarterly loss by any corporate in India — Airtel reported a loss of Rs 23,045 crore for the September quarter. "To ensure that its customers continue to enjoy world class digital experiences, Vodafone Idea will suitably increase the prices of its tariffs effective December 1, 2019," Vodafone Idea had said in a statement on Monday.

Bharti Airtel statement had said the telecom sector is highly capital intensive with fast changing technology cycles that require continuing investments and therefore, extremely important that the industry remains viable to support the vision of Digital India. "Accordingly, Airtel will appropriately increase price offerings in the month beginning December," Airtel had said.

Sensex rises 186 pts; RIL rallies 4 pc to all-time high

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Market benchmark Sensex rose by 186 points on Tuesday, driven by substantial gains in Reliance Industries, Bharti Airtel and HDFC Bank amid positive trends in global equities. The 30-share index ended 185.51 points, or 0.46 per cent, higher at 40,469.70 with 11 of its constituents closing with gains. The broader Nifty of the National Stock Exchange rose by 55.60 points, or 0.47 per cent, to end at 11,940.10. Reliance Industries led the gains, rallying nearly 4 per cent to its life-time high of Rs 1,514.95 (intra-day) on BSE. It became the first Indian company to hit the Rs 9.5 lakh-crore market capitalisation level. Telecom stocks surged after two older players announced a hike in data and mobile telephony plans from next month.

Bharti Airtel jumped to a fresh 52-week high before settling up 7.36 per cent on BSE. Vodafone Idea rallied 34.68 per cent. The two players have announced a hike in mobile phone call and data charges from next month. "The increase in tariffs will help the telecom industry players service huge debt on their balance sheets. This would have a pos-

itive impact on the banking sector which fuelled a sharp rally in PSU banks," Sunil Sharma, Chief Investment Officer, Sanctum Wealth Management.

Among banking stocks, Axis Bank rose by 3.43 per cent, SBI by 1.57 per cent, IndusInd Bank by 1.26 per cent and HDFC Bank by 1 per cent. Among other gainers, PowerGrid jumped 2.44 per cent Tech Mahindra by 1.84 per cent and Infosys by 1 per cent. On the other hand, Yes Bank dropped 2.66 per cent to emerge as the biggest Sensex loser, M&M fell by 2.19 per cent, and Tata Steel by 2.02 per cent. TCS, Tata Motors and Hero MotoCorp also declined.

"Domestic indices ended higher on the back of buying seen in the PSU bank, infra and energy stocks. Telecom stocks also edged higher after talks of raising tariffs from December onwards while energy stocks were lifted by a sharp fall in crude oil prices," Paras Bothra, President of Equity Research, Ashika Stock Broking, said. Sectorally, BSE telecom rallied 8.52 per cent, followed by BSE energy, power, teck, oil and gas, utilities and bankex. However, BSE metal, auto, FMCG and IT indices fell up to 0.94 per cent.

Bulgaria seeks investments from Indian businesses

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bulgaria's Deputy Prime Minister for Economic and Demographic Policy Mariyana Nikolova on Tuesday invited businesses from India to invest in the nation, pitching it as a gateway to the European Union, thereby offering duty free access to a market with 500 million consumers.

Addressing the India-Bulgaria Business Forum here, Nikolova said the nation offers attractive conditions and environment conducive to the development of successful business and investment projects. "One of the things we are particularly proud is our tax policy, we have some of the lowest tax rates in the European Union. Besides having a corporate tax of only 10 per cent, we do not tax profit reinvested in municipalities with high unemployment rates," the Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister said.

She said the country's labour market has a skilled workforce and operating costs are reasonable. "Our strategic geographic location and our membership in the European Union provides unhindered and duty free access to a market with 500 million consumers," she added.

RCom's committee of creditors to meet on Nov 20

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Communications' Committee of Creditors (CoC) will hold a meeting on November 20, the company said in a regulatory filing on Tuesday. Last week, Reliance Communications Chairman Anil Ambani along with four directors had resigned from the company, that is going through insolvency process.

The company posted a consolidated loss of Rs 30,142 crore for September 2019 quarter due to provisioning for liabilities after the Supreme Court ruling on statutory dues. This had marked the second highest loss posted by any Indian corporate till date, after VIL's Rs 50,921 crore losses. "... we wish to inform you that the 11th meeting of Committee of Creditors of Reliance Communications Limited is scheduled to be convened on Wednesday, November 20, 2019," RCom said in a BSE filing. During July-September 2019, RCom set aside Rs 28,314 crore on account of provisioning following the Supreme Court order on calculation of annual adjusted gross revenue (AGR) of tele-

com companies. The apex court, last month, upheld the government's position on including revenue from non-telecommunication businesses in calculating the annual AGR, a share of which has to be paid as licence and spectrum fee to the exchequer.

RCom's total liability includes Rs 23,327 crore licence fee and Rs 4,987 crore spectrum usage charges. The company is going through insolvency proceedings following an application filed by Swedish telecom gear maker Ericsson. The National Company Law Tribunal has handed over control of the company to an insolvency resolution professional. Sources estimate that RCom Group's total secured debt is around Rs 33,000 crore. Lenders have submitted claim of around Rs 49,000 crore in August. RCom has put its all assets for sale which include spectrum holding of 122 MHz that the company before insolvency proceedings estimated to be around Rs 14,000 crore, towers business for Rs 7,000 crore, optical fibre network Rs 3,000 crore and data centres worth Rs 4,000 crore.

NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	11919.45	11958.85	11881.75	11940.10	55.60
INFRATEL	227.95	259.85	227.70	251.65	24.85
BHARTIARTL	426.90	445.65	421.45	444.65	35.45
AXISBANK	725.00	750.20	725.00	749.80	26.85
RELIANCE	1467.00	1514.90	1465.00	1511.55	52.35
POWERGRID	191.00	196.00	190.20	195.95	5.30
CIFLA	461.20	477.50	459.35	473.30	12.70
GRASIM	775.00	793.50	772.00	789.00	19.50
SBN	325.80	331.80	322.10	331.40	6.30
TECHM	754.00	766.00	752.00	763.25	11.45
INDUSINDBK	1382.00	1409.00	1374.55	1395.00	20.60
ECHERMOT	21600.00	21799.95	21420.20	21780.05	302.65
INFY	709.90	714.00	705.00	712.80	7.60
HDFCBANK	1265.30	1275.00	1261.10	1274.75	12.70
IOC	132.40	133.60	131.75	133.50	0.95
BAJAJFINSV	9070.00	9189.00	9066.30	9163.00	58.75
DREDDY	2741.00	2760.45	2724.50	2751.00	14.00
TITAN	1158.00	1167.80	1153.10	1164.00	5.20
WIPRO	248.20	251.15	247.70	250.45	1.00
GAIL	124.70	125.80	123.15	125.30	5.00
LAT	1364.50	1378.20	1361.50	1369.50	5.00
UNPL	551.00	556.75	538.10	550.20	1.20
SUNPHARMA	425.00	429.90	421.60	425.20	0.65
NESTLEIND	14110.00	14211.90	14009.60	14100.00	14.45
NTPC	117.75	118.30	116.80	117.50	0.05
BAJAJ-AUTO	3156.00	3171.50	3122.10	3156.30	-0.60
HINDALCO	193.40	194.00	193.65	193.25	-0.35
BPCL	520.65	521.90	513.50	520.70	-1.05
KOTAKBANK	1629.90	1631.10	1614.15	1623.00	-4.20
COALINDIA	200.95	201.30	198.25	199.75	-1.05
BAFINANCE	4165.00	4182.15	4126.25	4140.00	-14.90
ADANIPORTS	367.50	368.15	361.55	364.00	-1.65
BRITANNIA	3140.90	3158.35	3110.00	3124.50	-16.40
ONGC	135.00	135.10	132.80	133.10	-0.80
ITC	251.75	251.80	248.80	249.25	-1.50
HCLTECH	1139.00	1143.50	1128.65	1133.90	-7.20
MARUTI	7146.00	7155.00	7032.00	7054.00	-44.45
JSWSTEEL	249.40	250.85	246.60	248.00	-1.60
ULTRACEMCO	4130.00	4130.00	4085.25	4097.00	-29.35
VEDL	143.75	143.90	140.40	142.30	-1.10
ICICIBANK	497.95	502.00	489.85	494.30	-4.05
HINDUNILVR	2060.05	2060.05	2030.00	2039.00	-17.20
HDFC	2235.60	2238.75	2202.20	2215.70	-20.60
ASIANPAINT	1747.90	1748.00	1718.50	1723.00	-16.00
HEROMOTOCO	2520.00	2520.00	2463.10	2473.00	-29.90
TATAMOTORS	1781.00	1775.15	167.10	167.90	-2.20
TATASTEEL	414.00	414.85	400.00	403.00	-7.05
ZEL	2153.00	2154.65	2105.00	2110.00	-42.60
TEES	293.75	293.75	282.50	288.00	-6.15
M&M	573.75	575.00	559.65	561.00	-12.70
YESBANK	65.00	67.25	63.05	64.20	-1.65

NIFTY NEXT 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	28152.10	28174.95	28006.70	28071.90	-82.10
IDEA	4.85	6.40	4.85	6.15	1.70
HDFCAMC	3464.00	3604.00	3461.00	3584.05	136.85
GICRE	246.90	262.00	236.00	255.20	9.75
BANKBARODA	96.00	99.55	95.80	99.40	3.50
PNB	62.05	64.85	62.05	64.40	2.00
L&T	97.90	101.90	97.70	99.80	2.20
IBULHSGFIN	210.20	218.00	210.05	213.00	4.30
HINDZINC	211.00	216.50	208.75	215.00	4.25
PEL	1760.00	1780.95	1753.00	1769.00	24.00
SIEMENS	1554.05	1590.00	1545.55	1575.00	20.40
AUROPHARMA	429.40	435.00	425.30	430.60	5.45
NIACL	150.20	156.50	147.00	152.90	1.50
CADILAH	242.00	246.90	239.25	243.90	2.40
SHREECEM	1990.00	2007.95	1968.30	2006.50	19.70
BAJAJHLDRG	3707.10	3794.25	3705.00	3727.00	25.10
AMBUJACEM	201.45	202.45	198.70	202.45	1.25
PEC	118.20	119.45	116.80	118.30	0.70
DMAT	1835.00	1864.95	1806.00	1840.00	10.55
MARICO	356.25	360.30	353.20	357.00	1.70
DABUR	455.90	456.65	448.60	456.50	1.40
HINDPETRO	291.40	292.85	288.15	291.00	0.85
LUPIN	746.80	754.85	740.70	748.00	1.45
NHPC	23.35	23.50	23.30	23.35	0.00
DLF	217.30	217.75	212.05	215.90	-0.10
HDFCLIFE	571.00	572.50	565.60	570.10	-0.35
PIDILITIND	1305.00	1306.00	1288.00	1303.30	-1.95
SRTANSFIN	1125.60	1130.00	1117.90	1124.50	-1.85
ASHOKLEY	82.30	82.45	80.20	82.00	-0.15
CONCOR	570.90	572.55	564.55	567.80	-1.35
AVC	1499.00	1502.90	1481.00	1488.20	-3.90
DISISLAB	1738.00	1746.50	1717.45	1730.00	-5.95
MOTHERSUMI	134.50	135.20	133.40	133.85	-0.45
NMDC	106.00	101.90	99.35	99.90	-0.35
OFSS	3063.95	3079.00	3040.00	3045.30	-10.65
HAVELLS	670.80	673.70	661.80	664.45	-2.90
MCDOWELL-N	612.75	617.35	607.15	609.55	-3.15
PETRONET	273.15	275.65	271.25	271.60	-1.55
BIOCON	260.60	262.70	257.40	259.00	-1.50
PGH	11107.00	11199.95	10985.00	10990.00	-69.05
BOSCHLTD	15142.90	15142.90	14912.00	14920.00	-128.85
COLPAL	1558.25	1564.10	1530.50	1533.10	-15.55
BERGPAINT	490.90	493.80	483.20	485.25	-5.45
ICIGEIFI	1355.55	1359.30	1332.10	1338.20	-15.05
UBL	1245.10	1250.00	1223.50	1230.00	-16.70
PAGEIND	23500.00	23699.00	22959.90	23044.65	-428.95
GODREJCP	718.00	721.45	700.05	701.90	-15.40
INDIGO	1460.00	1468.00	1422.20	1428.15	-31.85
ICICIPRULI	520.70	522.15	503.30	504.40	-16.25
BANDHANBNK	555.00	555.00	534.00	536.10	-22.55
SBLIFE	954.95	970.00	930.00	936.95	-63.10

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP	Change
SBLIFE	957.80	966.00	934.85	936.25	-21.55
BHARTIARTL	427.00	445.45	421.55	439.25	17.70
YESBANK	65.50	67.25	63.00	64.15	1.15
SUNTECK	394.00	402.75	375.00	390.65	-11.35
RELIANCE	1467.50	1514.95	1465.50	1509.80	42.30
CHOLAFIN	329.20	333.90	322.60	325.15	-4.05
IDEA	4.91	6.39	4.91	6.02	1.11
TECHM	754.00	765.30	749.95	763.25	-0.75
BALKRISIND	836.00	846.95	831.40	834.50	-1.50
LEMONTREE	58.55	61.00	58.05	58.55	0.50
SBN	326.90	331.75	322.20	330.30	3.40
IBULHSGFIN	210.00	219.00	210.00	212.70	2.70
AAVAS	1670.00	1699.00	1660.40	1689.90	19.90
TATATEEL	412.00	414.85	400.20	401.90	-10.10
MARUTI	7200.00	7200.00	7031.00	7044.00	-156.00
ASIANPAINT	1740.10				

Pak resumes postal mail service with India

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has resumed postal mail service with India, nearly three months after it was suspended in the wake of India's decision to end the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, the Pakistan media reported on Tuesday.

Tensions between India and Pakistan spiked after New

Delhi abrogated provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution to withdraw Jammu and Kashmir's special status and bifurcated it into two Union Territories.

India's August 5 decision evoked strong reactions from Pakistan, which downgraded diplomatic ties. Islamabad suspended all communication links with India as well as the

trade ties. According to the Pakistani media, the postal mail service with India has resumed, but the parcel service will remain suspended.

However, there was no official announcement of the limited postal service with India.

Pakistan had not accepted any postal consignment from

India after August 27 in a move seen as a retaliation of scrapping of special status for Jammu and Kashmir.

Communications and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, who is also in-charge of the postal department, said in October that Islamabad resorted to stopping postal mail service unilaterally and without giving

any prior notice to India. "Pakistan's decision is directly in contravention of world postal union norms. But Pakistan is Pakistan," Prasad had said. Pakistan's move was unprecedented as the postal mail service had continued in the past even through the partition, wars, and cross-border tensions.

Iran's bid at nuclear extortion will deepen its isolation: Pompeo

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Following recent assertion by Tehran of its intention to resume uranium enrichment at its Fordow facility, the United States on Monday said it would withdraw its sanction waiver to Iran's facility.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Monday announced the US decision to end its sanction waiver for Iran's Fordow nuclear facility, terming the Tehran assertion as "one of nuclear extortion" and warning that it would only deepen Iran's political and economic isolation from the world.

"The United States will terminate the sanctions waiver related to the nuclear facility at Fordow effective December 15, 2019," Pompeo told a news conference, pointing to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's announcement of renewed activity at Fordow.

"The right amount of uranium enrichment for the world's largest state sponsor of terror is zero," Pompeo told reporters at the Foggy Bottom headquarters of the State Department.

Iran originally built Fordow as a fortified, underground bunker to conduct secret uranium enrichment work, and there is no legitimate reason for Iran to resume enrichment at this previously



clandestine site, he said.

Iran should reverse its activity there immediately, the secretary of state demanded.

"Iran's supreme leader is reverting to his tried-and-true method of using nuclear brinkmanship to extort the international community into accepting the regime's destabilizing activity," Pompeo alleged, asserting that the US rejects this approach completely and calls on all nations to do the same.

"The only viable way forward is through comprehensive negotiations that address the full range of Iran's threats in their entirety. Iran's most recent action is yet another clear

attempt at nuclear extortion that will only deepen its political and economic isolation from the world," said Pompeo.

The latest US step comes amid Iran being rocked by violent protests sparked by the sudden decision to hike gas prices.

Pompeo voiced solidarity with the protesters.

"The authoritarian Iranian regime must cease violence against its own people and immediately restore the ability of all its people to access a free and open Internet," he added.

"The US is monitoring the ongoing protests in Iran closely," he said.

Strongly condemning acts of violence by the present Iranian regime against its people, Pompeo said the US is deeply concerned by reports of several fatalities.

"We've been at that since the beginning of this administration. The world is watching," he said.

"The Iranian people will enjoy a better future when their government begins to respect basic human rights, abandons its revolutionary posture and its destabilizing foreign policy in the region, and behaves simply like a normal nation," he said.

Responding to questions, Pompeo said the US wants Iran to be a normal nation, and it wants the people there to have the freedom to which they're entitled.

"We want the regime's money to be spent on things that benefit the Iranian people, not proxy forces in Iraq, not underwriting Hizballah, not conducting assassination campaigns throughout Europe," he said.

"We want the Iranian regime to behave like a normal nation, to take care of their people, and I think that is what you are hearing and seeing in these protests that are taking place in the Islamic Republic of Iran over these past few days," Pompeo said.

EU at odds with US over legality of Israeli settlements

AFP ■ BRUSSELS

The EU on Monday condemned Israel's policy of building settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, just hours after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Washington no longer considers them to be illegal. "The European Union's position on Israeli settlement policy in the occupied Palestinian territory is clear and remains unchanged: all settlement activity is illegal under international law," said EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini. The Israeli settlement policy "erodes the viability of the two-state solution and the prospects for a lasting peace," she added.

Earlier Pompeo said, "After carefully studying all sides of the legal debate, the United States has concluded that the establishment of Israeli civilian settlements in the West Bank is not, per se, inconsistent with international law." That statement puts the United States at odds with the EU and virtually all countries and UN Security Council resolutions.

"The EU calls on Israel to end all settlement activity, in line with its obligations as an occupying power," Mogherini said in a statement that made no mention of the US policy shift.

Sharif flies to London for treatment

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan's ailing former prime minister Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday left for London in an air ambulance for medical treatment for multiple diseases, days after the Lahore High Court allowed him to travel abroad for four weeks and rejected the Imran Khan government's condition of furnishing an indemnity bond.

Sharif, 69, is accompanied by his younger brother Shehbaz Sharif, his personal physician Adnan Khan and other personnel.

The Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML-N) supreme left for London via Qatar after arriving at Lahore airport, where the air ambulance - equipped with an intensive care unit and an operation theatre - had arrived from Doha.

PMLN spokesperson Marriyum Aurazeb told PTI that Sharif would be taken to Harely Street Clinic upon arrival in London for his treatment and, if required, he may be shifted to the US (Boston) for further treatment.

She said that before the departure the doctors examined Sharif at his Jati Umra residence in Lahore and gave him a heavy dose of steroids and medicines to ensure that his condition remains stable dur-



Supporters of Pakistan's ailing former prime minister Nawaz Sharif surround his vehicle at the airport in Lahore on Tuesday. Sharif arrived to board a special plane after a court permitted him to leave the country for four weeks abroad for medical treatment.

ing the travel.

Sharif's physician Khan said in a tweet late on Wednesday that an intensive care unit and an operation theatre had been set up in the air ambulance and a team of doctors and paramedics will also be on board.

Sharif is suffering from multiple health complications, including erratic platelet count,

and was treated at his residence near Lahore.

On Saturday, the Lahore High Court allowed Sharif to travel abroad for four weeks for medical treatment. The four-week duration can be extended further on his doctors' recommendations.

The court also ordered the Imran Khan government to remove Sharif's name from

the no-fly list or the Exit Control List (ECL).

On Wednesday last week, the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government granted a one-time permission to Sharif for four weeks to travel abroad for his treatment provided he submitted indemnity bonds worth Rs 700 crore.

On Thursday, Sharif challenged this condition in the

court terming it 'illegal' and a "trap" of prime minister Khan to use them (bonds) for his political gains.

He recently secured eight weeks bail on medical grounds from the Islamabad High Court in the Al-Azizia Mills corruption case in which he was serving seven years imprisonment. He also got bail from the LHC in the money laundering case.

He agreed to go to the UK for treatment, heeding doctors' advice and accepting his family's request. He was scheduled to leave for London on a Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight on Sunday. However, he could not leave as his name figured in the no-fly list.

The former prime minister was lodged in the Kot Lakhpat jail but last month he was sent to the custody of the National Accountability Bureau which is probing the Sharif family in the Chaudhry Sugar Mills corruption case.

In December last year, an accountability court had sentenced Sharif to seven years in prison in the Al-Azizia Steel Mills corruption case and acquitted him in the Flagship case.

The Sharif family has denied all corruption charges and termed them as politically motivated.

Taliban release two Western hostages

AFP ■ KANDAHAR

The Taliban released two Western hostages in southern Afghanistan Tuesday, handing them over to US forces more than three years after they were abducted in Kabul, insurgent sources and police told AFP.

The release of American Kevin King and Australian Timothy Weeks, both professors at the American University in Kabul, comes one week after President Ashraf Ghani announced that Afghanistan would free three high-ranking Taliban prisoners in an apparent swap that he hoped would help jumpstart peace talks. "This morning at around 10:00 am two American University professors were released in Nawbahar district of Zabul province. They were flown out of Zabul by American helicopters," a local police source said.

Three Taliban sources in the province also said the hostages had been released.

"We released the professors and are now expecting the Kabul government and Americans to release our three prisoners as soon as possible,"

one of them told AFP. There was no immediate comment from the US embassy in Afghanistan.

Afghan officials in Kabul said they would release a statement shortly. Ghani had first announced the exchange on November 12, saying the Taliban prisoners held at Bagram prison would be "conditionally" released.

They include Anas Haqqani, who was seized in 2014 and whose older brother is the deputy Taliban leader and head of the Haqqani network, a notorious Taliban affiliate. Afghan authorities accuse Anas of being a high-level player in the network. The Taliban has long demanded his release, insisting he is a student.

The other two Taliban prisoners to be released are Haji Mali Khan, believed to be the uncle of Sirajuddin Haqqani, and Abdul Rashid, said to be the brother of Mohammad Nabi Omari, a member of the Taliban's political office in Qatar.

Ghani said he hoped the swap would "pave the way" for the start of unofficial direct talks between his government

and the Taliban, who have long refused to negotiate with the Kabul administration. King and Weeks were kidnapped by gunmen wearing military uniforms in the heart of Kabul in August 2016.

They later appeared looking haggard in a Taliban hostage video, with the insurgents going on to say that King was in poor health.

Ghani said Tuesday that the pair had been "deteriorating while in the custody of the terrorists".

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and US National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien made separate calls to Ghani on Monday to discuss the prisoners' release, Ghani's spokesman Sediq Sediqqi said.

The release and swap were intended to try to restart talks to end Afghanistan's 18-year war and allow for the eventual withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan.

The United States had been close to an agreement in September with the Taliban but a fresh wave of violence in the Afghan capital that killed a US soldier brought talks and an impending deal to a grinding halt.

Verdict in Musharraf treason case on Nov 28

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A special Pakistani court on Tuesday reserved its judgement in the high treason case against former dictator Gen. Pervez Musharraf and said that the verdict will be announced on November 28, according to media reports.

The previous Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government had filed the treason case against the 76-year-old ex-army chief Musharraf in 2013 over the imposition of extra-constitutional emergency in November 2007.

A three-member tribunal headed by Justice Waqar Ahmad Seth conducted the hearing in the case about clamping the state of emergency by Musharraf on November 3, 2007.

The court announced that the judgment would be given on November 28. It also directed the counsel of Musharraf to submit final argument if any by November 26, Dawn News reported.

If convicted, Musharraf may face death sentence.

Musharraf became Pakistan's first army chief to be charged with treason when he was indicted on March 31, 2014. He pleaded not guilty to five charges and dismissed them as being politically motivated. The Express Tribune reported. The hearing in the high-profile case was stalled after Musharraf left for Dubai in 2016.

Musharraf left Pakistan for Dubai for medical treatment on March 18, 2016 with a commitment to come back. He managed to go abroad after his

name was removed from the no-fly list or Exit Control List on the orders of the Supreme Court.

A few months later, however, the special court declared him a "proclaimed offender" and ordered the confiscation of his property owing to his no-show at the hearings.

He has repeatedly refused to return to Pakistan citing security reasons.

His lawyer Akhtar Shah said that the former president could not appear in person due to security reasons. He also said that Musharraf's health was not good and was not allowed by the doctors in Dubai to travel.

Gen. Musharraf seized power in 1999 by toppling the government of prime minister Nawaz Sharif and ruled until 2008 when he was forced to step down.

Truck victim families take loans to repatriate remains to Vietnam

AFP ■ HANOI

Some families of the 39 Vietnamese people found dead in a truck in Britain last month will borrow money from the government to repatriate their relatives' remains, they told AFP Tuesday.

Vietnam's foreign ministry said they would help to bring either the ashes or the bodies of the victims back — but that families would have to cover the cost of repatriation.

The price to bring ashes back in a jar was USD 1,774, while the fee to repatriate a body was USD 2,858, according to an official document shared with the families and seen by AFP.

Families in central Vietnam, where many of the 39 victims come from, said they were desperate to bring their loved ones

back nearly four weeks after the tragedy, despite the steep loans they will have to take on.

"We're in deep pain, we just want him back soonest," said Le Minh Tuan, whose 30-year-old son was among the victims found on October 23 in a refrigerated container in Essex.

"We'll pay any price, whether I have to sell my house or my land, I am determined to bring him back," said Tuan, whose son Le Van Ha left behind two young children and a wife.

The family already borrowed more than USD 30,000 to send Ha to Europe, a huge sum in his province of Nghe An where the average annual per capita income is around USD 1,200.

Tuan said he will opt to bring his son's body back instead of ashes so he can give him a traditional burial.

Cremation is not common in rural Vietnam where the majority of the 39 victims come from, and bodies are normally buried several days after death.

The foreign ministry urged families to opt for cremation "to ensure speed, low cost and sanitation safety", according to the document.

Vo Thi Hong said the family would take on a bigger debt to give her brother Vo Nhan Du a traditional funeral.

"Our priority is to bring him back. We'll think about how to pay the loan later," she told AFP.

The majority of the victims come from Ha Tinh and Nghe An provinces in central Vietnam, impoverished parts of the country where the main source of income is fishing, farming, or factory work.

Mongolia's new 'cleaner' fuel linked to deaths, illness

AFP ■ ULAANBAATAR

One cold night in October, Gerel Ganbaatar decided to stay with her parents in one of Mongolia's traditional ger communities on the outskirts of the capital — a decision which would prove fatal.

Within hours of arriving, she and her parents both became breathless and nauseous. They desperately called for help — but by the time medics arrived Gerel, who was four months pregnant, was already dead.

The 29-year-old's parents were using smokeless briquettes to warm their home for the first time that night: A government-issued fuel — made of coking coal from the southern Gobi region and washed coal powder — it has been linked to deaths and ill-health.

Since residents started using the briquettes in October, there have been seven other deaths — mainly children, pregnant women, and the elderly.

Nearly one thousand have been hospitalised in Ulaanbaatar's outer slum districts, prompting fears the fuel can cause carbon monoxide poisoning.

Gerel's grieving mother, Jargalsaikhan Mishigdorj, warns the fuel should be used with care.

"I have burned coal all of my life, we have never ever been suffocated," she explains.

The Mongolian government is trying to battle dangerous smog levels in one of the world's most polluted cities by trying to offer replacements for raw coal, which produces a

dense, dangerous smoke, but is often used by the poor to warm their homes in a place where temperature can plummet to minus 40C.

Mongolian officials say the briquettes last longer and emit fewer fumes.

One nurse at the National Poison Emergency hospital, who declined to say her name, told AFP she had never seen the numbers of carbon monoxide poisoning patients so high. "We are working under an enormous amount of pressure," she says.

The city's emergency unit said issues were easing once people were told the "correct ways to burn the briquettes".

They said public service workers were spending time in the ger district to teach people about the new fuel as well as to report if any raw coal was still

being used.

Its latest example of governments in Asia struggling to find a safe, workable solution to replacing coal, in a region that is battling toxic levels of air pollution.

In India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promise to provide cooking gas connections to millions of rural residents has been beset by corruption.

In neighbouring China, three million homes near Beijing were ordered to switch from coal to gas or electric heating in 2017, but a difficult transition left many without any heating at all.

Ulaanbaatar is the world's coldest capital and only half of the residents have central heating, and Ulaanbaatar regularly exceeds World Health Organisation recommenda-

tions for air quality.

The government has been trying to force low grade coal out of commission to reduce the thick air pollution that has plagued the city.

And experts say there is evidence that the move is already having a positive impact on the environment.

Sonomdagva, associate professor at the National University of Mongolia, told AFP that PM 2.5 — tiny particles that get into the lungs and bloodstream — had decreased by 40 per cent compared with October last year.

"However, an incredibly long and warm autumn, plus the usage of the new refined fuel, and fear of suffocation meaning people use only wood (for fuel) can also be reasons of the 40 percent decrease," he said.



Britain's Prince Charles (left) and his wife Camilla (second left) greet members of the public during a walk at Viaduct Harbour in Auckland during their royal visit to New Zealand on Tuesday.

China says only it can rule on HK constitution

AFP ■ BEIJING

China insisted Tuesday it alone held the authority to rule on constitutional matters in Hong Kong, as it condemned a decision by the city's high court to overturn a ban on face masks worn by pro-democracy protesters.

The statement raised hackles among activists in Hong Kong after months of violent protests over concerns that Beijing is chipping away at the autonomy of the financial hub.

The ban on face-covering came into force in October, when the city's unelected pro-Beijing leader invoked colonial-era legislation for the first time in more than 50 years.

The move was seen as a watershed legal moment for the city since its 1997 return by

Britain to China — but has been largely symbolic.

The city's high court ruled on Monday that the government ban on face masks was unconstitutional. But Beijing said the judicial branch of the special administrative region had overreached.

Zang Tiewei, a spokesman of the National People's Congress, said only the legislature had the right to rule on whether a law is in accordance with the Basic Law — the city's mini-constitution.

"No other institution has the right to make judgements or decisions," Zang said, according to a state media report posted on the NPC's website.

He said the ruling had "severely weakened the governance" of Hong Kong chief

executive Carrie Lam and the city government.

Zang also indicated that the legislature might take some form of action.

"We are considering the relevant opinions and suggestions put forward by some NPC deputies," he said, without elaborating.

Protests started in June as a peaceful condemnation of a now-shelved China extradition bill, but have morphed into a battle to defend unique freedoms unseen on the mainland, which include freedom of speech and an independent judiciary.

Dennis Kwok, a pro-democracy lawmaker, warned that taking away the power of the courts in Hong Kong "will be the end of one country, two systems" — the policy that

governs the city.

"This is not a time to burn down your own house or to destroy the rule of law in Hong Kong," Kwok said.

"Respect the courts in Hong Kong, respect our system and this is the essence of the one country two systems." On Twitter, democracy activist Joshua Wong saw the NPC statement as a warning that it would reinterpret Hong Kong's constitution.

"When the state loses, she changes the rules of game. Beijing never intends to play by the rules," Wong said.

China has repeatedly warned that it would not allow the city to spiral into total chaos, fuelling concerns that Beijing might deploy troops to quell the unrest.

China's ambassador to

Britain, Liu Xiaoming, warned on Monday that the central government would not sit idly by if the situation got out of control.

"We have enough resolution and power to end the unrest," Liu said.

Beijing has so far backed Lam and the city's police force.

This week police laid siege at a university campus where protesters — some armed with bows and homemade catapults to fire bricks — were holed up.

Dozens of exhausted pro-democracy protesters barricaded inside the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) defied warnings to surrender on Tuesday after some escaped overnight by slithering down ropes from a footbridge.

Chinese state media slammed the high court ruling.

"This disappointing verdict will encourage radical protesters to do evil and discourage the police from curbing violence," the nationalist Global Times said in an editorial.

In a strident front-page commentary, the People's Daily accused Western politicians of defending "violent crimes" and "anti-China forces" in Hong Kong.

"Violent crime is not only a 'virus' that endangers Hong Kong society, but also a public enemy that endangers all mankind," the Communist Party mouthpiece said.

"The atrocities of Hong Kong's thugs have gone beyond the bottom line of human morality and civilisation, and will not be allowed in any country or civilised society," it said.

Former Lankan Prez Rajapaksa seeks resignation of PM Wickremesinghe

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's former strongman President Mahinda Rajapaksa has sought the resignation of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe after his younger brother Gotabaya Rajapaksa became the President, asserting that governance will improve if the President and the Cabinet are from the same party.

Addressing the media after a religious ceremony organised for his 74th birthday on Monday, the Opposition Leader in Parliament said it would be more effective to have a government where the President and the Cabinet are from one party.

"I think it is better if we have General Elections. Many Cabinet members have already stepped down. I think it is more effective to have a Government where the President and Cabinet are from the same party," the Daily Financial Times quoted him as saying.

Rajapaksa also said that the public's decision at the ballot box needed to be respected.

Gotabaya was on Monday sworn in as Sri Lanka's seventh President at an ancient Buddhist temple, a venue chosen to reflect the massive mandate he got from the Sinhalese majority, as he vowed to protect all communities while giving foremost priority to Buddhism.

The 70-year-old controversial wartime defence secretary was credited for ending the

military campaign of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) who ran a 30-year war to create a separate Tamil homeland in the north and east of the island.

Gotabaya is both respected and reviled in the island nation where he is considered a "war hero" by the Sinhalese Buddhist majority, but mostly distrusted by the minority Tamils.

A former military man, Gotabaya attended the counter-insurgency and jungle warfare school in Assam in 1980, served as the defence secretary during his elder brother Mahinda Rajapaksa's tenure as president from 2005 to 2014.

Rajapaksa, who was appointed Sri Lanka's Prime Minister by President Maithripala Sirisena in a controversial move, resigned in December as two crucial Supreme Court decisions made the embattled former strongman's efforts to cling to premiership untenable.

Rajapaksa was appointed the Prime Minister on October 26 by Sirisena after sacking Wickremesinghe, which plunged the country into an unprecedented constitutional crisis. The apex court later unanimously declared that the dissolution of Parliament by Sirisena was "illegal".

Rajapaksa won power in 2005 and went on to become South Asia's longest-serving leader. He became the country's youngest ever parliamentarian in 1970 at the age of 24.

100 protesters still holed up in Hong Kong univ

AP ■ HONG KONG

About 100 anti-government protesters remained holed up at a Hong Kong university Tuesday as a police siege of the campus entered its third day.

City leader Carrie Lam said 600 people had left the Hong Kong Polytechnic campus, including 200 who are under 18 years old.

Police have surrounded the university and are arresting anyone who leaves. Lam said those under 18 would not be immediately arrested but could face charges later.

She said that the other 400 who have left have been arrested. "We will use whatever means to continue to persuade and arrange for these remaining protesters to leave the campus as soon as possible so that this whole operation could end in a peaceful manner," she said after a weekly meeting with advisers.

Now in its fifth month, the Hong Kong protest movement has steadily intensified as local

and Beijing authorities harden their positions and refuse to make concessions.

Universities have become the latest battleground for the protesters, who used gasoline bombs and bows and arrows in their fight to keep riot police backed by armoured cars and water cannon out of two campuses in the past week.

China, which took control of the former British colony in 1997 promising to let it retain its autonomy, flexed its muscles, sending troops outside their barracks over the weekend in a cleanup operation.

China's ambassador to Britain accused the UK and the US of meddling in the country's internal affairs and warned that the Chinese government "will not sit on our hands" if the situation in Hong Kong "becomes uncontrollable."

Lam, asked whether she would seek help from Chinese troops based in Hong Kong, said her government remains confident it is able to cope with the situation.



Protesters go down the steps at the front entrance of Hong Kong Polytechnic University in Hong Kong in attempt to flee. The ongoing confrontation with police has turned the school known as "Poly U" into a fiery battleground. AP

Anxious families wait outside besieged campus

AFP ■ HONG KONG

Relatives of some of the young pro-democracy protesters holed up inside a Hong Kong university held anxious vigil Tuesday as police vowed to arrest everyone on the campus.

Around 100 protesters remain barricaded inside Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) surrounded by riot squads who have been besieging them for three days.

One woman, who gave her surname as Cheung, said she had spent last night in a park near a police cordon as she waited for news of her adult son, who she said came to the campus as a first aider.

"I was very, very worried, worried his life could be in danger. He's scared. He's scared about being arrested by the cops," she said.

Demonstrators, who took to the streets in their hundreds of thousands in June over a

now-shelved bill that would have allowed extradition to China, are demanding the right to elect their own leaders, as well as an inquiry into alleged police brutality.

Protest tactics morphed in the last 10 days into a "Blossom Everywhere" strategy of disruptive vandalism that has brought much of the transport network to a standstill and shuttered schools.

But the three-day PolyU occupation is the most serious

and sustained episode yet.

Another mother, identified by her surname Chung, told the South China Morning Post her 16-year-old daughter was still inside the university, despite assurances that minors would not face any immediate legal action if they surrendered.

"No one can ask her to come out now. She wants to walk out freely, and does not believe the police at all," she told the paper.

"She communicates with me but refuses to listen to me."

Cheung said she just wanted her son to come out safely. "I believe they won't charge my son, because he's just helping people... He's not one of the people in black, he doesn't have masks at home or any other tools like that, he just came out in jeans, a T-shirt and a windbreaker."

The government, however, has shown no willingness to

compromise, with chief executive Carrie Lam saying Tuesday that those inside the campus had no option but to surrender.

The increasingly unpopular police force has vowed to arrest everyone, insisting that they must face the force of the law.

"If the government is giving up on this generation, then what about the next?... Are they giving up on them too?" asked Cheung.

Iran unrest shows no signs of subsiding, 3 killed

AFP ■ TEHRAN

Three security personnel have been killed by "rioters" in Iran, the latest deaths in protests that showed no sign of subsiding on Tuesday despite a wave of arrests and an internet shutdown.

The deaths take to at least five the number of people confirmed to have been killed in the nationwide demonstrations that erupted on Friday against a shock decision to impose petrol price hikes.

The situation on the streets remains unclear largely due to the government-imposed internet outage which has entered a third day.

On Tuesday morning, AFP journalists saw two petrol stations in central Tehran gutted by fire and damage to other infrastructure including a police station and pedestrian overpass. But they were prevented from filming as hundreds of riot police stood guard at entrances to major squares in the Iranian capital with armoured vehicles and water cannon.

When the demonstrations broke out on Friday, drivers stopped their vehicles on major thoroughfares in Tehran to block traffic.

They soon turned violent and spread to more than 20 cities and towns across Iran, with banks, petrol stations and other public property set alight and shops looted.

The demonstrations erupted after it was announced the price of petrol would be raised by 50 per cent for the first 60

litres purchased over a month and 200 per cent for any extra fuel after that.

Iran's economy has been battered since May last year when President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from a 2015 nuclear agreement and reimposed crippling sanctions.

Footage of masked young men clashing with security forces has been broadcast on state television, which rarely shows any signs of dissent.

In a new video aired Monday night, a man can be seen firing what appears to be an assault rifle as others hurl stones apparently at security forces in the western city of Andimeshk.

In the latest bloodshed, assailants wielding knives and machetes ambushed and killed three security personnel west of Tehran, the ISNA and Fars news agencies reported late Monday.

One of the three was identified as Morteza Ebrahimi, a commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and father of a newborn child, according to Fars.

The other two were Majid Sheikhi, 22, and Mostafa Rezaie, 33. Both served in the Basij militia, a volunteer force loyal to the establishment.

The overall toll — which also includes a civilian and policeman — is expected to rise, with unofficial reports saying that at least six other people have been killed.

It is the worst violence since at least 25 lives were lost in protests over economic hard-

ship that started in Iran's second city Mashhad in December 2017 before spreading to other urban centres.

In response to the violence, the authorities say they have arrested more than 200 people.

The internet outage has stemmed the flow of videos shared on social media of protests or associated acts of violence.

"National connectivity remains at just five per cent of normal levels, leaving Iranians cut off from the world," tweeted Netblocks, a website that monitors global net shutdowns.

Iran announced the decision to impose petrol price hikes and rationing at midnight Thursday-Friday, saying the move was aimed at helping the needy with cash handouts.

The plan agreed by a council made up of the president, parliament speaker and judiciary chief comes at a sensitive time ahead of February parliamentary elections. It has received the public support of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

President Hassan Rouhani has defended the price hike saying the proceeds will be used to make welfare payments to 60 million Iranians.

The United States has condemned Iran for using "lethal force".

Iran hit back at its arch-enemy on Monday, slamming US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo after he tweeted "the United States is with you" in response to the demonstrations.

Nigeria cattle gang launches deadly attack

AFP ■ KANO (NIGERIA)

A gang of cattle thieves killed 14 people overnight Sunday in a remote village in northwest Nigeria, police said, the latest assault in a long-running series of tit-for-tat attacks.

Police said the bandits were taking revenge for an earlier killing of nine suspected gang members by local vigilantes in a nearby village in Zamfara state on November 3.

In the absence of a robust police force and effective judicial system in Nigeria, villagers created vigilante groups to fight off the gangs, but the villagers have since been accused of extra-judicial killings. Zamfara officials struck a deal in July with the bandits to end their attacks and vigilantes to stop extra-judicial killings, but sporadic outbreaks of violence have continued.

Zamfara police spokesman Mohammed Shehu said assailants riding motorcycles stormed into a remote village overnight Sunday to Monday, shooting residents and burning homes.

As well as the 14 people who were killed, 10 others were injured, Shehu said.

For several years, rural communities in the agrarian state have been under siege from gangs of cattle rustlers.

The gangs launch attacks from their camps dotting the Rugu forest — which straddles the states of Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and Niger.

The peace deal had seen the cessation of bandit attacks in Zamfara state, prompting authorities in nearby Katsina state to start similar peace talks with the bandits.

White House officials to kick off big Trump impeachment week

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Two top national security aides who listened to President Donald Trump's call with Ukraine are preparing to testify in the impeachment hearings, launching a week of back-to-back sessions as Americans hear from those closest to the White House.

Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, an Army officer at the National Security Council, and Jennifer Williams, his counterpart at Vice President Mike Pence's office, both say they had concerns as Trump spoke on July 25 with the newly elected Ukraine president about political investigations into Joe Biden.

After they appear Tuesday morning, the House will hear

in the afternoon from former NSC official Timothy Morrison and Kurt Volker, the former Ukraine special envoy.

In all, nine current and former US officials are testifying in a pivotal week as the House's historic impeachment inquiry accelerates and deepens. Democrats say Trump demanded that Ukraine investigate his Democratic rivals in return for US military aid it needed to resist Russian aggression and that may be grounds for removing the 45th president.

Trump says he did no such thing and the Democrats just want him gone.

"I did not think it was proper to demand that a foreign government investigate a US citizen," said Vindman, an Iraq War veteran. He said there

was "no doubt" what Trump wanted from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskij.

It wasn't the first time Vindman, a 20-year military officer, was alarmed over the administration's push to have Ukraine investigate Democrats, he testified.

Earlier, during an unsettling July 10 meeting at the White House, Ambassador Gordon Sondland told visiting Ukraine officials that they would need to "deliver" before next steps, which was a meeting Zelenskij wanted with Trump, the officer testified.

"He was talking about the 2016 elections and an investigation into the Bidens and Burisma," Vindman testified, referring to the gas company in Ukraine where Hunter Biden

served on the board.

"The Ukrainians would have to deliver an investigation into the Bidens," he said. "There was no ambiguity." On both occasions, Vindman said, he took his concerns about the shifting Ukraine policy to the lead counsel at the NSC, John Eisenberg.

Williams, a longtime State Department official who is detailed to Pence's national security team, said she too had concerns during the phone call, which the aides monitored as is standard practice.

When the White House produced a rough transcript later that day, she put it in the vice president's briefing materials. "I just don't know if he read it," Williams testified in a closed-door House interview.



LOOK BEYOND SCIENCE

Class XII Science students need not pursue engineering or medicine. There are other lucrative options that they can look at after their Boards, says ANKIT KAPOOR

Science has been one of the most popular streams among most of the students. It is the stream which opens gates to popular courses including Engineering, Medicine and other allied disciplines. The majority of students with science background (medical and non-medical) in Class XII are inclined towards engineering and medical career options. These courses attract most of the aspirants as they offer high salary packages and high esteem of respect in the society. If not engineering and medicine then what are other career opportunities for Science stream students? Students don't explore other career options. They are generally pressurised by their parents/friends/society to believe that engineering and medicine are only two options available after studying PCM and PCB in Class XII.

There was a time when the craze for engineering and medicine was at its peak as option in other streams was limited. But now the scenario is changing exponentially. The number of applicants is increasing as the number of seats available is limited. As per a report the selection in the last five years is around only a per cent. This is because engineering students lack advanced digital skills including artificial intelligence, machine learning, data science and wireless technologies among others that the companies require.

But still most of the science stream students tend to go for medical and engineering option. The two disciplines of the stream have reached the saturation point. This has made students to opt for other academic avenues to satisfy their creative aspects while offering great career prospects in the future. Many generations have been and are a part of this vicious circle. But now, more and more students are opting for unconventional courses like management, law and hotel management. Not only opportunities in private sector and MNCs, these courses provide a gateway for the Government jobs as well.

MANAGEMENT

Management as a career choice offers a solid foundation for a rewarding career. The statistics suggest that the postgraduate management colleges have witnessed an upswing in the number of students from the science background opting for it.

After completing MBA and graduation degree in management many students aspire for the jobs in Public Sector Units (PSU).

Along with higher pay, transparency in promotion and medical facilities, Job security is the prime reason that makes a government job a lucrative option. Some of the job opportunities that a student can opt after completing management degree include.

GLOBAL INDUSTRY, HOSPITALITY OFFERS EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES TO GRADUATES WHO WISH TO TRAVEL AND TAKE UP CAREERS BOTH NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

- **Banking sector:** Banking sector offers number of job opportunities for management graduates in the public sector which includes personnel officer, marketing officer, and additional programme officer. These are recruited via competitive exams like Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS) while some banks like State Bank of India and other PSU's conduct their own exam for the recruitment.
- **Management and operational manager:** Various PSU's offers vacancies in different departments such as managerial role, operations, HR and Finance etc. The criteria for this position are either on entrance on merit basis which are conducted by few

PSU's.

LAW

Law, as a career, is more than black and white but is now one of the most promising career options with immense opportunities.

The exam for it is called Common Law Admission Test (CLAT). Along with private sector and entrepreneurship, there are some career opportunities in Public sector. Some of them include:

- **Legal Advisors and Consultants in legal departments:** A student possessing qualification required by department of legal affairs and legislative department can practice as a legal advisor and consultant. These officers can reach the level of secretary to the Government with the passage of time and their performance. Legislative counsels are also appointed in the official wing of legislative department for Hindi and regional languages.
- **All these posts are filled through UPSC exam and State Public Service Commission on regular basis.** These officers are also recruited in the legal branches of Indian Army, navy and Air force.
- **Judiciary:** A person holding a law degree can also work at a junior cadre posts of Magistrate or sub- Judge. These are generally recruited through UPSC exam or through Public service Commissions.

HOTEL MANAGEMENT

A global Industry, Hospitality offers exciting opportunities to graduates who wish to travel, and take up careers both nationally and internationally. Over the last decade and a half, as the Indian economy has grown, the hospitality industry in our country has also grown by leaps and bounds.

The hospitality industry in India will need 3.5 million skilled employees over the next five years, with an international investment of ₹3,300 crores, a wide range of jobs will be created. Job opportunities for hotel management graduates in public include

- **Marketing and sales executive:** A person holding a degree in hotel management can apply in various hotels operated by government. The role of marketing and sales executive involves maximising hotel's revenues by developing programmes to increase occupancy making profitable use of accommodation.
- **Client Executives and other allied opportunities:** Various Government authorities like sports authority of India, Indian navy hospitality services and State Tourism department invites applications for various posts including client executives and other job opportunities for hotel management graduates. The recruitment is done through interviews only.

The writer is Managing Director, Pratham Test Prep, New Delhi

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The secret of education lies in respecting the pupil. It is not for you to choose what he shall know, what he shall do. It is chosen and foreordained and he only holds the key to his own secret.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

HOTEL MANAGEMENT

Lakshya Bhartee Institute of International Hotel Management invites applications for admissions to its under graduate programmes and post graduates programmes in Hotel Management.

Eligibility: For BSc in Hotel Management, applicants must have passed Class XII from a recognised central/ State board or from a recognised university. Selection will be based on personal interview. For MSc in Hotel Management, applicants must complete their graduation from a recognised university.

Duration: Three years for BSc and two years for MSc.

How to apply: Log on to www.lbiitm.com.

Last date to apply: November 29, 2019.

BANKING MANAGEMENT

Thadomal Shahani Centre for Management invites applications for admissions to its Professional Diploma in Banking Management course.

The bankers of tomorrow will need the skills to manage these new innovations along with having knowledge of core banking applications. This course provides highly subsidised banking programme to fresh college graduates and create the bankers of the future.

In keeping with this, the course includes a smart phone enabled Banking Mobile App through which students can view banking jobs available and see how their skills match with the job requirements and learn the subjects needed to get the desired job. The lectures are conducted only on weekends which are taught by the real time Bankers on various subjects such as Core Banking, Banking Processes, Consultative Selling, Interview Preparedness and Language & Communication.

Duration: Four months
How to apply: Log on to



<https://ask.careers/courses/professional-diploma-in-banking-management/> or contact — 022 6670 1111/91 99300 88330.

Last date to apply: November 29, 2019.

MANUFACTURING MGMT

The University of Strathclyde, Glasgow invites applications for admissions to its new MSc Manufacturing Management course.

Eligibility: First or upper second-class honours degree, or equivalent, in a relevant engineering, technology, science or business-related discipline.

IELTS 6.0 overall with no individual component below 5.5.

Fee: £20,900 for international students for 2020/21.

How to apply: Log on to <https://www.strath.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/taught/manufacturingmanagement/#whythiscourse> or contact - eng-admissions@strath.ac.uk.

CONTENT WRITING

Education and Career Times invites applications for admissions to its content writing courses for 2019-2020 session.

Eligibility: Anyone who has appeared for or passed Class XII exam can enroll for content writing courses at ECT. You should be able to read and understand English language to be eligible to attend the class.

How to apply: Log on to <https://ect.co.in> or contact 7827916060.

Last date to apply: November 29, 2019.

'Maintaining transparency among employees is key'

The slow down has a percolating effect on employee engagement and performance. There is high pressure to deliver on business results, demands are high and resources are low, says SONICA ARON

The last six months have been tough on the Indian economy, which is adversely impacting employees and individuals across the industry. GDP touched a six-year low. The auto sector and FMCG were the main sectors that were severely impacted. Infrastructure projects slowed down, unemployment increased, investments reduced.

One can see and feel the impact of the slowdown. Reports say around 2.30 lakh jobs have been lost in the auto sector. The majority of the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies have reported a decline in volume growth in the April-June quarter.

The slow down has a percolating effect on employee engagement and performance. There is high pressure to deliver on business results, stress is high, demands are high, resources are low. There are budget cuts. Training, travel is frozen. News of layoffs, decrease in consumption, shut down days at factories further impact sentiments. Low motivation further impacts productivity, retention and triggers the vicious downward spiral.

This brings us to the question, how can organisations, and employees as individuals tide over this period. Well, in our opinion, the economy has its cycles, and if we are experiencing a slowdown, we will experience a boom as well. And we suggest that organisations and individuals spend this time preparing for the boom.



What should organisations do during the slowdown?

We understand the budgets are tight and some tough calls might need to be taken. But it is at this time that the true mettle or organisational culture and leadership is tested. Maintaining transparency and ongoing communication to avoid any sudden big decisions is key. This will help in ensuring that employees continue to trust the management and insecurity is kept at bay.

Managers and leaders will play an important role, and organisations will see the emergence of new leaders. Managers who hold teams together

in these difficult times are your leaders of tomorrow.

This is also the time to think innovatively and invest in employee development. Use technology, open sources, in house resources, leaders from other companies to come and hold guest lectures. These are zero budget initiatives but will keep employees engaged. Reskilling, redeployment, cross-functional projects are easy wins.

Carry out those internal development projects that one never found the time for. Streamline processes, use internal resources to automate, develop apps. Create internal communication and involvement platforms.

Work on improvement areas. Work on the intranet, update your policies and communicate, communicate & communicate. Keep the atmosphere

positive.

Gear up for the future. What will you need when the economy starts to look up? Focus the attention of employees in that direction and get everyone working towards hope.

What can Employees do?

The onus is not entirely on the organisation. Every employee has a role to play. We are responsible for our skill development as well. Read, explore new developments in your fields, and attend industry events and conferences, volunteer for cross-functional/location projects.

Work on your branding, leverage social media, publish opinions, take guest lectures at institutes, do social work, contribute to society.

Grow your Network. Professional networking platforms and events are good areas to find peers with common interests as well as industry mentors.

On a personal front, spend more time with your family. Connect with friends from school, college or wherever last you met them. Focus on your health. Join the gym again. Take that bucket list holiday. Rekindle that hobby that you never had the time for!

In a nutshell, take charge and prepare yourself for tomorrow.

The writer is Managing Partner, Marching Sheep, an HR consulting & Diversity Firm

Be on Cloud 9

The demand for cloud computing services is on an exponential rise. DR VENKATESHWARAN LOGANATHAN lists out jobs to look out for

A growing domain in the tech industry, cloud computing involves the delivery of services such as servers, storage, databases, networking software, analytics and intelligence over the internet. A popular option for businesses to increase productivity, performance and security of their services, cloud computing reduces the requirement for large upfront investments in hardware.

Offering valuable services to organisations, the demand for cloud computing services is on an exponential rise. As per IDC, the Indian cloud computing market is expected to grow to \$4 billion by 2020 with an annual growth of more than 30 per cent, thereby creating one million new jobs in India.

Here are few job roles one can take up to advance their career in this domain.

DevOps: A set of applications that automates the processes between software development and IT teams, DevOps builds, tests, and releases software faster and more reliably. A DevOps manager needs to manage the infrastructure, ensuring that everything is perfectly in tune with the needs of the appliance. A DevOps manager should be adept with managerial skills to maximise the predictability, efficiency and security of the opera-



tional processes.

Cloud Architect: Responsible for bridging the gap between complex business problems and solutions in the cloud, a Cloud Architect converts the technical requirements of a project into the architecture that will guide the final product. They manage the cloud computing architecture in an organisation including the front-end platforms, servers, storage, delivery and networks.

Cloud Software Engineer: Responsible for any duties related to cloud computing, including design, planning, management and support, the roles of a Cloud Software Engineer can be broken into multiple divisions. A Cloud Software Engineer is responsible for overseeing the development of the programming systems, maintaining

them and ensuring that they function correctly.

Cloud System Administrator: With primary job responsibilities of configuring the cloud management service and manage these services, a Cloud System Administrator works in a mixed Windows and Unix software environment. They also lead, oversee and maintain multi-user computing environment as per the organisation's requirements. They are required to possess strong technical knowledge of virtual machines such as IaaS, PaaS and SaaS. These professionals are usually responsible for the design and development of disseminated software modules that combine with cloud service providers.

The writer is Head of Technical Training, KGI SL Institute of Technology

Free supplemental learning

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bringing the structural fundamentals of a classroom through the wide reach of digital technology, PaperVideo — India's first digital classroom for supplementary learning, has launched its Math curriculum for Classes VIII to XI. PaperVideo's digital classroom, which is free for all students, offers a comprehensive and holistic Math programme congruent with CBSE, ICSE, HSC, SSC and all State Education Boards of India.

Research has stated that the lack of quality teachers and curriculum are the primary reasons why India consistently ranks low in all global education indexes. The Annual Status of Education Report for 2018 mentions that 61 per cent of Indian eight graders struggle

with simple Math. Another shocking observation made by the researchers suggests that only 26.6 per cent of Class VIII students are fluent in subtraction — a fundamental arithmetical function.

Chirag Arya, Founder, PaperVideo, said: "The education sector has a critical role to play in driving the economic and social development in the country. Lack of access to quality education has been a persistent barrier for students beyond metro cities. Through PaperVideo, we want to bridge this gap and bring academic resources to those who need it."

The curriculum is based on a structured learning method which helps students to harness their optimum potential, resulting in a high-quality personalised learning arena.

Three-day national convention

The three-day 47th National Convention of Company Secretaries of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India was inaugurated at Jaipur, Rajasthan on November 14, 2019 and was concluded on November 16, 2019 with much gusto.

Attended by more than 1,800 participants from across the nation and abroad, the National Convention comprised Technical Sessions on areas of professional interest and various Motivational and Special Sessions. Two special sessions were dedicated to artificial intel-



Dignitaries present at the 47th National Convention of Company Secretaries

ligence and appearance before quasi-judicial bodies.

The valedictory session of the convention was graced by Dr Sudhanshu Trivedi, National Spokesperson of Bharatiya Janata Party, Dr Satish Poonia, State

President, Bharatiya Janata Party, Rajasthan and Ashish Chauhan, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, BSE Limited.

In his concluding address for the event, CS Ranjeet Pandey, President, ICSI thanking all the delegates for their tremendous participation said that: "We have made great progress so far as a profession. In the last 51 years of our history, we have become a profession to reckon with. Our membership has doubled and the members are taking up roles of insolvency professionals and registered valuers."

Study UK fair

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The British Council, UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations, is hosting 'Study UK Fair' on Saturday, November 23, 2019 at British Council, 17, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi.

The education fair will host anyone who aspires to study in the UK and wants to be a part of its rich and vibrant culture. Representatives from over 40 UK universities will be present at the fair to address

face-to-face queries.

The fair also welcomes parents, teachers and educationists.

The education fair provides a unique opportunity to meet academic institutions from the UK under one roof and seek information on application procedure, shortlisting of courses and institutions, scholarships and financial assistance, post-study work opportunities, IELTS and much more.

Interested candidates can register at the venue or online on British Council's website.

Wrist spinners difficult to pick with Pink ball: Harbhajan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

At the floodlit Eden Gardens, wrist spinners landing the pink ball with scrambled seam will be far more difficult to pick than finger spinners, feels senior off-spinner Harbhajan Singh.

India will be playing its much-awaited first Day/Night Test against Bangladesh at the Eden Gardens from Saturday and there is a lot of curiosity regarding how the pink ball would behave.

"Wrist spinners will have one advantage if you see because it's going to be very difficult to pick the seam (with black stitches) of pink ball," Harbhajan told PTI during an interaction.

India has a wrist spinner in Kuldeep Yadav but Harbhajan didn't want to talk on selection matters.

"Well, that's the team management's call and I can't comment. But then Bangladesh need to play the Indian pacers on the seamer friendly track before spinners are fully operational," he said, referring to their performance against Mohd Shami and Co. In the first Test.

"And also between 3.30 and 4.30 pm, the time of sunset in Kolkata where seamers are known to do maximum damage. But yes we need to figure out more about spinners if we want to play more D/N Tests in future."

He reminded how Kuldeep turned out to be lethal during the 2016 Duleep Trophy, played with the pink ball.

"If you remember Duleep Trophy, no one could effectively read Kuldeep from his wrists. Leg spinners got lot of wickets during that edition," Harbhajan said.

He explained why wrist spinners are more effective.

"When a finger spinner bowls, the ball is released with seam so that there is turn and bounce. When you are bowling the googly, the seam will be scrambled and very difficult to pick," he explained.

However, someone like a Muttiah Muralitharan might just be very effective.

"But there are exceptions like Muttiah Muralitharan, who could have been a killer with the pink ball despite being a finger spinner



Ravichandran Ashwin, center without cap, celebrates with teammates the dismissal of Bangladesh's Liton Das during the third day of first Test between India and Bangladesh in Indore

AP

because unlike other finger spinners, both his off break and doosra were released with scrambled seam," said one of India's greatest spinners.

However, the pink SG in general will be a challenge for the spinners with the extra lacquer that will be applied to keep its colour intact under lights.

"More lacquer means that you will not have a good grip on the ball, especially finger spinners. And the ball starts skidding from the hand."

He then went on to explain the fundamental difference between bowling with white ball and pink ball when the dew sets in.

"A lot of people think that the ball will be like a slippery soap bar as it happens with white ball in D/N games. It's not the same. The white ball becomes slippery because the white lacquer goes off the skin of the ball gets wet.

"With extra lacquer, pink ball's skin won't get wet but the stitches will be very soggy. And therein lies problem with finger spinners.

When a finger spinner bowls, the ball is released with seam so that there is turn and bounce. When you are bowling the googly, the seam will be scrambled and very difficult to pick

Also the format of the game makes it difficult.

"In 50 overs or 20 over cricket, whenever the ball gets wet, you can just alter the length a bit and let the batsmen play on backfoot getting those singles.

"But in a Test match, you will not have a field setting like that. You have to pitch it up. Now landing six deliveries on one spot while trying to grip a wet seam can be a challenge because trying the ODI length will be easy meat for batsmen."

For spinners to be more effective, they have to play more games at the domestic level.

"If BCCI creates a window so that all top national players are available for a couple of specific rounds in Ranji Trophy, then you can learn more."

"Even Duleep can go back to pink ball but only if stars play. With no disrespect to any player, if top players don't play here, the purpose is lost and no advantage gained while playing next pink Test," he concluded.

Nur-Sultan to host Ind-Pak Davis Cup tie

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Dismissing Pakistan's review appeal, the International Tennis Federation (ITF) on Tuesday announced Kazakhstan's capital Nur-Sultan as the neutral venue for the upcoming Davis Cup tie between India and Pakistan.

Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) had filed an appeal contesting the ITF Davis Cup Committee's November 4 decision to shift the November 29-30 tie to a neutral venue.

PTF had argued that if Indian pilgrims can visit Pakistan without any security threat, why can't the Indian team play matches in Islamabad, but the Independent Tribunal of the world governing body kept the games at a neutral venue.

"The Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) appealed the Davis Cup Committee decision to move the tie from Islamabad. The appeal was dismissed by an independent tribunal on Monday 18 November," ITF said in a statement.

"Further to the decision of the PTF not to nominate a neutral venue, in accordance with Davis Cup regulations, the Davis Cup Committee has voted in favour of the tie being hosted by the ITF on neutral ground at the National Tennis Centre in Nur-Sultan (previously Astana), Kazakhstan on 29-30 November," the statement added.

The matches will be played on indoor courts since extreme cold conditions there won't allow them to be staged outside.

"Playing indoor suits our players. It will work in our favour, not that our players can't play on grass but they a lot more comfortable on hard courts. The weather conditions are harsh and though we are playing indoors, it still affects the body," India coach Zeeshan Ali said.

"The quality of tennis is better playing indoors because factors like sun and wind do not affect the matches." The tie was scheduled to be held in Islamabad in September but was pushed to November 29-30 after India expressed concerns about the safety of their players due to diplomatic tensions between the two nations.

Shami alters length to keep batsmen guessing

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India speedster Mohammed Shami said altering length to keep the batsmen guessing would be key when India take on Bangladesh in their maiden Pink-Test.

Shami, who has been in terrific form, returned with the figures of 3/27 and 4/31 in the first Test at Indore to achieve his career-best ranking, said he intends on keeping things simple for the historic Test.

"What one thing bowlers should do is keep an eye on the wicket and how it is behaving, so what I do is as the pitch gets slower I keep pushing myself and when I notice that the batsman is uncomfortable I go over the top... So the length has to keep changing," Shami said on *Nerolac Cricket Live* on Star Sports.

Meanwhile, former India captain Sunil Gavaskar cautioned Mayank Agarwal, who scored a double century in the Indore Test, saying opposition would be better-prepared to counter him in future matches.



Former India opener Gautam Gambhir said the Men in Blue have a complete bowling unit with quality spinners and pacers in their ranks.

son there is a lot more data available of you to the opposition.

"But he has been batting beautifully, the way he balances himself without falling on the offside as he plays so straight and his movement of the front and back foot has been fantastic making him the man in form who is full of confidence," Gavaskar said.

Former India opener Gautam Gambhir said the Men in Blue have a complete bowling unit with quality spinners and pacers in their ranks.

"If you see other oppositions, some teams have got quality fast bowling attacks, some have quality spinners but if you look at this Indian side, they've got two quality spinners, three quality seamers plus Jasprit Bumrah and Bhuvneshwar Kumar who are not in the playing 11.

"So they've got proper 5 seamers plus Kuldeep Yadav."

Coach Langer throws weight behind Warner



IAANS ■ BRISBANE

Australia coach Justin Langer has reckoned opener David Warner will put his bad form in the Ashes this year behind him in the upcoming Test series against Pakistan. Warner had a horrible outing during the Ashes campaign this year as he managed just 95 runs at an average of 9.5 from five games.

When he simplifies the game, stays still and watches the ball, keeps his mind clear, we know there's no more destructive player in the world, probably," Langer was quoted as saying by *cricket.com.au*.

"He loves batting in Australia, he loves batting, basically. We are looking forward to him having a great summer. I know how important he is to our team, that's why I had no doubt after the Ashes that he'd be in the first Test of the summer," he added.

When Pakistan last toured Australia, Warner averaged 71.20 across three Test matches.

Earlier, Aussie spinner Nathan Lyon felt that Warner would come out all guns blazing in the two-Test series against Pakistan. "Dave is a world-class player. I'm expecting him to come out here and play exceptionally well," Lyon had told reporters on Saturday.

"No doubt, he would have been down and disappointed about the Ashes that he had. But he was still part of the side to go over there and retain the Ashes, which is pretty bloody special, if you ask me," he added.

Babar's best yet to come: Ponting

IAANS ■ BRISBANE

With Pakistan set to challenge Australia in a two-Tests series starting Thursday, former Australia skipper Ricky Ponting believes that Babar Azam could be a threat for the home team as the World Cup-winning skipper feels that Babar is yet to play to potential.

"We haven't seen the best of him yet," Ponting told *cricket.com.au*. "Twenty-odd Tests for an average of 35 — he's better than that. He averages 54 in one-day cricket at a strike-rate of about 90. He's a very, very classy player."

"He's a really exciting talent and probably the guy I'm looking forward to seeing the most this summer. I've seen the Aussies a lot and I've seen a lot of the Kiwis, but I'm really excited to see him. He could be anything," he added.



Babar Azam in a file picture PCB

Kiwis & Eng put rivalry to Test

AFP ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI

New Zealand and England will take their cricketing rivalry into the Test arena on Thursday after finding themselves evenly matched in recent limited-overs thrillers.

England have bragging rights after winning a rollercoaster World Cup final in July, then edging the Black Caps 3-2 in a despatch close Twenty20 series completed earlier this month.

Both the one-day decider and T20 series needed tie-breakers to find a winner and there will be no shortage of mutual respect when the rivals face off again on Thursday in the First Test at Mount Maunganui.

On paper, there again appears to be little to separate the teams, with New Zealand second in the Test rankings and England third.

But England skipper Joe Root is painfully aware that his team underperformed when it lost a two-Test series in New Zealand last year after underestimating the Black Caps' bowlers on their home turf.

Pacemen Trent Boult and Tim Southee bundled the tourists out for 58 in the first innings of the opening Test as England tried to play what Root described as "fast forward" cricket.

England's skipper said his team would be taking a more measured



New Zealand and England players watch as local maori perform a haka during an official welcome

approach this time, with batsmen placing an emphasis on protecting their wickets.

"We have to be prepared to play some attritional cricket at times," he said.

"We have to try to bat longer... it would be nice to get used to batting for 120 overs more regularly, especially in the first innings."

The series will not count towards the World Test Championship, giving new England coach Chris Silverwood room to experiment in his first Test series in

charge. He is expected to hand opening batsman Dom Sibley his debut, partnering Rory Burns, with Root moving down to fourth in the order.

New Zealand will take the opportunity to blood speedster Lockie Ferguson, who has already excelled in limited overs internationals and was described as "an extreme talent" by short-ball specialist Neil Wagner.

"I know he's raring to go. If he gets the opportunity he'll make the most of

it," Wagner said.

New Zealand will also be bolstered by the return of captain Kane Williamson, who sat out the T20 series with a nagging hip injury.

It will be the first Test match ever staged at Mount Maunganui's Bay Oval, which has been hosting limited-overs internationals since 2014.

The beachside venue is Wagner's home ground and he said the wicket could take time to get used to.

"It's been a pretty good wicket that's tended to be on the flatter side but there's always pace and bounce that you can work with," he said.

"It's also got its own unique challenges with wind that swirls around a bit."

SQUADS

New Zealand: Kane Williamson (capt), Todd Astle, Tom Blundell, Trent Boult, Colin de Grandhomme, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Henry Nicholls, Jeet Raval, Mitchell Santner, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, Neil Wagner, BJ Watling
England: Joe Root (capt), Jofra Archer, Jonny Bairstow, Stuart Broad, Rory Burns, Jos Buttler, Zak Crawley, Sam Curran, Joe Denly, Jack Leach, Saqib Mahmood, Matthew Parkinson, Ollie Pope, Dominic Sibley, Ben Stokes, Chris Woakes.

Misbah working on plans to shut Smith

IAANS ■ BRISBANE

Pakistan coach Misbah-ul-Haq said that pitching the ball consistently on the blind spot or near the top of the off stump would be key to dismissing Australian stalwart Steve Smith.

Smith returned to Test cricket by taking the Ashes by storm earlier in the year. In the five-match series that was held across August and September in England, Smith scored a whopping 774 runs at an average of 110.57. He carried the good form into the recently concluded T20I series against Pakistan at home.

"As far as Steve Smith goes, there's a blind spot for every top batsman in the world; as a bowler you're always interested in pitching the ball there," Misbah is quoted as saying by *ESPNcricinfo*.

"It's important that we bowl with consistency there. Our bowlers are

executing the plans very well right now, and hopefully we'll be able to build that kind of a pressure, and stay disciplined especially early in the innings. No matter how good a batsman is batting, it's about consistency and bowling the maximum balls in those areas that build pressure and the batsman respects you, and you force him to make a

mistake." Pakistan are going into the series with a pace attack that consists of Mohammad Abbas, Shaheen Afridi, Muhammad Nisa and the 16-year-old Naseem Shah.

"All the batsmen you talk to, any batsman in the world, that's the area where you have to defend a ball, and that is a six to eight metre spot where you have to play the top of off stump," he said. "That's the area from where if it's happening then that creates a great chance. Even if it's not happening, you have less chances to do anything with the ball."

"So it's about consistency, and top players in the world, if you miss those areas, that special length and line, then they are good enough to just cash in on that. So you have to be very, very disciplined, just keep the ball there, and if it's happening you are already in the game."



Azzurri hit 9 past Armenia

Mancini's side maintain perfect record with 9-1 rout; Danes, Swiss through to Euro 2020



Ciro Immobile (11) hugs Nicolò Zaniolo after Lazio striker scores his second goal against Armenia AP



Christian Eriksen celebrates with teammates after Denmark qualifies for Euro 2020 AP

AFP ■ PALERMO

Denmark and Switzerland secured spots at Euro 2020 at the expense of the Republic of Ireland on Monday as Roberto Mancini's Italy completed a perfect qualifying campaign by scoring nine.

Ireland needed to beat Denmark in Dublin to clinch qualification for next year's 24-team European Championship finals, but Matt Doherty's late header was only enough to earn Mick McCarthy's men a 1-1 draw at the Aviva Stadium.

A closely-fought contest, low on technical quality, swung the visitors' way when the unmarked Martin Braithwaite stuck out a boot to divert a Henrik Dalsgaard cross into the net on 73 minutes.

However, Ireland scored a late equaliser to draw 1-1 in Copenhagen in June and they repeated the feat here as Wolverhampton Wanderers right-back Doherty headed in an Enda Stevens cross with five minutes left.

Needing to win, the home side

then threw everything at their opponents in the dying moments, but Denmark held on to clinch second place in Group D behind Switzerland. "We had opportunities but I am not going to criticise the lads," McCarthy told Sky Sports.

"They have been brilliant. We lost one game out of eight. I am very proud of them. We can beat anyone in the play-offs."

The Danes, European champions in 1992, can now look forward to playing at home during the finals, with Copenhagen one of the 12 host cities chosen for the tournament.

Switzerland secured top spot with a 6-1 away win against minnows Gibraltar as Cedric Itten scored twice. Skipper and Arsenal outcast Granit Xhaka netted their final goal.

Italy had already wrapped up qualification from Group J but they saved their best for last, making it 10 wins from 10 by hammering Armenia 9-1 in Palermo with seven different scorers.

Serie A top scorer Ciro Immobile and Nicolò Zaniolo both scored braces, while Nicolò Barella and Alessio Romagnoli found the net before Chelsea midfielder Jorginho converted a penalty.

Riccardo Orsolini came off the

bench to score on his Italy debut and Federico Chiesa finished off the scoring after Edgar Babayan had pulled one back for Armenia.

It was an 11th straight win in all for Mancini's side, with Italy scoring nine times in a game for the first time since beating the USA 9-0 at the London Olympics in 1948.

"We had the right approach to the game and you don't score nine goals by chance," Mancini purred.

"We need to improve various aspects of the game but for me it will be really difficult to leave some people at home when I select the squad for the finals. They would all deserve to be there."

Having wrapped up a historic first qualification for a major tournament three days earlier, Finland lost 2-1 to Greece in Athens despite Norwich City striker Teemu Pukki giving them a first-half lead with his 10th goal in eight international games.

Bosnia and Herzegovina finish fourth in the group despite a 3-0 win in Liechtenstein, but they will have another chance to qualify via the play-offs next March.

LAST GAME FOR MORENO

Meanwhile, Group F winners Spain rounded out their qualifying campaign with a 5-0 destruction of Romania at a barely half-full Metropolitan Stadium in Madrid.

Gerard Moreno scored twice after Napoli midfielder Fabian Ruiz opened the scoring. Adrian Rus put through his own net in first-half stoppage time and Real Sociedad striker Mikel Oyarzabal wrapped up the win amid reports the match was Robert Moreno's last as coach.

Having already qualified as runners-up in the same group, Sweden defeated the Faroe Islands 3-0, while Norway, who go into the play-offs, won 2-1 in Malta.

The final automatic qualifying berth will be decided after Wales host Hungary with the winner going through from Group E, while a draw in Cardiff could allow Slovakia to pip both of them by beating Azerbaijan.



Spain coach Luis Enrique in a file picture AP

Enrique returns as La Roja boss

AFP ■ MADRID

Luis Enrique will return as coach of Spain and replace Robert Moreno ahead of Euro 2020, the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) confirmed on Tuesday.

Moreno took charge in June after Luis Enrique had resigned to take care of his daughter Xana, who died in August of bone cancer.

"Today we can confirm Luis Enrique returns to his position of work," RFEF president Luis Rubiales said in a press conference at the national team's training base in Las Rozas.

Rubiales said Luis Enrique has a contract until the 2022 World Cup in Qatar and that it will be up to him whether Moreno is offered a chance to resume his previous role as assistant coach.

The pair were close friends and also worked together at Barcelona, Celta Vigo and Roma but Moreno appears upset at the manner of his departure.

"Luis Enrique stepped down because of the worst possible thing that can happen to a father," Rubiales said.

"He has always been the leader of our project and he has a contract until (the) World Cup in Qatar."

Luis Enrique was appointed Spain's coach after the 2018 World Cup and his readiness to return will be welcomed, after the death of his nine-year-old daughter three months ago.

But the RFEF's handling of the change has

been clumsy, with reports emerging before Spain's 5-0 win over Romania on Monday that he would not lead the team at next year's finals.

Moreno did not appear for his post-match press conference and reportedly left the players' dressing room in tears.

Rubiales said Moreno also chose not to show up for a meeting with the RFEF on Tuesday.

"We had a meeting set up with Robert Moreno at 10am this morning," Rubiales said.

"But he did not come, only his two lawyers."

Moreno said in September he would be "the first and most delighted to step aside" if Luis Enrique decided he wanted to come back but he may have hoped for more transparency around the decision.

Rubiales rejected accusations of dishonesty, insisting he spoke to Luis Enrique in October and then again on Monday, having learned he was ready to return through Moreno.

"It was clear that as soon as Luis Enrique felt strong enough to return, the door would be open for him," Rubiales said.

"I have been honest about that. Nobody can feel tricked."

Rubiales added: "We thank Robert Moreno for his work, he did a very good job, and we are very happy with what he did."

"But I repeat that Robert Moreno told us that he had spoken to Luis Enrique, who told him he wanted to return. We found out Luis Enrique wanted to come back through Moreno."

Pep's agent rules out Munich return



Former Bayern Munich coach Pep Guardiola during team's training session in Allianz Arena AP/File Photo

MANCHESTER: Pep Guardiola's agent has ruled out a return to Bayern Munich at least until the Spaniard's contract expires at Manchester City in 2021, according to reports.

The German champions are currently looking for a new head coach following the sacking of Niko Kovac after a 5-1 thrashing at Eintracht Frankfurt at the start of the month.

Caretaker boss Hansi Flick will remain in charge at least until Christmas when the Bundesliga goes into recess but the Germans are already on the lookout for a possible high profile replacement.

"Pep is content and very happy in Manchester. His contract is until June 2021," Guardiola's agent Josep Maria Orobitig told German daily Bild on Wednesday, having also been quoted by websites SPOX and Goal.

"Guardiola always fulfils his contracts."

"I haven't spoken with anyone in Germany about him — neither with intermediaries nor club bosses."

"Pep has good memories of Munich and still has friends there, but at the moment he has shown no interest in returning to Germany as a coach."

"That is something that is just as impossible at the moment as it was last summer with Juventus."

"I deny all rumours."

Guardiola won the German league and cup double in his final season at Bayern in 2016 having lifted the Bundesliga title in each of his three seasons at the Munich club, who he joined in 2013.

Ajax coach Erik ten Hag and Paris Saint-Germain's Thomas Tuchel have been linked to Bayern, but both have made it clear they will not leave their respective clubs this season. **AFP**

AFP ■ TEL AVIV

Lionel Messi scored a late penalty as Argentina drew 2-2 with Uruguay in a friendly held in Israel on Monday, with the Jewish state considering the match a victory.

The game pitted Messi against his Barcelona teammate Luis Suarez, and it looked as though the Uruguayan had gotten the better of him as he scored one goal and set up another to give his team a 2-1 lead going into injury time.

But a ball into the box was handled by a Uruguayan defender, and Messi calmly slotted the resulting penalty home to ensure an engaging friendly ended all square.

The 32-year-old had earlier teed up Manchester City striker Sergio Agüero to make it 1-1, after Edinson Cavani

Barca boys star in 2-2 draw



Lionel Messi attempts to score via free kick against Uruguay AP

had opened the scoring. Suarez scored a free-kick from outside the box to give his side the lead before Messi's late intervention.

The game had been dubbed by organisers as an important moment for Israel, following the cancellation of another Argentina match a year earlier after pressure from pro-Palestinian campaigners.

On the pitch at times it felt like the Messi show, with the crowd chanting his name and every mazy run greeted by vociferous cheering.

While not at his electric best, he showed moments of quality — slaloming past defenders and forcing Uruguay goalkeeper Martin

Campana into a number of smart saves.

The match comes after the cancellation of a pre-World Cup friendly fixture between Argentina and Israel in June 2018 after boycott calls.

That match had been due to be played in Jerusalem, sparking Palestinian anger and criticism of Argentina online.

Israel considers Jerusalem its "indivisible" capital, while Palestinians claim the eastern part of the city — occupied by Israel in 1967 and later annexed — as the capital of their future state.

Monday's game was held in the Israeli commercial capital Tel Aviv.

Henry ready for Montreal challenge

AFP ■ MONTREAL

Newly-appointed Montreal Impact boss Thierry Henry vowed to learn from the mistakes of his disastrous reign at Monaco on Monday but called for patience as he attempts to revive the fortunes of the struggling Major League Soccer outfit.

Speaking at his first press conference since his appointment by Montreal last week, the 42-year-old former France and Arsenal superstar insisted he is ready for the challenge despite his troubled tenure with Ligue 1 side Monaco.

Henry was sacked by Monaco in January after only 100 days in charge as the team nosedived into the relegation zone following his appointment, with just five wins in 20 matches.

"For me, the way I put it is always [either] you win or you learn, and I learned a lot there," Henry said of his spell at Monaco.

"It's about coming back, always. You have to get up and be in front of what happens. The only mistake that you can make is not learning from what happened."

Henry, who was also an assistant coach to Belgium during the country's 2018 World Cup campaign, where they finished third, said his experiences were part of his evolution as a manager.

"You have to start somewhere," he said of his time with Belgium and Monaco.

"I learned a lot about myself. It's about fighting. This isn't just my story but the story of everyone in life. Everyone falls. It's about how you get up."

The Impact's sporting director Olivier Renard said Henry beat out several candidates under consideration for the Montreal position. After meeting Henry in mid-October, it



Thierry Henry during press conference AP

was decided then that he should take on the job of rebuilding the foundering franchise, he said.

Henry, who spent four years in MLS with the New York Red Bulls at the tailend of his playing career, meanwhile urged Montreal's fans to be patient, saying success won't come overnight.

"We have a fresh start and we're going to move forward to rebuild the team," Henry told reporters.

"We know the direction we want to go, but you can't build a new team in two months, or three months or even a year," he said. "We have a lot of hard work ahead of us, and it will require patience."

"We also need to win back the support of fans. I think this is very important because fans and the city, the community need to feel a connection to the team. It's up to us to bring them back on our side."

Russia beat Croatia in Davis Cup opener

AFP ■ MADRID

Karen Khachanov and Andrey Rublev helped Russia open the inaugural Davis Cup Finals with a 3-0 victory over defending champions Croatia in Madrid on Monday.

World number 17 Khachanov clinched the point for Russia by fighting back to beat Croatia number one Borna Coric 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 6-4, after Rublev had earlier seen off Borna Gojo 6-3, 6-3.

"When you're playing not only for yourself, but for your country, you have to fight harder," said Khachanov.

Russia, who are without US Open runner-up Daniil Medvedev due to exhaustion, can wrap up a place in the quarter-finals with victory over Rafael Nadal's Spain in their second Group B tie on Tuesday.

The 18 nations have been split into six groups of three at the Caja Magica, with the pool winners and two best runners-up to play in the last eight of the first edition of the revamped tournament.

The teams face off in two best-of-three-set singles matches and one doubles rubber in each tie.

Khachanov and Rublev completed the clean sweep later on Monday with a 7-6 (7/3), 6-4 doubles win over Ivan Dodig and Nikola Pietrangeli.

CANADA DOWN ITALY

Canada claimed a 2-1 victory over well-fancied Italy to strike first in Group F.

World number 12 Fabio Fognini slumped to a 7-6 (7/5), 7-5 defeat by Vasek Pospisil, ranked 150th, before rising star Denis Shapovalov edged out Matteo Berrettini 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (7/5). "I'm really happy to get the win

against a player like Matteo who has had such a good season," said Shapovalov. "I always love representing my country...It's not often you get to play as a team, so it's amazing."

Italy, who won their only Davis Cup title in 1976, were the favourites in Group F with Fognini and Berrettini both having enjoyed excellent seasons.

The 20-year-old Shapovalov saved three set points before snatching the first set in a tie-break, only for Berrettini to level the match in a second-set breaker.

A clash without a single break of serve, was decided by another tie-break, with Shapovalov reeling off the last three points to win after two hours and 52 minutes on court.

Berrettini and Fognini boosted Italy's hopes of making the quarters with a hard-fought doubles success over Shapovalov and Pospisil, winning 6-2, 3-6, 6-3.

Canada take on the United States on Tuesday, with Italy facing the Americans the following day.

Belgium made a victorious start in Group D with back-to-back singles wins against Colombia.

The South Americans are playing at the top level of Davis Cup tennis for the first time, having never played in the old World Group.

Steve Darcis saw off Santiago Giraldo 6-3, 6-2, before world number 11 David Goffin had to battle back from a set down to avoid a shock against 194th-ranked

Daniel Elahi Galan Riveros, winning 3-6, 6-3, 6-3.

But the world number one doubles pairing of Juan Sebastian Cabal and Robert Farah grabbed a historic win for Colombia by battling past Sander Gille and Joran Vliegen 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 7-6 (7/3).



France's Jo Wilfried Tsonga plays against Japan's Yasutaka Uchiyama during their Davis Cup match in Madrid on Tuesday AP



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Companies, agencies sign up for next Import Expo

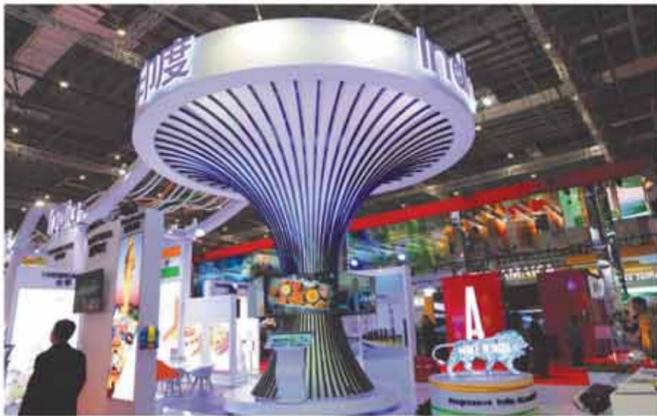
A signing ceremony for the 2020 China International Import Expo (CIIE) took place last Wednesday during this year's expo in Shanghai.

At the event, 21 companies and nine foreign agencies signed up for the third edition of CIIE at the expo's venue, the National Exhibition and Convention Centre.

The companies include major players in different industries, such as French cosmetics company L'Oreal Group, British automobile company Jaguar Land Rover, and US healthcare company Johnson & Johnson, as well as Thailand conglomerate Charoen Pokphand Group.

Among other agencies seeking to return are the China-Italy Chamber of Commerce, the Japan External Trade Organisation, Singapore Business Federation and Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Apart from the above-mentioned companies, more than 110 companies have already signed up for next year's expo, reserving an exhibition area of 60,000 square metres, according to the CIIE Bureau, one of the expo's organisers.



The Indian pavilion in the 2nd CIIE. Photo by Lei Tongxu

"We are glad to be one of the first companies to sign up for the third CIIE," said Will Song, chairman of Johnson & Johnson China.

"The CIIE is living proof of China's commitment to further opening up and improving the environment for doing business. The increasing numbers of exhibitors, and new products at the expo this year, testify to the appeal of the event which is becoming an important platform for more Chinese clients and customers to learn about the latest innovations of our company," he added.

Riding momentum of growth

Yunnan province held key industry investment cooperation and global procurement theme promotion activities on Nov.11.

The governor of Yunnan, Ruan Chengfa, pointed out in his speech that Yunnan is known as the hometown of "poetry's distant dream". It is not only a place where people come and want to stay on but also a place full of vitality and investment opportunities. In recent years, Yunnan has single-mindedly pursued high-

quality development, deepened supply-side structural reform and built a modern economic system with a bright green background to accelerate the development of eight key industries. It is also striving to build world-class green energy, green food and a healthy living destination. Yunnan is riding the momentum of its high-quality leapfrog development, the governor said.

Ruan Chengfa also said that Yunnan will learn from the successful experience of China (Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone and strive to

build the China (Yunnan) pilot free-trade zone into a new high ground for opening-up to South and Southeast Asia and a new engine for economic and social development. At the same time, Yunnan is focusing on creating a more efficient government service environment, a more considerate business service environment and a more accurate market service environment by constantly improving the market-oriented and law-based international business environment to sincerely welcome entrepreneurs to invest in Yunnan.

During the promotion, a number of enterprises signed 20 investment and financial cooperation projects and import purchase agreements with Yunnan, including 10 import purchase projects. The main imported products are chemicals, agricultural products, and mechanical and electrical products.

Ten investment promotion and financing support projects, covering green food, great health, tourism, culture, manufacturing and other fields are being promoted. **By China Daily and YDPG**

XI'S REMARKS

Of the problems confronting the world economy, none can be resolved by a single country alone. We must all put the common good of humanity first rather than place one's own interest above the common interest of all. We must have a more open

mindset and take more open steps, and work together to make the pie of the global market even bigger. We need to strengthen the mechanisms for sharing benefits globally, and explore new ways of international cooperation. The goal is to give more impetus to economic globalization and

remove impediments as much as we could.

— Excerpt from Chinese President Xi Jinping's keynote speech at the 2nd China International Import Expo on Nov.5, 2019

CULTURE

Yunnan's intangible cultural heritage presented



The Thai pavilion in the CIIE. Photo by Lei Tongxu

Music playing and singing and dancing attracted the audience to dance together. During the 2nd China international import expo, the performance and exhibition of intangible cultural heritage from Yunnan province were wonderfully presented.

He Zhengwen, inheritor of Dongba hieroglyphic writing art, demonstrated the Dongba script writing and explained its history on the site and attracted attention from the guests. Seeing that so

many people are concerned about Dongba characters, He Zhengwen said happily that to bring Dongba culture to the expo is to show the world the unique national cultural charm of Yunnan.

Bai Xiaobai, inheritor of Yi embroidery from Daxinzhai Village, Honghe County, is wearing her own embroidered traditional national costumes for display. Bai Xiaobai said that she started to learn embroidery when she was a teenager. Now she is already

in her 50's. Her wish is to make every stitch and line carefully well so that more people know this ancient craft. Another inheritor of Yi embroidery Li Xiaofen said that a specialized cooperative of Yi embroidery has been set up in Daxinzhai Village. A well-made cap can be sold for about 1,700 yuan. Ethnic culture has given villagers a new way to get rich.

Yang Yuyan, a 23-year-old girl from Yunnan, introduced the skills and characteristics and Yunnan tie-dye. She and her father brought many tie-dye works of beautiful Yunnan series to the expo. "This piece the spring water and flower city not only contains traditional Yunnan symbols such as Dianchi Lake and Yunnan famous flowers, but also represents new events of Yunnan development such as the entry of high-speed railway into Yunnan," said Yang Yuyan. Their tie-dye works show the new atmosphere of Yunnan flourishes. They hope to inspire new inspiration and creativity through the platform of the expo. **By Liu Ziyu**

This is a laudable initiative by the Govt. of China to provide market access to Exporters from all over the world and also to address the issue of trade imbalance. The Expo provides an opportunity and is a Win-Win situation. China and India are the largest producers and consumers of Tea in the world. There are opportunities of synergies in many areas including Research.

Indian Tea is becoming popular in China whereas Chinese tea particularly green tea is becoming popular in India. The Expo has representation from India in tea industry. 'Tea' is a 'Way of Life' and Culture in China and not just a commodity. We in India have to learn a lot about Chinese market. India has definite strength in textiles yarn, gifts, Agri commodities, ayurvedic products, generic drugs, IT etc. China being a huge market can provide significant export opportunities for Indian companies. We are hopeful of positive response from Chinese buyers.

We expect good number of trade queries, orders and business tie-ups for Indian exporters. This event will also grow bigger for Indian exporters in the future as there is a lot more interest to be generated.

—Office of the Chairman, Centre for Promotion of India-China Cooperation

CITM

India attends Int'l travel mart in KM



The Indian booths in the CITM. Photo by Liu Yanqin

The 2019 China International Travel Mart (CITM) ends on Nov.17 in Kunming, capital of southwest China's Yunnan Province. Housing more than 3,800 booths in the exhibition

area, exhibitors cover a wide range of fields including scenic spots, hotels, airlines, cruise lines, travel agencies and online travel platforms. India participated in the event.

POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Ecological improvement brings prosperity to villagers

Tourists are crowded into Shigu Village, Shigu Town, Yulong Naxi Autonomous County, Yunnan Province. The owner of Hongqiao Restaurant He Shaohua is busy preparing meals for the guests. He told us that the village used to be dirty and untidy, but now the environment is getting better. There are more and more guests all year round and business at home is getting better and better.

The change began three years ago. In that year, Shigu Town started a comprehensive management of rural

living environment. Shigu Village Committee mobilized villagers to clean up public areas and collect household and production garbage, and require businesses to be responsible for greening, cleaning and parking in front of their doors. After three years, Shigu Village now becomes a web celebrity for people to come and visit constantly.

Yuan Yixiang, head of the village, feels very proud when talking about the changes of Shigu Village. She said that through growing greens

and comprehensive environment treatment, Shigu Village's mountains become green, water becomes clear and more tourists come.

Relying on the good ecological environment, villagers have set up food and beverage businesses, home stay facilities and rural tourism. Their life has been getting better and better, and their income has been increasing year by year. Last year, the per capita net income of the whole village reached more than 10,000 yuan.

By He Qian

IN PICS

Spectacular formations of flying red-breasted parakeets



Recently, flocks of red-breasted parakeets hover above Ruili, northeast part

of Yunnan province in spectacular formations. This is benefited from the substantial

improvement of the local ecological environment. **Photo by Zheng Shanhe**

ECONOMICS

Cross-border e-commerce public service platform launched in Yunnan

A cross-border e-commerce public service platform was launched on November 18 in Yunnan province.

Yunnan cross-border e-commerce public service platform supports cross-border bonded import, general export and other business models, and connects with multiple regulatory sites in the whole province. The service covers cross-border e-commerce industry in the whole province. Now the cross-border e-commerce public service platform has been connected to the airport area of Kunming comprehensive

free trade zone and over 10,000 orders have been declared online.

Kunming comprehensive bonded zone opened up a number of e-commerce routes to India, Thailand, Nepal, Vietnam, and Australia with categories including goods for everyday consumption, shoes, clothing, cases and bags, food, and accessories. The effectiveness of customs clearance has been constantly improving, the maximum single line machine load has increased from 3,000 to 50,000 pieces in a single day. Customs clearance in the zone is within 24 hours.

A batch of American

and Australian wine, bird's nest from Thailand, handmade goods from Nepal passed customs inspection and entered the bonded warehouse of Kunming comprehensive bonded zone. It indicates that consumers in Yunnan can enjoy T+1 shopping experience. The products purchased online and stored in the bonded warehouse of the comprehensive bonded zone can go through the customs and be delivered to consumers on the same day or the next day at the latest.

By Wang Huan

Chinese auto makers to explore \$5b investment in India

Chinese auto manufacturers are expected to pump about \$5 billion in the Indian market over the next 3-5 years at a time when Indian manufacturers are holding back their investments, said a media report recently.

Chinese companies, including Geely, Chery, Great Wall Motors, Changan and Beiqi Foton, were scouting for opportunities and slated to enter India while MG Motor plans its second round of investment and BYD has decided to venture beyond buses to electric vans, said a report

in the financial daily *The Economic Times*.

"Chinese automakers have the capacity to challenge the dominance of market leaders on the back of economies of scale and they already have an edge with the electric vehicle technology that fits well into the Indian government's vision to become a key global base for electrification," said the report quoting Amit Kaushik, managing director at the consultancy firm Urban Science.

Other Chinese companies are planning to create space in the Indian market, including



Sinotruk—a China National Heavy-duty Truck Group, Foton, which recently acquired land at Chakan, 140 km from Mumbai.

The Indian passenger car market has an installed capacity of 6.6 million units at the end of 2018, with capacity utilization at 60 percent while the

household penetration of cars remains low at 7 percent, comparing to 30 percent in China and 46 percent in Thailand. **(Xinhua)**