

OPINION 8
NEIGHBOUR'S
BORDER ENVY

WORLD 12
IMPEACHMENT SHAM DEBUNKED,
SAYS WH AFTER PUBLIC HEARING

SPORT 15
GINI SCORES HAT-TRICK
IN NETHERLANDS' 5-0 WIN

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HOMOSEXUALS
ARE NORMAL:
ZAREEN KHAN
14 VIVACITY

Talks on, but Cong sure of Sena Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a clear indication of joining hands with the Shiv Sena, leaders of the Congress and the NCP on Wednesday expressed confidence of forming a "stable" Government in Maharashtra soon.

After a marathon meeting of senior leaders of the two parties at NCP supremo Sharad Pawar's residence here, former Maharashtra Chief Minister and Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan said the alliance is hopeful of ending the spell of political uncertainty in the State and working to provide a stable Government.

However, Chavan's confidence has not ended the suspense over the formation of a Government in Maharashtra, currently under President Rule, for two reasons: The ongoing NCP-Cong talks are inconclusive, and second, the hour-long meeting between Pawar and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has further raised curiosity about what transpired during the discussion.

Pawar, who later took to social media to announce his meeting, claimed his meeting with the Prime Minister was about farmers' distress in Maharashtra. However, there were few takers for Pawar's emphatic denial of any political discussion during his meeting with Modi.



NCP chief Sharad Pawar, senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel and others during a meeting regarding Government formation in Maharashtra, at Pawar's residence in New Delhi on Wednesday

"Due to President Rule in the State, your urgent intervention is highly necessitated. I shall be grateful if you could take immediate steps to initiate massive relief measures to ameliorate distressed farmers," the three-page memorandum given by Pawar to Modi said.

Asked by reporters about the Government formation in Maharashtra, the NCP chief declined to comment. The Pawar-Modi meeting, which went on for 50 minutes, took place against the backdrop of hectic parleys between the Congress-NCP and the Shiv Sena to form a Government in Maharashtra. Two days ago, Modi had praised NCP MPs for

maintaining the decorum in Parliament by not entering the Well of the House during proceedings.

The NCP and the Congress leaders met in the evening at Pawar's residence in Delhi to discuss how to partner with the Shiv Sena, the long-term BJP ally which recently ended its alliance with the ruling party over a power tussle in Maharashtra.

Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut exuded confidence that a Government led by his party will be in place by next month in Maharashtra. "We are inching towards the Government formation. The picture will become clear in the next two

After meeting NCP leaders, Prithviraj Chavan says strong Govt in Maha soon

Speculation over Modi-Pawar talks

- Pawar's emphatic denial of any political discussion during his meeting with Modi has failed to stop speculation about the talks on Government formation in Maharashtra
- Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut exuded confidence that Govt will be led by his party
- Sena has called a meeting of its MLAs and senior leaders on November 22

days and a popular Government led by the Shiv Sena will be in place by December," he told reporters.

The Shiv Sena has called a meeting of its MLAs and senior leaders on November 22 in Mumbai, a party leader said.

Continued on Page 7

Pushing me to back bench in RS aimed at hurting Sena, Raut writes to V-P

New Delhi: Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Wednesday wrote a letter to Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu saying that moving him to the 5th row is an attempt to humiliate him and the party.

NRC across India soon: Shah HM says no need for people from any religion to be worried about it



Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP leaders JP Nadda, Dharmendra Pradhan, Jitendra Singh and Arjun Ram Meghwal leave after the BJP Parliamentary Party meeting at Parliament House in New Delhi on Tuesday

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On the lines of Assam, National Register for Citizens (NRC) exercise will be carried out across the country soon, Home Minister Amit Shah said here on Wednesday, assuring that no one should be worried as it is just a process of getting everyone under the NRC, irrespective of their religion. He also underscored the point that there is no need for people from any religion to be worried about it.

Speaking in the Rajya Sabha, Shah said the NRC has no such provision that says that certain religions will be excluded from it. "All citizens of India irrespective of religion will figure in the NRC list. The NRC is different from the Citizenship Amendment Bill,"

Shah said.

"The Assam exercise was carried out under a Supreme Court order. NRC will be carried out across the country, will be done in Assam again, no one from any religion should be worried," he said. Some BJP-ruled States — like Uttarakhand, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand — have already announced that they will conduct Assam-like NRC exercise in their States. In the NRC final list published on August 31, over 19 lakh people were left out of the citizenship register in Assam.

Most of the people who have not produced adequate documents to prove their claims will not be declared illegal immediately, according to officials in the Government.

Continued on Page 7

Won't allow NRC in Bengal, says Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA/PNS ■ KOLKATA/ASSAM

Barely 24 hours after launching a broadside against the BJP and the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimen chief Asaduddin Owaisi for conspiring to dislodge Trinamool Congress from Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee once again asked the people to remain cautious against "nefarious designs" being hatched by these parties.

Addressing a huge crowd in Murshidabad, Mamata said her party would not allow the implementation of National Register for Citizens in Bengal as long as she was the Chief Minister of the State.

On the day Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced a country-wide NRC, Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma too said the State Government has requested the Centre to reject the final updated NRC in the State.

"Till I am there no one can take away your citizenship and no one can throw you out of India which is your own country," Mamata told a large gathering. "Some people are crying hoarse about NRC but let me tell you that there will



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addresses party supporters in Murshidabad on Wednesday

be no NRC in Bengal," Mamata said, adding how "not even the Hindus were spared in Assam where they have thrown out 19 lakh people from the citizenship list out of which 14 lakh are Hindus."

All these people were now being kept in detention camps, she alleged. "They are now in jails in Assam. But I will not let that happen in Bengal. There will be no NRC here," she added.

Targeting the "dirty alliance" between the BJP and AIMIM, Mamata said, "Money, men and ideas are being imported from outside and you will have to remain

Continued on Page 7

SC comes to rescue of DJ players in UP

New Delhi (PTI): Coming to the rescue of Disk Jockeys who make their living by performing at marriage and birthday parties in Uttar Pradesh, the Supreme Court has stayed the blanket ban imposed on their operations by the Allahabad High Court.

Ahead of the upcoming marriage season, the top court has asked the authorities to grant permission to the DJ operators in accordance with law.

The Allahabad High Court had on August 20, imposed a blanket ban on DJ services terming the noise generated by them as "unpleasant" and of "obnoxious level".

A bench of Justices UU Lalit and Vineet Saran was told by advocate Dushyant Parashar, appearing for the petitioners, that due to the high court order these DJs are getting unemployed across the state.

Parashar, who represented 13 members of the Bundelkhand Sound and DJ Association, said the DJ players used to make their living by offering their services during marriages, birthdays and other ceremonies but due to the blanket ban, they are unable to take care of their families.

Normalcy back in Valley, Shah tells Rajya Sabha

No one has died in police firing post-Article 370, says Home Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Asserting that normalcy has returned to the Kashmir Valley following the abrogation of Article 370 on August 5, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said the situation is completely normal and not a single civilian was killed in police firing in the Jammu & Kashmir. However, the detention of politicians and the blockade of the internet and social media were continuing because of security concerns. Shah reiterated that schools, colleges, offices, shops and markets are open.

Presenting the status report on Kashmir in the Rajya Sabha, the Home Minister said there is no shortage of medicine, food and fuel and the law and order situation is extremely normal. "People in this House were predicting bloodshed but I am happy to inform that no one has died in police firing," Shah said.



Replying to a question from Leader of the Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad on the restoration of internet services, the Home Minister said that facilities will be restored at an appropriate time by the authorities there. "As we all know our neighbouring country (Pakistan) is carrying out various covert activities there, and only after taking into consideration the law and order, a decision in this regard can be taken," Shah said.

Azad challenged the logic cited by Shah and remarked that Pakistan has been India's neighbour since 1947, since when India has also fought wars against it. If this were the case, Azad said, then internet would never be restored in the Valley. This led to a war of words between both sides.

The claim of normalcy

also prompted the Opposition to ask why their MPs were barred from entering J&K. This prompted Shah to say, "I agree that internet is quite essential for information and it should be restored as soon as possible. But let me remind him that mobile phones were introduced in India in around 1995, and Kashmir got mobile phones for the first time in 2003 by the then BJP Government. Internet was also introduced in the Valley only in 2002, due to security reasons. Internet is an essential facility but when the question is about security and law and order, I think we to understand our priorities."

Seeing the ruckus, Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu disallowed any further discussion on the question. Besides internet services, Azad raised the issue of education in the State which has been affected after the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A on August 5 this year.

On the issue of imposition of section 144 in Jammu & Kashmir, Shah said the section was applied in areas under a few police stations only for limited hours - from 8 pm to 6 am. "In not even one of the total 195 police stations, the Section

Continued on Page 7

UPHG salary scam: Top official among 5 held

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Gautam Buddha Nagar police on Wednesday arrested five home guard officials, including a divisional commandant posted in Aligarh, for their alleged role in the fraudulent withdrawal of salaries of scores of the force's personnel. The police action has come within 24-hour deadline set by UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Their arrest came a day after muster rolls (attendance logs) of all home guard personnel were found burnt in a box inside the Gautam Buddha Nagar district home guard commandant's office in Greater Noida. The attendance logs of all personnel since 2014 in the district were found gutted in the fire amid an investigation

into the alleged salary fraud, prompting Yogi to intervene.

Gautam Buddha Nagar Senior Superintendent of Police Vaibhav Krishna said five officials have been held for their suspected role in the fraudulent withdrawal of salaries.

"Home Guards' present Divisional Commandant, Aligarh, Ram Narayan Chaurasia (42), Assistant District Commandant Satish Chandra (35), and Platoon commanders Montu Kumar (32), Satveer Yadav (38) and Shailendra Kumar (30) have been arrested in the salary scam case," Krishna said.

Chaurasia is the mastermind of the alleged scam which he initiated since his appointment as District Home Guard commandant in Gautam Buddha Nagar in 2017 until he

got promoted and transferred in 2019, the SSP said.

"While Chaurasia was picked up for questioning from Aligarh, the others deployed locally were called in for questioning over the matter and arrested on Wednesday afternoon," Krishna told PTI.

The police also suspects their role in the fire at the commandant office in which personnel's attendance logs got burnt, but said they are not named as accused in the case as yet as a separate probe is underway.

The Noida police chief said the irregularities in withdrawal of salary of home guards appears to have existed before 2017 also but it had become prominent in the last two years.

Earlier in July, it came to light that salaries of scores of

home guards deployed here were withdrawn despite them showing up for work only half of the time during May and June, prompting officials to launch a probe into the matter.

A sample analysis of fraud in seven police stations of Noida showed that in May and June this year, 114 home guards were given Rs 7.07 lakh in salary for 1327 work days, and about 50 per cent of it was based on forged muster rolls, police said.

It estimated that the total fraud could be around Rs 3.50 crore to Rs 4 crore, and said a detailed analysis of attendance logs, which are available with the police, is underway.

Meanwhile, a team of forensic experts from Gujarat arrived in Greater Noida for analysing the

Continued on Page 7

सबका साथ-सबका विकास-सबका विश्वास



उत्तर प्रदेश राज्य चीनी निगम लि. की इकाई

मुण्डेरवा, जिला-बस्ती में
5000 टी.सी.डी. पेराई क्षमता की नई चीनी मिल एवं 27 मेगावाट को-जनरेशन प्लान्ट का लोकार्पण

मुख्य अतिथि
योगी आदित्यनाथ
मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश के कर-कमलों द्वारा

अध्यक्षता
सुरेश राणा
मंत्री, चीनी उद्योग एवं गन्ना विकास विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

गरिमामयी उपस्थिति
सुरेश पासी
राज्य मंत्री, चीनी उद्योग एवं गन्ना विकास विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

हरीश द्विवेदी सांसद, बस्ती	दयाराम चौधरी विधायक, सदर-बस्ती	रवि कुमार सोनकर विधायक, महादेवा
अजय कुमार सिंह विधायक, हरैया	संजय प्रताप जायसवाल विधायक, रुधौली	चन्द्र प्रकाश शुक्ल विधायक, कप्तानगंज

दिनांक: 21 नवम्बर, 2019 | समय: पूर्वाह्न 10:00 बजे | स्थान: चीनी मिल परिसर, मुण्डेरवा, बस्ती



कार चालक सीट बेल्ट अवश्य लगायें।
चीनी उद्योग एवं गन्ना विकास विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

Sunni Board divided over mosque land

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Even as the UP Sunni Central Waqf Board is firm on its stand of not filing a review or curative petition against the Supreme Court's verdict on Ayodhya title suit, its members are divided on accepting the 5-acre land for the mosque as ordered by the apex court.

The UP Sunni Central Waqf Board will meet here on November 26 to discuss the Supreme Court verdict on Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit.

Sunni Central Waqf Board chairman Zafar Farooqui on Wednesday reiterated that they were firm on their stand and would abide by the apex court decision and not file a review petition in the Supreme Court.

On the five-acre land ordered by the apex court for a mosque in Ayodhya, two members of the Sunni Central Waqf Board, Imram Mabood Khan and Abdul Razzaq Khan are not in favour of accepting alternative land for the mosque. Both are former chairman of UP Bar Council.

The other members of the

"THE EIGHT MEMBERS OF THE SUNNI CENTRAL WAQF BOARD WILL MEET AT THE HEADQUARTERS IN LUCKNOW AND DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH THE 5-ACRE LAND TO BE GIVEN FOR THE MOSQUE AS PER THE SUPREME COURT ORDER"

Sunni Central Waqf Board are yet to express their views on this issue. The Sunni Central Waqf Board has eight members. "The eight members of the Sunni Central Waqf Board will meet at the headquarters in Lucknow and decide what to do with the 5-acre land to be given for the mosque as per the Supreme Court order," Farooqui said here on Wednesday.

Without commenting on the decision of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board to file review petitions in the apex court before December 9, Farooqui said, "We are firm on our stand and will not file any review petition against

the apex court's ruling; there is no question of joining hands with the AIMPLB."

The Sunni Central Waqf Board chairman denied the contention of AIMPLB secretary Zafaryab Jilani that he (Farooqui) was invited to the Muslim Personal Law Board meeting held in Lucknow on November 17. Farooqui said he had no information about the decisions taken at the meeting of the AIMPLB.

"The court has accepted that the Babri mosque was constructed by Mir Baiqi, commander of Babur's army in 1528 and the mosque with three domes and inner courtyard was in the possession of

"THE APEX COURT'S ORDER FOR 5 ACRES ALTERNATIVE LAND FOR MOSQUE IS AN ATTEMPT TO DISTRACT THE ATTENTION FROM THE INFIRMITIES AND INACCURACIES IN THE JUDGEMENT. THE ORDER FOR FIVE ACRES LAND IS LIKE OFFERING BRIBE TO MUSLIMS"

Muslims from 1857 to 1949," Imran Mabood Khan said.

"The apex court's order for 5 acres alternative land for mosque is an attempt to distract the attention from the infirmities and inaccuracies in the judgement. The order for five acres land is like offering bribe to Muslims," he said.

He said the Supreme Court, despite recognising that the mosque was in possession of Muslims and regular prayers were offered there and also holding that the placing of idols of Lord Ram in the mosque on December 22, 1949 was unlawful, it had awarded the disputed land to the temple side.

Khan said the apex court's verdict was of the land and it had set a legal precedent as the Ayodhya verdict would give rise to fresh disputes of this nature.

Khan said he would not attend the meeting of the Sunni Waqf Board on November 26.

Abdul Razzaq Khan is also not in favour of accepting the 5-acre land for mosque. He also opposed the stand of Farooqui to not file a review petition.

"Filing a review petition is part of the legal process and Farooqui is opposing the review petition only to save his skin from the CBI inquiry into the affairs of Sunni Central Waqf Board," Abdul Razzaq Khan said.

"I will attend the Sunni Waqf Board meeting on November 26 to register my protest against the chairman for not filing the review petition," he said.

The other members of the Sunni Central Waqf Board are Mohammad Junaid Siddiqui (nominated by the state government), Abrar Ahmed who is Samajwadi Party MLA from Sultanpur, Adnan Farrukh Shah and Ahmad Ali.

Akhilesh slams govt for poor condition of roads in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday lashed out at the state government for the poor state of infrastructure, particularly the road network, in the state.

"The maintenance of roads in the state is so poor that it is difficult to make out whether there are potholes on roads or the roads are on potholes. The poor state of roads is the single biggest cause of fatal road accidents in the state in which precious lives are lost and serious injuries are sustained by several people every day," the former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh said.

Yadav added, "During the Samajwadi Party regime, a network of good quality roads was laid which has been spoiled by the present Bharatiya Janata Party government."

Drawing attention towards the contradictory statements of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his deputy Keshav Prasad Maurya, the SP chief said, "It is indeed ironical that one claims that the roads have been freed of potholes while the chief minister is issuing repeated orders for making roads pothole-free."

Yadav said, "The chief minister himself recently issued orders to make roads pothole-free by the end of November 30."

Earlier in March 2017,



soon after coming to power, Yogi Adityanath had directed officials to make all roads free of potholes within 100 days.

Maurya, who holds the Public Works Department portfolio, is responsible for the construction of state highways and their maintenance.

The SP president said the performance standard of the BJP government had so far been very poor. He said the BJP government in UP had completed more than half of its term and during this period its performance was very bad.

"It appears that the officers of the PWD are either not complying with the orders of their minister or they are misleading Keshav Prasad Maurya by giving him false information.

Listing the achievements of his government, the SP chief said that besides constructing the Agra-Lucknow Expressway, his government had made elevated road in Ghaziabad and built a network of four-lane roads across the state while the BJP government was busy claiming the works of the Samajwadi Party government as its own.

20 farmers sent to jail in Pilibhit for burning stubble

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath reprimanded officials of 10 districts for their failure to check stubble burning that was causing air pollution, the Pilibhit district authorities tightened the noose around farmers by sending 20 to jail and taking action against 17 lekhpals, suspending eight of them.

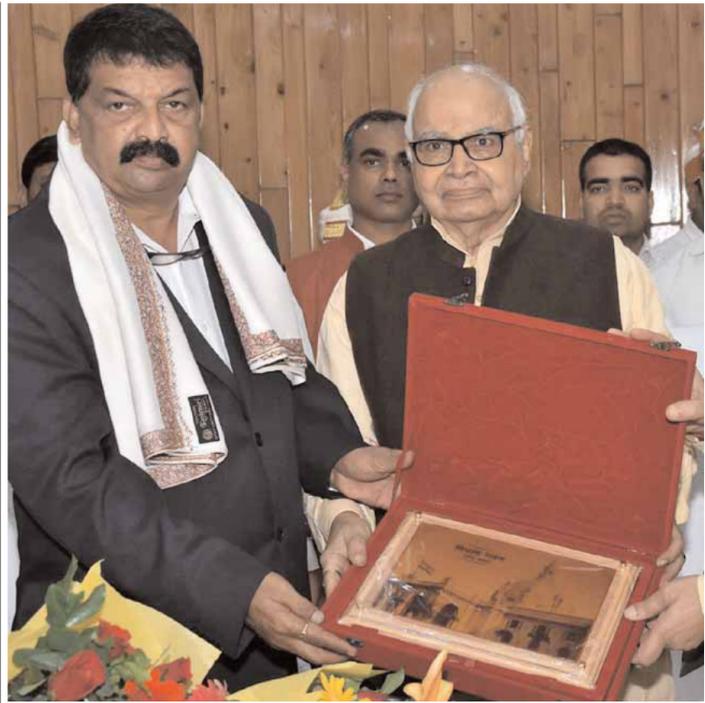
Taking stern action against the stubble burners, Pilibhit District Magistrate Vaibhav Srivastava, on Tuesday sent 15 farmers of Purnapur police station area and five of Madhotanda police station area to jail, confirmed a district official here on Wednesday.

Though the farmers alleged that they were not burning stubble and the district authorities, in order to cover up their lapses, had sent them to jail, the district magistrate said that none would be spared for violating the norms.

The district magistrate has suspended eight lekhpals, ordered departmental inquiry against five lekhpals and served showcause notices on four lekhpals. Besides, a police sub-inspector and two police constables have been sent to the police lines and the district magistrate himself is visiting the stubble burning-prone areas and asking the farmers not to burn their agriculture waste.

Already, FIRs have been registered against 850 farmers in Pilibhit and a fine of Rs 15 lakh has been imposed on them. The district authorities have already collected Rs 6 lakh of this fine so far.

Meanwhile, another report from Ballia quoting Sub-Divisional Magistrate (Sadar) Ashwini Srivastava said that FIR had been registered against seven farmers and a fine of Rs 26,000 slapped on them for burning stubble.



Uttar Pradesh Assembly Speaker Hriday Narayan Dilshet greeting Goa Assembly Speaker Rajesh Patnekar in Lucknow on Wednesday

Most veterans stay away from UPCC chief's meeting

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Majority of UP Congress veterans who came on a platform in Gomti Nagar recently to show their strength and a big section of party leaders who contested assembly or parliamentary elections stayed away from a meeting called by UPCC chief Ajay Kumar 'Lallu' here on Wednesday to garner maximum support for the proposed 'Bharat Bachao rally' in New Delhi on December 14.

Sources said the meeting was earlier cancelled by Lallu as he knew that majority of former MLAs and MPs would not attend the meetings chaired by him hence he also included the names of all leaders who contested assembly or parliamentary elections and called about 300 leaders to join the discussions for making the Delhi rally a big success.

Lallu also invited veteran Congress leader Pramod Tewari hoping that his name would force other leaders to attend the meeting. However, the meeting was attended by just 60-70 leaders, maximum of them being those who unsuccessfully contested the last elections.

Chairing the meeting, Lallu asked party leaders to hold meetings with district/city presidents of their respective areas and also hold discussions up to block/ward level to ensure maximum participation of people from UP in the 'Bharat Bachao rally'.

The rally will be led by party president Sonia Gandhi and other leaders and target the Central government for its failure on economic and other fronts, closure of big business establishments, unemployment, rising inflation.

In the meeting on Wednesday, besides Lallu and Pramod Tewari, the other prominent leaders who were present included Congress Legislature Party leader Aradhna Mishra 'Mona', former minister Pradeep Jain Aditya, former MP Zafar Ali Naqvi, Rajarampal, RK Chowdhary and Mohammed Mukim.

Four of a family die in bus-SUV collision

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Four members of a family were killed and several others were injured when a tourist bus collided head-on with an SUV in Baddapur police station area of Barabanki on Wednesday morning.

Barabanki Superintendent of Police RS Gautam said the victims were native of Reosa village in Sitapur district and were travelling on the SUV.

Eight people were critically injured in the accident and they were admitted to the KGMU Trauma Centre in Lucknow.

The SUV was returning from Lucknow along with a new-born baby and the woman who delivered the child.

The eight-day-old child was also injured in the mishap along with several passengers of

the bus. In a separate incident reported from Aligarh, a home guard was killed by unidentified assailants in Pali Mukimpur area, police said on Wednesday.

According to reports, the home guard, identified as Ashok Dixit (45) of Pali Mukimpur town, was on duty till 10 pm on Tuesday. While on his way back home, unidentified assailants attacked Dixit with sharp-edge weapon. His body was recovered from Bulapur road on Wednesday morning.

Sources said that the motive behind the murder was yet to be ascertained. The police registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem.

Further investigations are on.

In another incident report-

ed from Ghaziabad, a police constable allegedly committed suicide over some domestic issue in Modinagar area.

According to reports, constable Nitin Kumar Sharma (35) of Phaphran locality of Modinagar area, has joined police force in 2011. Sharma was currently posted as a PRB at Titawi police station in Muzaffarnagar and had been absent from duty since November 15.

He is said to have committed suicide by hanging himself on Tuesday night.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the deceased constable was not on good terms with his wife and hence, he may have taken the extreme step.

A report was lodged by the family members and the body was sent for autopsy.

Govt ropes in pvt agencies for soil testing

Lucknow (PNS): Uttar Pradesh Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi said that to ensure that farmers got the benefit of soil testing, many private agencies including private banks, had been roped in to conduct soil testing and advise farmers on the nutrients to be added in the soil.

"The beginning has been made with HDFC Bank, which will conduct free soil testing for farmers in 250 villages of Uttar Pradesh. This initiative aims at helping farmers understand their soil composition and nutrient quality," he said. The minister said that with soils testing, the farmers would learn about optimal use of fertilisers and the latest varieties of seeds to be used, enabling them to increase their crop yield.

Known as 'Unnati Ka Uphar — Mati Parikshan', this initiative will run for a full month.

At present, farmers have to travel long distances to the nearest testing facility for testing of their soil. This is time consuming as well as

expensive. "With private banks' participation, mobile soil testing solution vans will visit each village and test soil samples on site digitally," Shahi said. The farmers will be made aware of incorrect farming practices and told about techniques they can use to improve their soil nutrition.

Over 10,000 farmers of 250 villages will directly benefit from this month-long initiative. The 'Unnati Ka Uphar — Mati Parikshan' was launched in Meerut. HDFC Bank head, Branch Banking, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, Sanjeev Kumar, was present at the inaugural event.

"It is our bank's long-term endeavour to bring about a positive change in the society that we operate in. We are happy to announce that the soil testing and education programme will benefit farmers of Uttar Pradesh and bring in prosperity," Kumar said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that our Client intends to enter into a transaction in respect of land described herein as Schedule-A situated at Village- Raniganj Tehsil- Hamirpur, District- Hamirpur, Uttar Pradesh (Subject Lands). Any entity / person including any Bank or Financial Institution having or claiming any right, title, claim, benefit, demand or interest with respect to the Subject Lands or has any objection to the intended above-referred transaction by our Client, such entity / person may inform us in writing with documentary proof on the address mentioned below within a period of 15 (Fifteen) days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which it shall be presumed that no adverse right, title, interest, share, claim or demand of any nature whatsoever exists into or upon or in respect of the Subject Lands.

SCHEDULE-A- LAND DESCRIPTION
Gata/Khasra/Khas. (Area in Hectare)
404(2.2400), 416(1.8370), 405(0.2910), 415(1.8780)
Rudra Pratap Singh (Advocate)
FLAT NO. 301- A-CRISTAL
APARTMENT 509/150
OLD HYDERABAD, LUCKNOW

NOTICE

Please be informed that the original free hold deed date 31.10.1996 registered on Lucknow registrar 1st at book No. 1 Khand 3454 page 219/238 of my House No. 21462, Vivek Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow have been lost on 26 March 2019 near Krishna Nagar, Umang Gyan Chandani 205 Annapurna Apts. Fz. Rd. Lko.

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (C)DR.XI
ROOM NO. 308, VARUNALAYA PHASE-1, KAROL BAGH, NEW DELHI-110005
Telefax 011-23554487 / Email : eecd11.djb@nic.in

Short NIT NO. 03 (2019-20)
(PRESS TENDER)

S. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost in Rs.	Date of release of tender on e-procurement system	Last date/time for receipt of tender through e-procurement system
1.	Face lifting / renovation of A wing gallery and lift lobby at First Floor, Varunalaya Phase-II	25,15,268/-	20.11.2019 at 12:30 hours onwards	25.11.2019 upto 15:00 hours

Further details, in this regard, can be seen on Delhi Government web-site <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>. Any further corrigendum / addendum / clarification, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

ISSUED BY P.R.O (WATER)
Advt. No. J.S.V. 543/2019-20

Sd/-
EE (C)Dr.XI

DELHI JAL BOARD: DELHI SARKAR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SOUTH)-I,
OPPOSITE J-BLOCK MARKET, SAKET, NEW DELHI-110017

NIT NO. 56/(S-I) (2019-20)

S. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost/Tender Fees	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Last date/time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1.	Desilting of deep and silted up sewer lines manholes of Vasant Kunj Institutional area, Vasant Kunj Phase-2 against deficiency charges deposited by D.D.A. under EE (South)-I. (Re-invited)	Item Rate/ 65800/-	2019_DJB_184059_1 20.11.2019	10.12.2019 upto 3:00 PM

NIT along with all the terms & conditions is available on Web Site <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>

ISSUED BY P.R.O (WATER)
Advt. No. J.S.V. 547/2019-20

Sd/-
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SOUTH)-I

PRESS NOTICE

No.SSA/CW/KGBV-AUG-S.SALMARA/2018-19/12/2019/18208 Dated - 19/11/2019

The Mission Director, SSA, Assam, invites fresh bids for the following works from registered contractors under A.P.W.D.(Building) Registered Contractor [Class-I (A, B & C)] Assam, having experience of similar nature of work.

Details of the bid may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e. www.assamtenders.gov.in and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours from 20/11/2019(04:30 PM) to 29/11/2019(2:00 PM)

The bidders must be enrolled in www.assamtenders.gov.in

Package No	Name of Work	Approx. Value of Work	Time of completion	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	E.M.D. to be drawn in favour of	Tender Cost
20T	AUGMENTATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE (RCC G+1) FOR CLASS IX & X AT EXISTING KASTURBA GANDHI BALIKA VIDYALAYA (KGBV) BUILDING OF MANKACHAR, SOUTH SALMARA MANKACHAR DISTRICT	Rs. 64,26,700.00	12 (twelve) months	Rs.1,28,500.00 (for General) Rs.64,250.00 (for reserved Category)	The Mission Director, SSA, Assam, Guwahati-19	Rs. 3000.00

Sd/- Mission Director,
SSA, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

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Psychology student hangs self

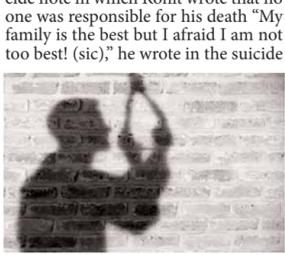
PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A post-graduate student of clinical psychology of a private university was found hanging from the ceiling in his rented room in Chinhat on Wednesday morning.

Police said a suicide note was recovered in which the student gave the reason for taking the extreme step.

According to Chinhat police, the post-graduate student, identified as Rohit (21) from Gopalganj district of Bihar, was found hanging in his room in Nizampur locality on Malhar road by his colleagues and they informed the police about it. "Rohit was found hanging from the ceiling by a rope tied around his neck," the police said.

The police said they recovered a suicide note in which Rohit wrote that no one was responsible for his death "My family is the best but I afraid I am not too best! (sic)," he wrote in the suicide



note. SHO of Chinhat said Rohit ended the letter with the sentence "I am sorry Juhie!"

He said it seems that he was emotionally attached to some girl Juhie.

The police said Rohit's classmates were questioned but they failed to explain any reason for which he ended his life. They said that Rohit was an average student.

His suicide note indicates that he was under pressure to perform to live up to the expectation of his parents. The family is reaching Lucknow and the police will talk to them to reach a conclusion.

Rohit's classmates were shocked as he was a student of clinical psychology which deals with assessment and treatment of mental illness and behavioural problem and was focusing on emotional disorders.

Doc: Smoking, pollution cause COPD

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Dr Surya Kant, head of pulmonary medicine department of King George's Medical University, said that the main reason for COPD were smoking (cigarettes, hukka), vehicular emission, air pollution and bio mass exposure.

On World COPD Day on Wednesday, a patient awareness camp was organised by the Respiratory Medicine department of KGMU.

Addressing the patients and their relatives, Dr Surya Kant pointed out that around 60 lakh people in Uttar Pradesh were suffering from COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease).

Dr Kant, who is president of National College of Chest Physicians, said that COPD was caused by long-term inhalation of smoke, dust particles etc. "Symptoms of this disease appear after 30 years of age. Out of all, the first being cough with expectoration in early morning (smokers cough). Gradually it becomes persistent for the whole year. As the disease progresses, the patient also becomes breathless," he said. Dr Kant said that COPD does not only affect the lungs but has serious implication on heart, liver and other organs.

"The patient gradually complains of loss of appetite and becomes fatigued. In India, the main reasons for COPD are smoking, vehicular emission, air pollution and bio mass exposure.

He said one could take preventive steps against COPD by giving up smoking, using cooking gas instead of wood for cooking food. He said to protect oneself from air pollution, one should use face mask, take steam inhalation and carry out respiratory exercises (Pranayam). The patient awareness programme was jointly organised by KGMU respiratory medicine department, Indian Chest Society and National College of Chest Physician.

Dr RAS Kushwaha emphasised on regular use of inhaler and also elaborated on treatment of COPD.

Brar to highlight Lucknow in Master Chef Season 6

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Ranbir Brar, the celebrity chef from Lucknow who will be part of the Master Chef Season 6, said that he would be highlighting Lucknow in the show.

Talking to 'The Pioneer', Brar said that being from Lucknow, he would not miss the chance for highlighting the state capital. He, however, admitted that the city does not require his efforts to promote it.

"Lucknow does not need me for promotion because it has both the character and integrity as well as culture of its own but it my habit that wherever I go I always promote my city," he said.

Brar said that in the Master Chef Season 6, if he got a chance he would demonstrate the cuisine of Lucknow.

Talking about the show, he said that what was new in the show this time was the focus on the "Indian-ness of the dishes".

"There will be emphasis on food and ingredients and cooking styles which come from the country. Last time, when I was a part of the panel of judges, the focus was only on the vegetarian food but this time all kinds of foods will be part of the competition," he said.

When asked why the season 6 was returning after a gap of two years, Brar said that time was required for complete preparations and research which was carried out.

On being queried whether the Master Chef would be able to attract the same kind of eyeballs as compared to the time when it was first launched considering the fact that there were umpteen number of people who had started their food



"LUCKNOW DOES NOT NEED ME FOR PROMOTION BECAUSE IT HAS BOTH THE CHARACTER AND INTEGRITY AS WELL AS CULTURE OF ITS OWN BUT IT MY HABIT THAT WHEREVER I GO I ALWAYS PROMOTE MY CITY"

channels on the social networking sites, Brar said Master Chef as the biggest platform would always attract attention. "It is a case of the more the merrier which means that when there is more content in the food space then as a content it is attracting the attention of the viewers," he added.

immensely in the field of food media.

"I don't think that there is anything bigger in the programming world than Master Chef. I myself have many shows which are running online," he added.

The celebrity chef said that the auditions for the Master Chef had already taken place in Lucknow.

The show is likely to start in the first week of December.

Reckless driving by truck driver claims two lives

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Reckless driving by a truck driver claimed the lives of two youths in Banthara early Wednesday morning.

Those killed in the accident were identified as Rohit (19) and Shaktiman (20) of Kallan Kheda village in Banthara.

As per reports, Rohit and Shaktiman were going to Kati Bagiya locality in Banthara on a motorcycle to receive their friend who had come from Delhi on Wednesday morning.

When they reached Mohan Road (near a soft drink manufacturing factory), a speeding truck coming from opposite direction knocked down the motorcycle and crushed both to death. The truck driver fled the scene after the mishap.

Some passers-by rushed the victims to a hospital where they were pronounced dead.

The police traced the address of the victims from the registration number of the motorcycle and contacted the family.

Later, Rohit's father Ram Kishan lodged a report with the police.

The police said Sub-Inspector Harinath was assigned the investigation. "Rohit worked as a private driver

while Shaktiman was a farmer. Rohit got a call from his friend who was coming from Delhi and he asked Shaktiman to accompany him to receive their friend," the police said.

DENGUE DEATH

A traffic head constable, Manik Chand, posted in Lucknow, fell victim to dengue.

Quoting the deceased head constable's wife, the police spokesman said Manik Chand was diagnosed as suffering from dengue and was admitted to Viveknand Hospital on November 13.

When Manik Chand's condition deteriorated, he was admitted in the ICU unit of Trauma Centre where he died.

FOUND DEAD

The body of a man identified as Rajendra aka Rajan (36) was found lying beside the railway tracks in Dilawar Nagar locality of Malihabad on Wednesday.

The deceased's brother Ram Prakash identified the body at the mortuary.

The police were informed by the station master of Malihabad about the death of the man in the morning.

The police later contacted the family of the deceased and his brother identified the body. The body was sent for autopsy.

Illicit liquor seized

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The enforcement team of Excise department, during the drive against spurious liquor, seized huge amount of illicit liquor, various types of equipment and vehicles in Farrukhabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar and Deoria districts. According to information received here, a joint team of Excise and UP Police recovered 1,350 cartons of illicit liquor in Farrukhabad that was being smuggled from Arunachal Pradesh. It also recovered 83 cartons of illicit liquor being smuggled from Haryana.

A case was registered against four persons held with the liquor.

Another joint team of Excise and UPP recovered 430 cartons of illicit liquor in Gautam Buddha Nagar and 203 cartons of Haryana manufactured illicit liquor in Deoria.

A case was registered against two persons arrested with the illicit liquor.

The arrival of 'winter guests' begins in the city

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow district has started receiving a number of migratory birds with the onset of winter.

Divisional Forest Officer (Awadh) Dr Ravi Kumar Singh while talking to *The Pioneer* said that most of these birds could be seen at Kathauta Jheel in the district.

Singh said that the number of the migratory birds was likely to increase in the coming days and by the end of November all birds would arrive.

Among the prominent species which have arrived include the Spoon Bill, Open Bill, Siberian cranes, painted storks, Demoiselle cranes.

The DFO said that most of the species had been spotted at Bakshi ka Talab and a number of wetlands in the district. "The birds have also started arriving at the Unnao sanctuary," he added.

On being asked whether the delay in winter had affected the coming of birds and their numbers, Singh said that this was not the case,



"The winter here will not impact them because these birds are coming from Siberia and they follow the cycle of the winter in those areas. They are



more impacted by the temperature as it exists in Siberia," he added.

The DFO said that the Forest department monitors the well-being of the migratory birds in the forest areas. "If these birds are injured treatment is given to them," he said.

Singh said that these birds boosted eco tourism because there were a number of enthusiasts who loved to take their photographs so that they could be highlighted in the bird exhibitions.

"There are a large number of enthusiasts who want to take their photographs and project them at the bird

"THE WINTERS HERE WILL NOT IMPACT THEM BECAUSE THESE BIRDS ARE COMING FROM SIBERIA AND THEY FOLLOW THE CYCLE OF THE WINTERS IN THOSE AREAS. THEY ARE MORE IMPACTED BY THE TEMPERATURE AS IT EXISTS IN SIBERIA"

festivals which have started being organised in the district" he added.

The DFO admitted that it was important to conserve the water bodies because if the water get polluted and the birds do not get their food, they would stop coming to the city.

LDA to give flats in Hardoi Road scheme in Jan

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Lucknow Development Authority has decided to give possession of flats in the Vrindavan housing scheme on Hardoi Road in the first week of January next year.

The LDA took this decision on Wednesday.

LDA Vice Chairman PN Singh said the first preference would be given to those who have been allotted flats when the Hardoi Road Vrindavan housing scheme was launched in 2009.

He said the second preference would be given to those whose properties were transferred to Vrindavan scheme from other residential colonies by the competent officer after completing all formalities.

Possessions in the Hardoi

Road Vrindavan housing scheme were to be given by 2016 but it was delayed for unknown reasons.

Interestingly, 900 home buyers were allotted flats in the scheme in the initial stage. Besides, there are 150 transfer cases.

The LDA will select 564 applicants to be given possession of flats through lottery draw.

LDA chief financial controller RK Singh said all effort would be made to maintain transparency in the lottery draw to leave no room for any doubt.

The exercise will be initiated by LDA property department by next week.

LDA said all those who have applied for flats in the housing scheme will get their property sooner or later.

Piped water in Gomti Nagar, Indira Nagar of poor quality

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) report on piped drinking water supplied in 20 cities of the country shows that water samples of Gomti Nagar and Indiranagar do not conform to several parameters for which the water was tested.

The report says that the samples of water taken from Gomti Nagar do not conform to five parameters out of 44, including presence of magnesium, total alkalinity, total hardness, coliform bacteria and E Coli.

The samples taken from Vijay Khand in Gomti Nagar do not conform to four out of 44 parameters which include total alkalinity, total hardness, presence coliform and E Coli.

सेंट्रल बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Regional Office
Central Bank of India 73, Hazratganj Lucknow

Notice
It is inform to public in general that auction notice published on 04.11.2019 and corrigendum on 06.11.2019 in Pioneer English in Lucknow and Varanasi Edition pertain to properties situated at dist. Lucknow, Barabanki, Amethi and Raibareilly mentioned under Sl. No. 1, to 12, now, on same terms and conditions auction date is deferred from 10.12.2019 to 23.12.2019 rest contents of auction notice will remain same.
Date : 21.11.2019 Authorised Officer, Central Bank of India

The samples taken from Tankiwala Park in Gomti Nagar do not conform to two out of 44 parameters which included coliform and E Coli.

The samples from Indira Nagar Sector 11, Mayawati Colony also do not conform to two parameters — presence of coliform and E Coli.

The samples from Indira Nagar Sector 14 do not conform to five parameters, including those of magnesium, total alkalinity, total hardness, coliform and E Coli.

The samples from Indra Nagar Sector 19 do not conform to two parameters, including coliform, E Coli. The samples of Vijay Khand 2 in Gomti Nagar conform to six parameters, including those of total dissolved solids, magnesium, total alkalinity, total hardness, coliform, and E Coli.

The samples from Vinay Khand 4 in Gomti Nagar do not conform to six parameters — total dissolved solids, magnesium, total alkalinity, total hardness, coliform, E Coli.

The samples from Vijayant Khand 4 in Gomti Nagar do not conform to 6 parameters — total dissolved solids, magnesium, total alkalinity, total hardness, coliform, E Coli. Samples from Vishesh Khand 4 in Gomti Nagar do not conform to six parameters, as per the report.

Officials from the BIS said that in keeping with the objectives of the Jal Jeevan Mission of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BIS, as per the directions of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs Food & PD, undertook a study of the quality of piped drinking water being supplied in the country.

In the first phase, the samples of drinking water were drawn from various locations across Delhi, and in the second phase, the samples were taken from 20 other state capitals. "The samples were taken from different locations from piped water being supplied by city municipal corporation/local bodies and sent for testing to the designated labs through couriers. The samples were

sent for testing as per IS 10500:2012 (Specification and Calibration laboratories) at NABL (National Accreditation Board) accredited labs across India, they said.

"Samples were sent for testing against 47 out of 48 parameters. These covered organoleptic and physical test, chemical tests, toxic substance, bacteriological, virological and biological test. In the third phase, samples from the state capitals of north eastern states and Smart Cities identified by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs were taken and are being tested. The results of these are expected by January 15, 2020. In the fourth phase, it is proposed to test samples drawn from all the district headquarters of the country and their testing is planned to be completed by August 15, 2020" the officials added. When contacted, General Manager of Jal Sansthan, SK Verma, said that he had still not read the report and would comment only after seeing the report.

बैंक ऑफ बड़ौदा Bank of Baroda POSSESSION NOTICE
BRANCH: ROSARB, SHAHJAHANPUR (For Immovable Property)

Whereas, The undersigned being the authorized officer of the BANK OF BARODA under the securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice to the following borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the notice, within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession on of the property described herein be below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the act read with Rule 8 of the Security interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 on the dates as mentioned below. The Borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal as with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the BANK OF BARODA for an amount and interest thereon. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions off sub-section (8) of section 13 of the act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

Sl. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower Date of Demand/Possession Notice	Description of Immovable Property	Outstanding Amount (₹)
1.	BORROWER: Rakesh Kumar Pandey S/o Lt. Shri Phool Chand Pandey, Moh. Bhatnagar Colony, Tehsil Lakhimpur, Dist. Lakhimpur Kheri. Demand Notice : 26.05.2017 Possession Notice : 18.11.2019	Property situated at plot No. 40A, being land of Khasra plot no. 172 and 173, situated at Rampur, NISF, Ward janikipuram, Lucknow. Aarea: 3000 Sq. ft. BOUNDARY: East: Plot of Deepak Agnihotri, West: Rasta 25 Ft. Wide, North: Araj Seegar, South: Rasta 25 Ft. Wide.	₹ 2,05,220/- as on 26.05.2017 + interest w.e.f. 11.08.2015 +other Expenses

Date: 21.11.2019, Place: Lucknow Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda

TOLL FREE HELP LINE NO. 1800-1800-151 ROAD SAFETY - LIFE SAFETY ROAD SAFTY WEEK (18 - 24 NOVEMBER, 2019)

A LITTLE CARE - MAKE ACCIDENTS RARE
Helmet reduces chance of grievous head injury by 70%

TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, UTTAR PRADESH

ParivahanUP @ParivahanUP 112 108 EMERGENCY

Monika Agnihotri takes charge as NER DRM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW
Dr Monika Agnihotri assumed charge as the new Divisional Railway Manager of North Eastern Railway's Lucknow Division on

Wednesday. She was earlier posted as Executed Director (Freight Marketing) in New Delhi.

Agnihotri has served as Senior Divisional Safety Officer and Senior Divisional Commercial Manager in North Eastern Railways.

She has also served as Director (Passenger Marketing) in Railway Board.

Meanwhile, a team working on the direction of Northern Railway's Divisional Railway Manager Sanjay Tripathi conducted a surprise checking and nabbed eight vendors selling food stuff and tea without any valid authority letter in train on Lucknow-Barabanki railway route on Wednesday.

The DRM said different teams had been deployed to conduct surprise checking in trains and platforms of railway stations under the Lucknow Division.

"The aim is to provide better amenities to the passengers," he said.

Meanwhile, the teams conducted checking in different trains realised penalties amounting to ₹1.87 lakh from passengers found travelling without ticket/irregular tickets.

कार्यलय अखिल अमित, विद्युत कार्यशाला मण्डल, पूर्वांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि, पूर्वीय तल भेलुर पावर हाउस, वाराणसी। निविदा विस्तार सूचना पूर्व प्रकाशित निविदा संख्या 92, 97 एवं 98/ईडब्ल्यूएससीवा/19-20 जो कि जिला मुख्यालय छोड़कर 10 के.वी.ए. से 180 के.वी.ए. क्षमता के क्षतिग्रस्त परिवर्तकों को बदलने हेतु ई-टेंडरिंग के माध्यम से दिनांक 20.11.2019 को डाली जानी थी पर्याप्त निविदा प्राप्त न होने के कारणवश उक्त निविदा पुनः ई-टेंडरिंग के माध्यम से दिनांक 25.11.2019 को 13.00 बजे तक डाली जायेगी एवं दिनांक 25.11.2019 को 16.00 बजे खोली जायेगी। (आशु कालिया) अखिल अमित, विद्युत कार्यशाला मण्डल पूर्वोपनिवेश वाराणसी। पत्रांक-1671, दिनांक-20.11.2019 "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाये"

SCHOOLSCAN

ICSQCC-2019



City Montessori School is organising a four-day International Convention on Students' Quality Control Circles (ICSQCC-2019) from November 27 at CMS Kanpur Road auditorium. Renowned quality experts and students from Australia, Bangladesh, China, Ireland, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nepal, Qatar, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Thailand, USA, UK, UAE and India will be participating and enlightening the audience with their presentations. Besides this, the student teams from various countries will also participate in various contests including case study presentation, collage, quiz, debate, poster and slogan writing and street play etc.

SANSKRIT COMPETITION

The Seth MR Jaipuria School conducted the Bhavani Bharti Sanskrit Inter-school Competition. The competition was based on Bhavani Bharti, an original work in Sanskrit by Sri Aurobindo. 14 schools from Barabanki, Lucknow, Kanpur and Kolkota participated in the unique event. Chief guest Avnish Agarwal

enlightened the audience about Sri Aurobindo's early life and the turbulent times that gave birth to this beautiful poetry. The event also witnessed eminent personalities and scholars of Sanskrit language. The competition was divided into three levels recitation of bhavani bharti shlokas with their meaning, recitation of bhavani bharti shlokas with music instruments and dramatic representation of the bhavani bharti shlokas through a skit.

The winners of the event were Riya Modi from Seth MR Jaipuria (Navsrijan), Ishita Tripathi from Pooran Chand Vidya Niketan, Kanpur and Aayushi Pandey from CMS Gontinagar. The championship trophy went to Seth MR Jaipuria. Army Public School, Nehru Road and Pooran Chand Vidya Niketan, Kanpur finished second and third respectively.



CITYBRIEFS



CAMPAIGN

In the wake of International Children's Day, Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation along with UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) ran a campaign at metro stations in the city which concluded on Wednesday. The week long drive supported the issue of child rights protection with special emphasis on helping them meet their basic needs and expand opportunities for complete development of their talent. Earlier this week it was launched at Hazratganj Metro Station to mark the 30th anniversary of the 'Convention on the Rights of the Child'. LMRC officials said that as a part of the campaign, five metro stations of LMRC including the Hazratganj Metro Station took the blue hue with decorative lighting. Photo booths were installed at all the metro stations, volunteers posted at these

photo booths encouraged visitors to click their pictures and support the cause. They informed the visitors about the need and purpose of the campaign.

DISTRIBUTION

University Polytechnic, Integral University Lucknow, organised its diploma distribution ceremony on Wednesday in the central auditorium of Integral University. 484 students from various branches of diploma in the fields of engineering, mechanical, electrical, computer science, civil, automobile and architecture were awarded with gold, silver medals and the customary diploma certificate. Among other dignitaries, the ceremony witnessed the presence of University Polytechnic Integral University principal KM Moeed, Controller of Examination Abdul Rahman Khan, advisor to principal M Ashraf Rizvi.

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No. M/301/IZNS/OT-19

E-Tenders for the work described below are invited by CWM, North Eastern Railway, Izatnagar for and on behalf of the President of India with Eligibility Criteria as mentioned in tender document.

S. No.-1, Brief Description of work: Repair and Painting work of floor, Body and Door of 960 Nos. BCN series wagons in 24 months at Mechanical Workshop, Izatnagar (As per Scope of work) Approx. Cost (In Rs.): ₹ 7,38,24,000/-, Earnest Money (In Rs.): ₹ 5,19,100/- Cost of Tender Document: ₹ 10,000/-, Duration of Work: 24 Months, Date of opening of tender: 20-12-2019 at 15:30 Hrs.

Note:- (1) The complete information along with tender booklet of above E-Tenders will be available/uploaded since 17:00 Hrs. of 18-11-2019 and shall be remain on website www.ireps.gov.in upto 15:00 hrs. on due date 20-12-2019 of tender opening. **(2)** Bids other than those in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with Class-III Digital Signature Certificate issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. **(3)** Rates into offer sheet page online duly signed digitally shall be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form/Letter head if attached by vendors shall be straightly ignored and shall not be considered. **(4)** Payment of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and Tender Document Cost (TDC) in respect of E-Tendering shall be accepted through net banking or payment gateway only.

Dy. CME (Plant) Mechanical CPRO/Yantrik-146 Workshop, Izatnagar
About any passenger amenity complaint SMS on Mob. No.-0979484595
Never travel on roof and foot boards.

U.P. RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LIMITED, OBRA THERMAL POWER STATION, OBRA-SONEBHADRA Extension Notice E-Tender No. : 07/SE-IBTPS/BMD-I/2019-20 NAME OF WORK :

Work of radiography of HP weld joints during breakdown maintenance of boiler of unit no.-9, 10 & 11, 3X200MW, BTPS, Obra. TENDER No. : T-07/SE-IBTPS/BMD-I/2019-20 ESTIMATED COST OF WORK : Rs. 5.37 (Rs. Five Lakh Thirty Seven Thousand) only. Last Date and Time For Submission of e-Bids (Technical and Financial) at e-procurement website <http://etender.up.nic.in> : 27.11.2019 up to 18:00 hrs. Last Date and Time For Submission of uploaded requisite Hardcopy of Tender fee, Earnest Money and tender Document in the Undersigned Office : 28.11.2019 up to 17:00 hrs. Date And Time of Opening of E-Bids : 29.11.2019 up to 16:00 Hrs. Place of Opening of e-Bids : Office of Superintending Engineer, Operation & Mechanical Maintenance Circle-I, 'B' Thermal Power Station, Obra-Sonebhadrha Address for Communication : Superintending Engineer, O&MMC-I, BTPS, Obra, Sonebhadrha. U.P. - 231219. E-mail Address: se.ommc_1.btps.obra@uprvnl.org Bid Document Cost : Rs. 500.00+ 90.00 (GST) = Rs. 590.00 Earnest Money : Rs. 10,740.00 (Rs. Ten Thousand Seven Hundred Forty Only) Note:- The tender documents shall not be sold. Tender specification is available on <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Tender will be accepted online only. SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, O&MMC-I, 'B' T/PS, OBRA No. 289 Date 20.11.2019 "SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF NATION"

NBW issued against Azam Khan, family

Rampur: The Rampur district court has issued non-bailable warrants against Samajwadi Party MP Mohd Azam Khan and his family. The matter is related to the dispute in birth documents of Azam Khan's son Abdullah Azam, who is an SP MLA.

Azam Khan, his wife and son Abdullah Azam were to appear in court on Tuesday but neither of them appeared after which the court issued the non-bailable warrants against them. The next date of hearing has been fixed for December 2. BJP leader Akash Saxena had filed a case against Azam Khan and his family under Sections 420, 467, 468, 471 of IPC. Abdullah Azam had reportedly given different birth certificate in his passport and then the election affidavit and the case was filed against the family on this issue. There are over 84 criminal cases pending against Azam Khan and his family in Rampur. These cases are related to land grabbing, encroachment, book theft, statue theft, power theft, buffalo theft, goat theft and forgery. **IANS**

STORES E-PROCUREMENT

TENDER NOTICE No. S/15/2019 Dated, 19-11-2019. (1) All tenders have been uploaded on Indian Railways E-Procurement portal (IREPS) - www.ireps.gov.in. For details & necessary guidelines for quoting against e-tender. Please visit IR-E-Procurement portal. (2) The prospective tenderers are advised to get them registered on the website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> on line. This registration is mandatory for participation in e-tendering and is free of charge. (3) Offers are to be submitted online only. Offers sent/submitted against such e-tenders through e-mail, post/fax or in person will be rejected summarily without any consideration. (4) This notice is for information during initial phase only. In future, no such notice shall be published. Vendors are requested to get registered with IREPS and visit portal www.ireps.gov.in for future tenders. (5) Please submit offers online for the following Materials: **SN-1. Tender No. 30/19/0103/OT/034/19, Brief Description:** Footstep arrangement. Quantity: 1800 Nos, Closing/Opening date: 16-12-2019. **SN-2. Tender No. 30/19/0103/OT/034/19, Brief Description:** Kit of Brake Shoe adjuster. Quantity: 1000 Set, Closing/Opening date: 16-12-2019. **SN-3. Tender No. 37/18/0384/OT/035/19, Brief Description:** Knuckle for CBC/BG. Quantity: 2320 Nos, Closing/Opening date: 18-12-2019. For PCMM

U.P. POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LTD.

E-Tender Notice No. 17/ETDR/2018-19 Sealed Tenders in two parts (as detailed in tender specifications) are hereby invited from experienced contractors/transporters and vehicle owners up to 13.00 hrs. of 22-12-2019 and will be opened on same day at 15.30hrs. publicly in the office of under signed for Hiring of one no. Taxi Quota, diesel driven light vehicle for the use of Sub-Divisional Officer-II under ETD, Raebareilly, along with driver for Nine Month. The tender document can be received/downloaded upto previous working day of the opening day from website www.upptcl.org, by online payment of Rs. 236.00 (Tender cost Rs. 200.00 + GS 18% Rs. 36.00 Total Rs. 236.00) (NON - REFUNDABLE) the required earnest money Rs. 2000.00 (Rupees two Thousand Only) which has to be deposited through RTGS in the current account (Punjab National Bank, Civil Line Raebareilly, A/C No.: 4655005800000018, IFSC Code : PUNB0465500) of this office as detailed. Part-I of the tender will contain the receipt of earnest money and part II will contain rates, terms and conditions and other relevant details. Without earnest money tender will not be accepted. In case of holiday on notified opening day, the tender will be opened on the next working day at the same time. Undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof. **Executive Engineer, Electricity Transmission Division, Raebareilly, No. 652, Date: 20.11.2019, "SAVE ELECTRICITY FOR NATION"**

BANARASHINDU UNIVERSITY ROW Muslim prof's father sings bhajans, offers namaz

PTI ■ JAIPUR

The group of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) students protesting against the appointment of a Muslim at their Sanskrit department might just change their minds if they visited the professor's father.

At a temple in premises of Shree Ramdev Gausahala Chetanya Dham in Bagru, 35 kms from the Rajasthan capital, Ramzan Khan participates in the aarti, sitting at a harmonium and singing a bhajan.

The atmosphere there is in sharp contrast to the protest by some students at the BHU. They say only a Hindu can teach Sanskrit. But a visit to Bagru, where the family lives in a modest three-room house, reveals that the professor grew up in an atmosphere immersed in Sanskrit and "Hindu traditions".

His father Ramzan Khan himself holds the Shastri qualification in Sanskrit, composes religious songs and performs 'gau sewa' at the nearby cattle shed. At the same time, he visits the mosque and offers namaz.

The local Hindu community as well as his own relatives are okay with this. "I was very happy when my son was appointed at the prestigious BHU. The protest by students is unfortunate and I would like to urge the agitating students to recognise my son and see what kind of background he has," he said.

"My son wanted to learn Sanskrit like me so I got him admission at the school. He had the blessings of the teachers, acquired a high qualification and got selected at BHU," Khan told PTI on Wednesday.

"I am confident that if the students listen to him with patience and see his family background, they would be convinced and satisfied," he added. Ramzan Khan has had a better deal than his son.

"I never faced discrimination on the basis of religion. We all live in brotherhood. I go to the mosque and often offer namaz, I go to the temple and do Krishna bhakti and gau sewa," he said. He said Sanskrit runs through his veins.

"My father also used to sing songs at temples. I learnt this from him. He made me learn Sanskrit and I also started dedicating time for gau sewa, and also composed songs. My time goes in Krishna and Bhagwad bhakti," he said.

At temples, he sings songs dedicated to Rama, Krishna, Shiva and other Hindu deities. Singing bhajans at temples and events like "jagrans" is also his source of livelihood.

Hindu seers in the area have come out in support of the family after the BHU row.

"This is very condemnable that a per-



Ramzan Khan, father of Feroze Khan, sings bhajans at a temple near Jaipur

BHU students continue protest, Muslim professor feels "insulted"

IANS ■ VARANASI

The students' protest against the appointment of a Muslim professor in the Sanskrit Vidya Dharma Vignyan in the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) entered its 14th day on Wednesday with the students refusing to give up on their demand.

The BHU administration continues to maintain that the appointment of professor Feroze Khan is in accordance with the prescribed norms and there is no question of his removal.

The BHU administration has issued a statement, saying, "The idea behind the establishment of the university was to contribute in nation-building by provid-

ing equal opportunity of study and teaching to all deserving people without any discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, gender and sect."

The statement also said that Khan's appointment was a unanimous decision made by a selection committee under a transparent process.

The Muslim professor Feroze Kahn, meanwhile, said that he felt "insulted" by the incident and added that he would have never applied for the job if the university had mentioned in the advertisement that they did not want a Muslim.

Students sitting on dharna, on the other hand, have started reciting Hanuman Chalisa to underline their opposition to a Muslim faculty member.

Lal Sharma, a priest from another temple. "He too is a Sanskrit scholar, serves cows and loves them," the priest added. While Ramzan Khan meets people who call on him following the BHU protests, other family members appear reluctant to do so.

"I only want to convey that people should see the qualifications of my son instead of judging him on the basis of religion," he said.

Akhilesh responds to Shivpal's offer with a cold silence

IANS ■ LUCKNOW

The olive branch extended by Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party Lohia (PSP) president Shivpal Yadav to his estranged nephew and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav has, apparently found no takers.

More than 24 hours after Shivpal Yadav put forward a proposal for unity on Mulayam Singh Yadav's birthday on November 22, Akhilesh Yadav has chosen to completely ignore the overture.

Shivpal had suggested that the birthday celebrations of Mulayam Singh should be held in their native village Sefai in Etawah and the entire family should come together for the event. Akhilesh, however, has directed all district units of his party to celebrate the occasion in Lucknow, sources said.

It is not yet known if Mulayam Singh would opt for Lucknow or Etawah on his birthday. According to a former SP minister, known for his proximity to Akhilesh Yadav, "Too much water has flowed under the bridge. Shivpal Yadav has damaged the Samajwadi Party in the Lok Sabha elections by cutting into our votes and paying the way for BJP's victory. It will not be easy to forget all the bad blood that

prevails between the two family members and their parties."

The mood is upbeat in the Samajwadi Party following its victory in three assembly seats in the recent assembly by-elections. "We have proved that we are the main opposition party in UP and our victory has given clear indications that SP is firmly on the comeback path. Akhilesh is now working towards strengthening the party organisations and nothing will divert his attention from the job right now," the former Minister added.

Sources close to the Yadav clan also admit that reconciliation at this stage would not be able to wipe off the mistrust between Akhilesh and Shivpal and their followers.

"The divide is too deep now. Netaji (Mulayam) made several attempts but could not bring the uncle and nephew together. Other family members like Prof Ram Gopal Yadav are also a party in the strife. Difference between Akhilesh and his sister-in-law Aparna has also widened. A political reunion seems difficult but we should try to bring the family together. After all, there have been cases when members in a family belong to different political parties but come together for family events," said a source close to the family.

Office Project Manager, Construction Unit Uttarakhand Peyjal Sansadhan Vikas Evam Nirman Nigam
Ghingsharikhat, Rankhet, Distt. Almora
E-Mail: pmrankhet@rediffmail.com Fax & Ph. No.: 05966-220690
Letter No. 1640 / NIVIDA/2019 Date: 08-11-2019

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTICE
The Project Manager Construction Unit Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam Rankhet (Almora) 263645, on behalf of Chairman Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam invites sealed item rate tender on e-Government Procurement System (e-GPS) portal i.e. <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>, for The following Works.

Sl. No.	Name Of Work	Cost of Work (in lacs)
1	Construction of Primary School Building and apartment work at Bamori Tarula.	28.06 Lacs
2	Construction of Primary School Building and apartment work at Bheema devi.	28.29 Lacs.
3	Construction of Primary School Building and apartment work at Manihar Matela.	28.29 Lacs.

The tender form can be downloaded from e-Government Procurement System (e-GPS) portal i.e. <http://www.uktenders.gov.in> from 09.11.2019 at 10:00 hrs. to 25.11.2019 at 17:00 hrs. Other information can be seen in tender form or office notice board or obtained from office or phone no. 05966 220690 of office of tender inviting authority.
Letter no.-1719/tender/255, Dt- 18.11.19 **PROJECT MANAGER**

Power staff demand govt guarantee for their PF

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Power Employees Joint Action Committee has demanded that the state government issue a gazette notification taking responsibility for the payment of provident fund of the power employees as the Reserve Bank of India has superseded the board of the DHFL and appointed an administrator to run the management of the company.

The RBI has superseded the board of DHFL owing to governance concerns and defaults by the housing finance company in meeting various payment obligations.

Shaileendra Dubey, convener of the joint action committee, said here on Wednesday that the UP government was now left with no option but to issue a categorical undertaking for payment of the provident fund and contributory provident fund of the power employees.

The UP Power Employees Provident Fund Trust had invested Rs 4,100 crore as fixed deposits in the scam tainted housing finance company.

The DHFL has paid back some amount on maturity of fixed

deposit by Power Employees PF Trust but it still owes over Rs 2,100 crore to power employees trust.

The DHFL has defaulted in payment of Rs 15,000 crore to fixed deposit holders, Rs 38,000 crore to PSU banks. The total debt on DHFL is a whopping Rs 88,000 crore which it owes to banks, mutual funds, pension funds, National Housing Bank, depositors and fixed deposits.

The RBI has appointed R Subramaniakumar, former managing director and chief executive of Indian Overseas Bank, as the administrator.

This would be the first housing finance company that is heading to bankruptcy tribunal under new rules of Insolvency and Liquidation Proceedings of Financial Service Providers and Application to Adjudicating Authority) Rules, 2019, notified on November 15.

The move comes after the Centre on November 15 empowered the RBI to refer stressed non-banking finance companies and housing finance companies having assets worth at least Rs 500 crore to insolvency court under National Company Law Tribunal.

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE
Divisional Railway Manager (Signal & Telecommunication)/Northern Railway/Lucknow division/Lucknow, invites open tender for and on behalf of President of India invites E-tenders in Single pack system from the experienced & established contractors satisfying minimum eligibility criteria for the under noted work:

Tender No. & Name of work 189/S&T/2018-19 (4 Call) "Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract of IPS-Amara Raja make over Lucknow Division for three years"

Approximate cost Rs. 2,02,39,656.19

Cost of tender form Rs. 10,000/-

Earnest Money Rs. 2,51,200/-

Completion period Three Year

Last date and time of submission of tender document 23.12.2019 15:00 Hrs.

Website particulars and notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen. www.ireps.gov.in Office of the Sr. DS/TE, DRM office Complex Northern Railway, Lucknow

- The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for participating in the e-tender system.
- For all terms and conditions please refer tender document.
- No manual offers are acceptable.
- Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable online through net banking or payment gateway only.

T. Notice No. 713-Sig/TN-189(4th Call)/S&T/19-20 Dated - 19.11.2019 3709/19
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Raut complains about seat allotment in RS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Wednesday attacked the BJP-led NDA Government and also wrote to Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu saying moving him to the fifth row is an attempt to humiliate him and the party.

In a letter addressed to Naidu, Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut said, "I think that this decision was taken by someone deliberately to hurt the sentiments of Shiv Sena Party and to suppress our voice."

"I may remind you that even when NDA was in Opposition, I was allotted a 3rd row seat in the House in view of my seniority in Rajya Sabha, but now, what I feel, it is clearly shows that my seat has been allotted in the fifth row intentionally to humiliate me and my party's status in the House," Raut said.

Sanjay Raut has said he fails to understand the reason behind "this unwarranted step

of re-allocation of seats since there is no formal announcement about the removal from NDA".

The senior party leader and MP has further said that the move has hurt the dignity of the Parliament and has demanded that he be allotted a seat in any of the first three rows according to the decorum of the House.

Raut has also raised questions on Venkaiah Naidu's conduct of Rajya Sabha and said, "Chairperson is above party affiliations and should take decisions in a non-partisan manner".

In his letter to the Rajya Sabha chairman, Raut has also said that there is no reason behind this seat change as Shiv Sena is still officially a part of NDA.

He has said there has been no "formal announcement about the removal from NDA". Allies Shiv Sena and BJP



Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut

fought the Maharashtra assembly elections together and got a clear mandate to form the government. However, soon after the results were announced, the two parties struggled over power sharing and later they severed ties.

Both the parties has since then made several vicious attacks to blame each other for the stalemate over Government formation in Maharashtra. Shiv Sena has even removed its lone minister in the NDA Government at the Centre in order to facilitate talks with arch rivals NCP and Congress.

Congress seeks resumption of SPG security cover for Gandhis

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Anand Sharma on Wednesday demanded in the Rajya Sabha restoration of the elite SPG security cover to the party president Sonia Gandhi and her family as also former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh by "rising above partisan politics."

Senior BJP leaders, however, maintained the decision to withdraw the SPG cover of Gandhi family and Singh was taken by the Home Ministry based on changed threat perception.

Earlier this month, the Centre replaced the Special Protection Group (SPG) security cover given to Sonia Gandhi, her son Rahul Gandhi daughter Priyanka Gandhi Vadra by according them 'Z-plus' security category of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). Singh's SPG cover was withdrawn in August.

Raising the issue during the Zero Hour in the House, veteran Congress MP Sharma said there was a clear evaluation of threat perceptions to the four leaders and withdrawal of SPG cover makes them vulnerable.

"It is the responsibility of the state to protect its leaders," he asserted, while pointing out that the Congress-led UPA Government had not disturbed SPG protection of former Prime Ministers, including that of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and also of other protectees.

The security cover was neither diluted nor withdrawn during the 10-years of UPA rule, Sharma further said. Underscoring that after withdrawal of the SPG cover to Gandhis and Singh, there are concerns which are well founded, Sharma said, "We would urge the Government that these issues of personal safety, security and lives of our leaders have to be beyond partisan political considerations."

"Please rise above that. Review and restore (SPG security cover). That would be in national interest, otherwise intention will be questioned today, tomorrow and in the future," he told the House.

Defending the Government's decision to downgrade the security cover, senior BJP MP Subramanian Swamy said the decision has been taken by the Home Ministry, and

moreover the threat perception to the Gandhis has disappeared with the end of the LTTE in Sri Lanka." Threat perceptions have always been the judgement of the Home Ministry. It has been always been a special committee in the Home Ministry which decides.

If there is any question about it, one can go to court and challenge it," Swamy said. Swamy further said the threat originally arose out of the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). "That issue has disappeared because of two reasons," Swamy said. "First there is no LTTE and second the 'attitude' of protectees who have been asking for reduction of punishment of those involved in the assassination and even Sonia Gandhi had written to the President of India in this regard. Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu said he too was not in favour of reduction in punishment. Meanwhile, Congress youth-wing members on Wednesday burnt the effigy of Home Minister Amit Shah to protest the withdrawal of SPG security cover of the Gandhi family.

Rahul questions media silence over 10K tribals' detention in Jharkhand

"Our 'sold out' media may have lost its voice; as citizens can we afford to?"

Rahul Gandhi



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday hit out at the media after 10,000 tribals in Jharkhand were reportedly charged under the "draconian" sedition law, saying it should have raised a "storm" but it did not.

"That any Govt could slam the draconian 'sedition' law on 10,000 Adivasis, fighting against State oppression, should have shocked the conscience of our nation & raised a media storm. But it hasn't," Rahul tweeted.

He also slammed the media for not raising it properly. "Our 'sold out' media may

have lost its voice; as citizens can we afford to?" Rahul tweeted. According to a report, 10,000 adivasis were booked under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code by Jharkhand police.

The case relates to the Pathalgadi movement in Jharkhand's Khunti district where engraved stones were installed in villages in 2017 granting special autonomy to tribal areas under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution.

The police filed cases and levelled sedition charges against 10,000 tribals, as per the media reports. Jharkhand will go to polls from November 30 in five phases.

WhatsApp expresses regret over Pegasus snooping row

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

WhatsApp has written to the Government expressing "regret" over the Pegasus snooping row, and has assured that it is taking all security measures to address concerns. Senior Government officials on Wednesday said that the Information Technology Ministry asked WhatsApp to reinforce its security wall, and that no more breaches at the messaging platform will be tolerated. Earlier in the morning, in response to a question in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, IT Minister

Ravi Shankar Prasad said Cybersecurity agency CERT-In has issued a notice to WhatsApp seeking details on targeting of mobile phones of

SPYWARE WAS DEVELOPED BY ISRAEL-BASED NSO GROUP

Indian citizens by Israeli spyware Pegasus.

Meanwhile, the parliamentary standing committee, headed by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, met here to examine the WhatsApp snooping issue. As per the notice issued by the Lok Sabha secretariat for the meeting, the panel will be briefed by representatives of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of Home Affairs and Department of Atomic Energy

on the subject - "Citizens' data security and privacy".

Tharoor, who heads the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology, had written a letter to the other panel members, saying the alleged use of technology for snooping on Indian citizens was a matter of "grave concern" and it would be discussed at the next meeting of the committee on November 20.

Last month, the Facebook-owned company had showed that Indian journalists and human rights activists were among those globally spied upon by unnamed entities using Pegasus spyware. According to WhatsApp, the spyware was developed by Israel-based NSO Group and

had been used to snoop on about 1,400 users globally, including 121 users from India.

Following the Government's notice seeking more information on the attacks, WhatsApp had responded saying it had alerted the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) in September that 121 Indian users had been targeted by Pegasus.

A WhatsApp spokesperson, in an e-mailed statement, said the company is deeply committed to protecting the privacy of its users in India "by providing industry-leading security for all messages and calls and by staying ahead of advanced threats to user security". WhatsApp has over 400 million users in India.

MPs raise concern on Surrogacy Bill clauses

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

While supporting most of the provisions of the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill 2019, Rajya Sabha members on Wednesday expressed reservation in clauses which mandates that only a close relative can be a surrogate mother and provisions of five years of marriage for commissioning parents.

Cutting across the party line, they sought modifications in provisions such as time frame for abortion, time limit of age and prior informed consent, among others. Some of the members also sought provisions for allowances and insurance along with maternity leave for the surrogate mother, besides relaxation in num-

bers of surrogacy.

The Bill was introduced in the Upper House on Tuesday by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan. It has been passed by the Lok Sabha in the Monsoon Session.

Participating in the debate, Jairam Ramesh (Congress) said that it was a "very complicated bill" and the Government should get an amended bill passed after considering the suggestions of the members.

"It is very complicated bill. We all agree that surrogacy should be regulated but in what form, it is still debated," he said, adding that the bill should have come after the Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) bill as the Government is "dealing with surrogacy but not dealing with

the technology of surrogacy," he said.

P Wilson (DMK) said the bill has provisions for permission for abortion within 90 days, but sometimes there are cases of medical emergency, and surrogate mother cannot wait for such period.

There should be provision of post-approval as well, he said while Vijaysai Reddy of the YSRCP, while supporting the bill, sought clarity as in which close relatives of the couple opting for surrogacy could be considered for the procedure under the provisions of the bill.

Manoj Kumar Jha (BJD) pointed out that the bill was silent on same-sex couples and people who were in live-in relationships while Aam Aadmi Party's Sushil Kumar Gupta

said the bill in the current form would end up surrogate mothers exploitation.

Vikas Mahatme of the BJP said that with passing of the bill in Parliament, the exploitation of poor surrogate mothers would end in the country while Congress's Ameer Yajnik said the bill is much needed but in the current form contains various gaps.

Binoy Viswam (CPI), D P Vats (BJP), Banda Prakash (TRS), Chhaya Verma (Congress), C P Thakur (BJP), Vijila Sathanath (DMK) Lal Singh Vadodia, Gopal Singh (BJP), Harshvardhan Singh Durgapur (BJP), Gopal Narayan Singh (BJP) and Jugal Singh Mathurji (BJP) also participated in discussion on the issue.

Sena MP questions 'strict rules' for building in Defence areas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As Members in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday questioned 'strict rules' for construction or renovation of houses around the defence establishments or even in the vicinity of residential colonies of armed forces in the cities, the Government informed them that it was revising no-objection guidelines for buildings and ensure that security is not compromised while accommodating development needs.

Shiv Sena member Rahul Shewale said in the Lok Sabha during the Question hour that he was unable to repair his house due to restrictions on building construction in the vicinity of defence establishments. He also sought that the definition of national security should be relaxed at.

"I am an MP and my father was a Naval officer. But I am unable to repair my own house," said Shewale whose party had recently split with the BJP in Maharashtra over the issue of

Government formation in the State. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, a former Defence Minister in the last Modi-Government, said there is "no conflict" between civilians and armed services on the issue.

In October 2016, the Defence Ministry had issued a circular regarding guidelines for issue of No Objection Certificate (NOC) for building constructions. As per the guidelines, Army stations requiring NOC from the Local Military Authority (MLA) within distances specified have been identified.

It is a "sensitive issue" but the situation is not that no permissions have been given for projects, said Sitharaman who was responding to certain supplementaries as Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was not present in the House. The House was discussing a question about defence establishments and restrictions on buildings in their vicinity.

There are projects that are

getting clearances. After 2017, as many as 22 proposals related to Mumbai were received and out of them, only one is under examination. Seven projects were given permission, she added.

"Without hesitation, permissions were given," the Minister said even as she stressed that national security cannot be put in danger. The minister said during her tenure, she had six meetings on the issue and assured that matter is "almost nearing the stage of finalisation".

"342 establishments of Indian Army have been identified under the circular dated October 21, 2016. No establishment of Air Force, Navy and other establishments of Army have been identified," Minister of State for Defence Shripad Naik said in a written reply.

"The matter is being monitored to ensure that the security of defence establishments does not get jeopardised while accommodating development needs," Naik said.

Lok Sabha MPs demand strict action against chit fund firms, promoters

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

While passing the Amendments to Chit Fund Bill on Wednesday Lok Sabha members demanded strict action against chit fund firms and its promoters who siphon money of the poor. Participating in the debate several BJP members lauded the Government's move, saying this will help protect the money of the economically weaker section.

Saugata Roy (TMC), however, questioned the delay in bringing the bill. He said the bill was also introduced in the last Lok Sabha but was then forwarded to the Standing Committee on Finance. The panel gave its recommendations in August 2018 but it has taken more than a year for the Government to bring the fresh bill with amendments, he said. "We have to address the anomalies in the financial system," he said.

Roy said two BJP members

from West Bengal had wrongly referred to State Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in the chit fund scam and her name should be expunged from the record. Anurag Sharma (BJP) said there are over 30,000 registered chit funds in the country and the unregulated would be more than 100 times the number. He stressed that more people should be brought in the formal sector.

Meenakshi Lekhi (BJP) said there was a need for financial literacy in the country to avoid people from falling into the trap of such financial system. She said people who invest in chit funds are many a time unaware that when banking system gives an interest rate of nearly 8-9 per cent, then how can one provide an interest of nearly 30 to 40 per cent. P P Chowdhary (BJP) said the amendments to the bill may appear small but will have long term ramifications in saving people's money.

Requested HCs to expedite 10-year-old cases: Shankar

LAW MIN INFORMED IN LOK SABHA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The issue of piling up of huge pending cases in the courts figured in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday with Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad saying his Ministry has requested all High Courts to clear 10-year-old cases immediately to bring down pendency of cases as amidst the reports of a cyber attack on the Kudankulam nuclear power plant, Union Minister Jitendra Singh told the concerned members that "if at all an error like this happened, it was confined to the administrative block".

Among other issues raised during the Zero Hour in the house, Satabdi Roy of the Trinamool Congress said the Ministry of External Affairs has refused to give her a no-objection certificate for attending a film festival in China.

The MP said she had to face a lot of harassment for get-

ting the visa and when it did come she was not given the required NoC without being offered any reason. She said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was getting pictures clicked with Chinese President Xi Jinping while she has been denied a visit to China. At this point, the Speaker Om Birla asked another member to raise his issue. BJP MP Shankar Lalwani asked the Centre to work to waive passport requirement for pilgrims visiting Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan.

Taking up the issues relating to crores of cases pending in the courts, the law minister said it his for the court to clear the backlog in the court as Government is always there to provide infrastructure.

Congress MP Manish Tewary, however, did not agree with the minister that the Government was not accountable or the piling up of cases in the courts.

The Minister said his Government has taken various measures to improve the infrastructure of various courts

across the country so that justice delivery is expedited.

The Modi Government has already given 50 per cent amount for infrastructure improvement, he said, adding, the National Judicial Database is now in place.

Besides, he said, the government has made 478 appointments in high courts and number of Supreme Court Judges has been increased.

On pendency of cases in various courts, he said, all high courts have been requested to immediately clear civil and criminal cases which are pending for 10 years. "I would take this opportunity to again request Chief Justice of all high courts to immediately dispose of cases which are pending for 10 years," he said.

More than 43 lakh cases are pending in 25 high courts in the country and over 8 lakh of these are over a decade old.

Prasad also said there is a case for All India Judicial Service but there are reservations expressed by some high courts.

Doval-led committee to appoint India's first CDS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A high-level committee headed by National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval is likely to finalise the modalities for appointing the first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in the next three to four weeks. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced in his August 15 speech the creation of the post of CDS as single point military advisor to political leadership.

The proposal to create the CDS was hanging fire for more than 20 years after the K Subrahmanyam committee on higher defence reforms favoured the creation of such a post for synergy amongst the three Services.

As regards the Doval led panel report, sources said here on Wednesday the Government has asked the Army, Navy and

IAF to recommend the names of their senior most commanders for the new position. As of now indications are that Army Chief General Bipin Rawat may become the first CDS as he is the senior most amongst the three serving chiefs. He is due to retire as the Army Chief on Dec 31.

In a major defence reform to keep pace with fast changing war fighting capabilities world over, Modi on August 15 announced the creation of post of the CDS to promote synergy and integration of three Services including the army, navy and air force. The CDS will be single-point military advisor to the political leadership on matters of modernisation, operational preparedness and fight jointly.

The proposal for creation of the CDS was pending for the last 20 years after a Group of Ministers (GOM) headed by



National Security Advisor Ajit Doval

then Home Minister LK Advani recommended it. A review committee headed by K Subrahmanyam to fine tune higher defence management in the wake of Kargil war in 1999 had given this proposal to the GOM.

However, successive Governments did not go in for the crucial reform citing lack of political consensus. Also, the three Services could not come on the same platform leading

to delay of creation of the CDS. Many western countries including the UK have the institution of CDS.

Prior to the land mark reform made public by the Prime Minister on August 15, he had made the political leadership's inclination apparent during his speech on Kargil Vijay Diwas in July where he stressed on "jointness" and said it was time to connect among three services in terms of "action and system".

Making the important announcement during his Independence Day speech here, Modi said time has come to enhance coordination among the three services to deal with security challenges facing India.

"To further sharpen coordination between the forces, I want to announce a major decision from the Red Fort: India will have a Chief of Defence

Staff. CDS. This is going to make the forces even more effective," he said. The Prime Minister said as head of the three services, the CDS will ensure synergy and provide effective leadership to the armed forces in dealing with security challenges. In a tweet then, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had said the announcement has been made keeping in view the much needed reform to streamline and further improve the coordination among the three forces and their functioning. "CDS will have a long lasting and a positive impact on India's security," Singh said.

The creation of the CDS will eventually lead to the formation of tri-service theatre commands intended to create vertical integration of the three forces. The CDS will be a single window advisor to the Government and also synergise

long term planning, procurements, training and logistics of the three services. After Modi's announcement, the defence Ministry commenced the process to select the CDS, his tenure and other related issues through the Doval led panel.

Also, the Defence Ministry will have to take a call on the seniority of the CDS. At present, the three Chiefs are four-star generals and it remains to be seen whether the CDS will be a five-star general therefore senior to the Chiefs. If the CDS is four-star general, then he will be first among equals, it was learnt.

While the GOM proposal was lying in cold storage since 2001, in 2012, the Naresh Chandra committee recommended the appointment of a Permanent Chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) as a midway to allay apprehensions over the CDS.

3-day Global Bio-India Summit from today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A three-day mega event will kick off from Thursday here with an aim to showcase India's potential in bio-tech sector to the world as well as to chart out an actionable roadmap to catapult the industry on the global map.

Union Science and Technology Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan and Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan will inaugurate the Global Bio-India Summit, 2019 that will witness academia, innovators, researchers, start-ups, medium & large companies coming together on the same platform which will facilitate acceleration of the innovation ecosystem in the country.

Dr Renu Swarup, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology

& Chairperson BIRAC, said, "Global Bio-India Summit is being organized for the first time in India. Biotechnology is recognized as the sunrise sector - a key driver for contributing to India's USD 5 Trillion economy target by 2025."

More than 25 countries besides 11 States from India are participating in the event which is being held at Aero City in association with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE) and Invest India. Various MoUs will be signed while there would be several interesting events such as "NanoBiotech-2019" and Nano for Agri-2019" which will cover most recent research and developments in their respective fields, said Dr Manish Diwan from BIRAC.

'Only if required', Kamal on ties with Rajini

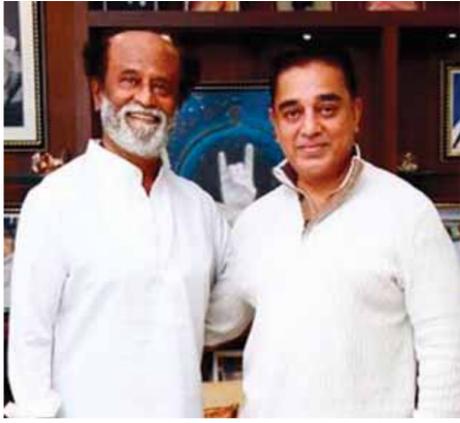
PTI ■ CHENNAI

As MNM founder Kamal Haasan on Wednesday reiterated his intention to join hands with his contemporary 'Superstar' Rajinikanth politically, the ruling AIADMK continued to target the duo, calling it a 'mirage' and insisted the actors can't harm the party's prospects.

Though Haasan expressed his willingness to partner with his four-decade old cinema colleague, he made it clear he would do so "only if required" and for the sake of Tamil Nadu.

While AIADMK Coordinator and Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam said the duo's possible partnership would not affect his party, his Cabinet colleague D Jayakumar said the duo was like 'mirage' that would "disappoint" the person believing it to be water.

He also likened them to an 'illusion'. Haasan's comments on joining forces with Rajinikanth came a day after both actors hinted at coming



together keeping in mind Tamil Nadu's welfare.

"My friend Mr Rajinikanth and I are of the same opinion and that if need be all hands should join for the sake of Tamil Nadu and we are no exception," he told reporters here.

"That is our attitude, we

mean it. We have come here not just to do politics but to make a better Tamil Nadu," the actor-politician added.

He, however, said their statements on Tuesday should be "carefully" looked into.

"Carefully look at what we had said.. (they had said they

would join hands) if required only. We will, if required, and that too for Tamil Nadu's sake," he said. Beyond their friendship, Tamil Nadu's welfare was important, he added.

Haasan also ruled out any timeframe for the two actors possibly working together politically. "The positive thing (from the developments) is that there is an assurance we will work for Tamil Nadu," he said. When a scribe asked if Rajinikanth would join his MNM, Haasan shot back saying it was "not fair" to pose such questions. Responding to Haasan's statement, Panneerselvam said none can affect the ruling party.

"The AIADMK's base is very strong. We are not worried who joins hands. This movement is cadre-based," he told reporters. While many political parties could come into existence they can, however, do no damage to the AIADMK, he added.

However, his party and cabinet colleague Jayakumar seemed to be more harsh towards Haasan and

Rajinikanth, calling them a mirage and 'illusion'. "A mirage, illusion is being created — it is like those who went believing it was water and getting disappointed," he said. "Rajini or Kamal or Vijay (another top actor who is rumoured to be harboring political ambitions) are all illusions. They cannot survive in Tamil Nadu politics," the Minister said.

To another question, he described top actor Ajithkumar as "dignified and dedicated to his profession". Ajithkumar is considered Vijay's rival, and known to keep away from controversies, although he had once publicly told then Chief Minister and late M Karunanidhi, that actors were forced to attend certain events which became a debating point.

Exuding confidence that the possible Rajini-Kamal duo cannot do harm to the AIADMK-led alliance in the state electorally, Jayakumar said "none will stand before" the coalition, comprising of BJP, DMK and PMK.

Swami Nithyananda booked, two disciples held for 'kidnapping' kids

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

An FIR was registered against self-styled godman Swami Nithyananda on the charges of alleged kidnapping and wrongful confinement of children to make them collect donations from followers to run his ashram in Ahmedabad in Gujarat, police said on Wednesday.

Police also arrested Sadhvi Pranpriyanda and Priyatatva Riddhi Kiran, both women disciples of the controversial godman, on charges of allegedly kidnapping at least four children, keeping them in illegal confinement in a flat and using them as child labourers to promote activities of the ashram to collect donations. Nithyananda was booked on the similar charges after police recorded statements of the four children who were rescued from a flat and the ashram, "Yogini Sarvagayapetham", a police officer said.

Sadhvi Pran Priyanda and Priyatatva Riddhi Kiran are responsible for managing the ashram, he said. "We have arrested two disciples of Swami Nithyananda after two children in the age group of 9 and 10 years enrolled at the ashram told us that they were tortured and made to work as child



File photo of self-styled godman Swami Nithyananda

labour and kept in an illegal confinement at a flat in the city for over ten days.

"Similar allegations were made by two other children rescued from the ashram on the basis of a complaint filed by their parents," Dy Superintendent of Police (Ahmedabad rural), KT Kamariya said.

The accused persons have been booked under Sections 365 (kidnapping or abducting with intent to secretly and wrongfully confine a person), 344 (wrongful confinement for ten or more days), 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace), and 502 (sale of printed or engraved

substance containing defamatory matter) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

They have also been booked under Section 14 of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, the police officer said. "The two children (rescued from the flat) have been handed over to the child welfare committee which is questioning them and trying to locate their parents," Kamariya said.

The rescued children told police that they were forced to take part in a religious ritual and were harassed, he said.

"They were being made to work for the ashram by force to collect donation from followers by sharing and uploading various ritual materials," the DYSP said.

Gujarat HC issues notices to self-styled godman, State Govt on 'detention' of two women

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat High Court on Wednesday issued notices to self-styled godman Swami Nithyananda and the State Government on a plea filed by a man seeking custody of his two daughters "detained" at an ashram run here by the controversial guru.

A division bench of justices SR Brahmbhatt and VP Patel issued notices to the respondent, including the State Government, DGP, police officers concerned, child welfare committee chairman as well as Nithyananda and Maa Pranpriya, the co-ordinator of Ahmedabad-based ashram.

The petitioner, Janardhana Sharma, alleged that officials of the ashram — Yogini Sarvagayapetham — were not allowing him and his wife to meet their two daughters staying there. Sharma said the police recently managed to rescue their two other daughters, both

minors, lodged in the same ashram. While police rescued his minor daughters — Lopamudra (21) and Nandhitha Sharma (18) — were still under "detention" at the ashram and not being allowed to meet their parents, Sharma has said in his "habeas corpus" petition.

A habeas corpus plea is a petition which is filed to ensure a person under arrest is brought before a court which will determine whether the detention is legal. The petitioner has requested the high court to direct police and other authorities to produce their elder daughters, who he alleged are being kept under "illegal confinement", before the court and hand them over to their parents. Apart from seeking their custody, the petitioner has also sought the HC's direction for an inquiry regarding all other minors kept at the ashram and appropriate action against the swami and his disciples, if required.

Soldier killed, another injured in Army exercise in Jaisalmer

The incident took place on Wednesday morning during the movement of tanks

PTI ■ JAISALMER

A soldier was killed and another injured in an accident during movement of tanks as part of an Army exercise in Jaisalmer district of Rajasthan on Wednesday, officials said.

According to police, the deceased soldier was identified as Parmeshwar Yadav. The incident took place on Wednesday morning during the movement of tanks, leaving one soldier dead and another injured, Defence spokesperson Col Sombit Ghosh said.

The injured soldier, RD Dixit, is undergoing treatment at a hospital in Jodhpur, the police said.

Pakistan violates ceasefire along LoC in Poonch

PTI ■ JAMMU

The Pakistan Army violated the ceasefire on Wednesday by resorting to small arms fire and shelling with mortars on forward posts and villages along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu & Kashmir's Poonch, a Defence spokesman said.

The firing from across the border in Krishna Ghati sector started around 1645 hours and was retaliated by the Indian Army "befittingly", the official said, adding the Pakistan army initiated the cross-border firing.

There was no report of any casualty in the Pakistani shelling, the spokesman said.

Meanwhile, General Officer Commanding, Star Corps, Lt Gen JS Nain visited forward areas of Jammu-based "Tiger division" and reviewed the operational preparedness of the forces, he said.

The Corps Commander exalted the troops to be ever-vigilant towards the external threats facing the country and complimented them for their stellar performance against all odds, the official added.

The GOC was briefed by GOC, "Tiger Division", Maj Gen Sharad Kapur on the operational readiness of the division as also the current security scenario in Jammu, the spokesman said.

Navy inducting large no. of state-of-art assets: Prez

PTI ■ KANNUR

Indian Navy is inducting a large number of highly capable and state-of-the-art assets and equipment, President Ram Nath Kovind said on Wednesday as he highlighted the strategic importance of the seas in the well-being of people of the country.

Addressing the Naval cadets after awarding the President's Colour to the Indian Naval Academy, the President said that India is a maritime nation and highlighted the strategic values of its long coastline and several islands which are acting as the country's "national outposts".

"A significant proportion of India's trade and energy needs



President Ram Nath Kovind presents the President's Colour award — the highest honour that is bestowed upon a military unit to Academy Cadet Captain Sushil Singh in Kannur, Kerala, on Wednesday

are met through the medium of the oceans.

Safety of the seas and maritime commons, therefore,

remains a critical requirement to ensure the economic and infrastructure development on land, as also to ensure well-

being of its people," he said at a function organised at the Ezhimala Naval Academy in the district.

Underscoring the security challenges — both in the conventional and asymmetric domains — facing the country today, Kovind said, "The country looks upon you to deliver, each and everytime, whether it is a full fledged conflict, natural calamity, law and order challenge or our diplomatic mission."

Hailing the Indian Navy as the country's prime instrument to ensure maritime security, Kovind said, "You will be pleased to know that our Navy is inducting a large number of highly capable and state-of-the-art assets and equipment".

Hindutva bodies warn Sena, BJP against tying up with NCP, Cong

Pune: A group of Hindutva organisations on Wednesday warned of launching a campaign against Shiv Sena and BJP if any of the two parties join hands with Congress and NCP to form a Government in Maharashtra. Samasta Hindu Aghadi president Milind Ekbote said the BJP and Sena, which have together won 161 seats in the 288-member House, should form a Government in the State as soon as possible as fighting between themselves was an "insult" of the people's mandate. He said the Hindutva outfits

were coming together as a "united front" to oppose Sena or BJP's attempts to tie up with the ideologically different parties. "We have been working for Hindutva for decades. We were expecting that some of our demands would be fulfilled since the BJP and Shiv Sena came to power..We are also concerned about farmers.

"But these two parties are fighting with each other. It is an insult of people's mandate. Therefore, we are appealing to both of them to form a Government in Maharashtra as soon as possible," he said. PTI



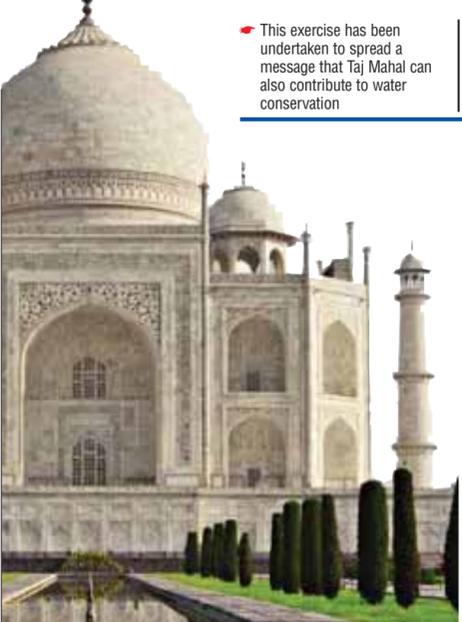
Icecools hang from the roof of a hutment after the recent pre-season heavy snowfall at Gulmarg in Baramulla district of Jammu & Kashmir on Wednesday

ASI to use waste water from RO treatment to replenish water table around Taj Mahal

This exercise has been undertaken to spread a message that Taj Mahal can also contribute to water conservation

A total of 30,000 litres of drinking water is provided daily through the RO (Reverse Osmosis) process for consumption

While 30,000 litres of waste water will be diverted into stepwell and well, remaining 10,000 litres will go into borewells



PTI ■ AGRA

The ASI has begun doing its bit to replenish groundwater around Taj Mahal, diverting waste water discharged during the RO treatment to a stepwell built during the Mughal period. Of the 40,000 litres of waste water generated within the Taj Mahal complex, some would also be channelled into a well and four borewells that have been constructed for this purpose.

This exercise has been undertaken to spread a message that Taj Mahal, a place which sees maximum tourist footfall in the country, can also contribute to water conservation, Vasant Kumar Swarnkar, superintending archaeologist of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Agra Circle, told PTI on Wednesday.

A total of 30,000 litres of drinking water is provided daily through the RO (Reverse Osmosis) process for consumption, he said. In the process, 30,000 litres of waste water is generated and another 10,000 litres is wasted during consumption. So overall, 40,000 litres of water is being wasted everyday, he said.

While 30,000 litres of waste water will be diverted into stepwell and well, remaining 10,000 litres will go into borewells, Swarnkar said. He said water will be channelled through PVC pipes to replenish the water table at 120 feet.

The Taj Mahal complex has six RO systems which provide 750 to 2,000 litres of water every hour, he said, adding that the Mughal era mausoleum is open to tourists for 10 hours every day.

ASI asks internet service providers to boost signal to promote cashless ticket booking for Taj

PTI ■ AGRA

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has asked major internet service providers to boost signal strength near monuments and hotels in Agra, so that tourists can easily book tickets online via "QR code standees" placed there to visit the Taj Mahal.

Agra Circle Superintending Archaeologist Vasant Kumar Swarnkar told PTI that ASI has contacted BSNL, Airtel, Vodafone-Idea, Jio to increase their signal strength near the sites the standees have been put.

"BSNL has assured it will do the needful within 15 days," Swarnkar said. QR code standees offer tourists an option to book tickets by making online payment through mobile phones by scanning the codes.

After tourists scan the code, they are connected to the ticketing portal. They can book 30 tickets — 20 for adult visitors and 10 for children — at a time. Tourists can also directly visit the ticketing portal to book tickets online. The ASI official said the district administration is monitoring the progress with the internet service providers.

SC to hear plea seeking removal of dead trees near Agra mental hospital falling in Taj zone

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Wednesday agreed to hear on Friday a plea seeking to remove some dried up trees near the mental hospital at Agra which falls under the Taj Trapezium Zone housing protected monument Taj Mahal.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde took note of submissions of a lawyer, representing the Government hospital, that certain dead trees be allowed to be removed as they "scaring mental patients". It has been alleged that the Forest department of Agra Zone has denied the permission to remove even dried trees in view of the apex court's earlier orders in this regard. Apex court, which has

been hearing the PIL filed by environmentalist MC Mehta, has restrained cutting or removing trees in the Taj Trapezium area.

The PIL has sought protection of the Taj from the ill effects of polluting gases and deforestation. Earlier, apex court, in 2014, had allowed Agra civic corporation to cut down 38 trees in protected area of Taj Mahal under Taj Trapezium Zone but had directed it to plant three number of trees in the compound or nearby areas. The corporation had submitted the trees need to be cut down to renovate the tehsil building. PTI

Andhra college's bid for plant conservation with QR codes

PIANS ■ VIJAYAWADA

At a time when Quick Response (QR) codes have become common for digital payments across India, a college in Andhra Pradesh is showing how the technology can benefit students and help in the conservation of plants.

The initiative of PB Siddhartha College of Arts and Sciences here is not only helping the students get information

about plants at their fingertips but is also expected to contribute in plant conservation.

Students or anyone can use their smart phones to scan the QR code hung in the trees on the campus to access all the information about the plant ranging from its botanical name to its medicinal value.

Any app generating QR code and available for free on the online stores can be used to scan the QR code and access the

information. The user will see what has been incorporated and for detailed information can refer to books or do the Google search.

Those scanning QR code will not only know the scientific name of the plant, but also its status by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which releases the status of all species every year.

"These days people have awareness about conservation of

plants, but they don't know which plant has to be conserved and what is its name. The IUCN status shows which are the endangered species. We hope that educated people will help conserve such species by growing them in their gardens," Srinivas Reddy, head of Botany Department at the college told IANS.

The department has developed herbal garden on the college campus with 60 varieties of

medicinal plants like Tulsi, mustard, aloe vera and spearmint.

It has also grown 20 other varieties. These include "Gyrocarpus Americanus", whose wood is used to make the world-famous Kondapalli toys. The scarcity of the wood, locally known as "Tella Poniki" has affected the toy manufacturing in Kondapalli near Vijayawada.

The Botany Department worked for a month to collect all database about trees in the col-

lege campus and assigned QR codes to them. They catalogued the trees according to their species and incorporated vital information.

This has also made the learning easy and interesting for the students. "Today students don't have time and energy to go to the library and read books. They read about the plants in text books along with the monograph and line diagram, but they can't identify the

plants. If they see the live plant, they can easily understand and remember," said Srinivas Reddy.

According to Reddy, the exercise started as an experiment evoked huge response. Many students, including non-biology students, faculty members, morning walkers and other visitors are scanning QR codes to get the information.

Enthused by the huge response, the management of this college is looking to extend

the initiative beyond the campus. "We have submitted a proposal to assign QR codes to trees outside the campus. If the municipal authorities accept the proposal, we will do it, he said.

Reddy believes that such an exercise will create more awareness among people and they will be curious to know about different species and grow the endangered ones to help in their conservation.

European delegation that toured Kashmir was on 'private visit' to India: Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A group of European parliamentarians that recently visited Kashmir was on a 'private visit' to the country, the government informed Parliament on Wednesday.

"The government of Jammu and Kashmir has reported that a group of 27 Members of European Parliament (MEPs), who belonged to different political parties, including ruling and opposition parties, paid a private visit to India from October 28, 2019, to November 1, 2019, at the invitation of the International Institute for Nonaligned Studies, a Delhi-based think tank," Union minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy said in a written reply in Rajya Sabha.

He also informed the House that an Indian delegation of MPs was not allowed

to visit Kashmir due to security concerns.

Opposition parties had attacked the government over the EU delegation's tour of Kashmir after Indian politicians and MPs were not allowed to travel to the Valley after abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status on August 5.

Reddy was responding to a set of questions that sought to know which institution organised and bore the

expenses of this Kashmir tour, and whether the institution that organised it was working as a coordinating institution for the central government.

In a separate reply, the minister said such visits or exchanges promote "deeper" people-to-people contact.

"Meetings were facilitated for the MEPs, as has been done previously on familiarisation visits for the visiting members of parliament of

different countries.

"Further, the MEPs had expressed their desire that they would like to visit Kashmir to understand how terrorism is affecting India and how this has been a challenge for India," Reddy said.

They got a sense of the threat of terrorism and how terrorism poses a threat to India, especially in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, he said.

"Such exchanges promote

deeper people-to-people contact and ultimately, it feeds into the larger relationship which any two countries would like to develop," the minister said.

To another question on whether the Union government has "distracted" from its policy of not allowing any external intervention on the Jammu-Kashmir issue, Reddy stated that India's consistent position has been that issues, if any, with Pakistan are dis-

cussed only bilaterally.

"There is no scope for any third party role or mediation," the minister said.

The team of MEPs was the first foreign delegation to travel to Kashmir after J-K's special status was revoked. The delegation was on a two-day visit to get a first-hand assessment of the situation there after the August 5 decision. Of the 27 MEPs who came to India, 23 went to Kashmir.

ctor and former BJP MP P. P. Parash Rawal says he is "stunned" by the protests against a Muslim professor in the Sanskrit faculty of the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) who is facing opposition from the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP). By this logic, he said, neither the legendary Mohammed Rafi nor music composer Naushad should have collaborated on bhajans (devotional songs).

The Banaras Hindu University has been in the headlines for the ABVP and many of its students protesting against the appointment of Feroz Khan as assistant professor in the Sahitya department of the Sanskrit Vidya Dharma Vijnan (SVDV).

Pointing out that language had no correlation with religion, Rawal appealed to the students to

Paresh Rawal 'stunned' by BHU protests, supports Muslim prof

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

not engage in "idiocy." "Stunned by the protest against professor Feroz Khan! what language has to do with Religion!!!! Irony is professor Feroz has done his masters and PhD in Sanskrit !!! For Heavens sake stop this god damn idiocy! (sic)" the 64-year-old actor said in an impassioned tweet on Tuesday.

Rawal condemned the protests in a follow-up tweet, saying, "By same logic great singer late Shri Mohammad Rafi ji should not have sung any BHAJANS and Naushad Saab should not have composed it! (sic)"

The singer-composer duo has collaborated on many songs, including numbers with 'bhakti ras' such as "Man Tarpat Hari Darshan Ko Aaj" from "Baju Bawra" (1952) and "Madhuban mein Radhika nache re" from "Kohinoor" (1960).

Last week, the BHU backed the appointment of Khan, saying it is committed to provide equal opportunities to everyone irrespective of religion, caste, community or gender.

In a statement, the BHU said the administration had already made it clear that the selection committee unanimously recommended the selection of the said candidate on the basis of prescribed guidelines of the University Grants Commission and the central government.

The selection committee, chaired by Vice Chancellor Rakesh Bhatnagar, had met on November 5 and recommended the most suitable candidate for the said position on the basis of the applicants' performance in the interview, it said.



Home Ministry strips T MLA of citizenship

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Wednesday issued a fresh order cancelling the Indian citizenship of TRS MLA Ramesh Chennamaneni for concealing facts.

The issue was related to his visits during the 12-month period immediately preceding his application seeking Indian citizenship.

In its 13-page order, the ministry said the competent authority has considered various aspects like Chennamaneni is a sitting MLA and has no criminal background or no criminal case has been filed against him.

He has not been reportedly involved in any activity of terrorism, espionage, serious organised crime or war crime, it said.

"His misrepresentation / concealment of fact misled the government of India in making its decision initially. Had he revealed the fact that he had not resided in India for one year before making the application, the competent authority in this ministry would not have granted citizenship to him," a home ministry order said.

Income Tax raids on Tollywood biggies

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The officials of Income-Tax (I-T) Department on Wednesday conducted simultaneous raids on Ramanaidu Studios in Hyderabad and other premises owned by popular Tollywood producer Daggubati Suresh Babu. The searches are underway against another biggie S Radha Krishna, who owns production houses, Haarika and Hassine Creations and Sitara Entertainments.

According to information, the searches are on in 25 locations across Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai and Visakhapatnam

based film production house owners. Ironically, both production houses are readying to release their new films. Haarika and Hassine is all set to release its next movie 'Ala vaikunthapurramulo' starring Allu Arjun, while Sitara Entertainments' last production was Premam, remake of 2015 Malayalam film . The romantic drama featured Naga Chaitanya and Shruti Hasan.

According to sources, the sleuths are suspecting massive tax evasions in production, distribution and exhibition earnings. Ramanaidu Studio is set for a December release of 'Venky Mama' that stars the uncle-nephew duo Venkatesh and Naga Chaitanya.

Cong dissolves Himachal unit, PCC chief to continue

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/SHIMLA

The Congress has dissolved its party unit in Himachal Pradesh, a release issued by the party said on Wednesday.

However, the president of the state Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) shall remain unchanged, the release signed by party general secretary KC Venugopal said.

It added that Congress president Sonia Gandhi had decided to dissolve the executive committees of the PCC, DCC and BCCs in Himachal Pradesh with immediate effect.

In a state-level move, the Himachal Pradesh Youth Congress also dissolved executive committees of its two blocks in Bilaspur district.

The executive panels of Naina Devi and Jukhala blocks were dissolved with immediate effect, state Youth Congress president Manish Thakur said in a statement. Thakur said the executive panels were dissolved with the consent of the All-India Youth Congress secretary, Jagdev Ganga, as several of their members were above age.

No proposal to link social media accounts with Aadhaar: Prasad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has no proposal for linking Aadhaar with social media accounts of individuals, Parliament was informed on Wednesday.

"There is no such proposal with the government for linking Aadhaar with social media accounts of individuals," Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha.

He was replying to a specific query on whether the government proposes to enact a law for linking Aadhaar with social media accounts of individuals.

Prasad said that as a matter of policy and by design, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) precludes itself from aggregating information arising from the use of Aadhaar, tracking and profiling individuals.

"...the system by intent is blind to the purpose for which Aadhaar may be used at the

front end by the resident. Also, the core biometrics is encrypted at the time of enrolment/update. It is never kept unencrypted and is never shared," he added.

Prasad said Aadhaar is based on three core principles of "minimal information, optimal ignorance and federated database".

"In its whole lifecycle, an Aadhaar database contains only the information that the resident provides at the time of enrolment or update... The database may also have mobile and e-mail, if provided by the resident, during enrolment or update," he said.

Aadhaar database contains name, address, gender, date of birth/age, photograph and core biometrics (10 fingerprints and 2 iris scans) of the enrolled resident.

In response to another query, Prasad said non-resident Indians (NRIs) are entitled to obtain Aadhaar number after arrival in India.

"Unique Identification

Authority of India (UIDAI) has already implemented facility of such Aadhaar enrolment for NRIs w.e.f. September 20, 2019... As on November 14, 2019, over 2,800 Aadhaar have been generated to NRIs," he said.

To another question, Prasad said a total of 3,433 URLs (Uniform Resource Locators) have been blocked on social media platforms this year (up to October 31).

The number of URLs blocked stood at 633 in 2016, 1,385 (in year 2017), and 2,799 (2018), he said.

"Section 69A of the IT Act, 2000 empowers the government to block any information generated, transmitted, received, stored or hosted in any computer resource in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign states, public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence..." he said.

The Union Home Ministry on Wednesday issued a fresh order cancelling the Indian citizenship of TRS MLA Ramesh Chennamaneni for concealing facts.

The issue was related to his visits during the 12-month period immediately preceding his application seeking Indian citizenship.

In its 13-page order, the ministry said the competent authority has considered various aspects like Chennamaneni is a sitting MLA and has no criminal background or no criminal case has been filed against him.

He has not been reportedly involved in any activity of terrorism, espionage, serious organised crime or war crime, it said.

"His misrepresentation / concealment of fact misled the government of India in making its decision initially. Had he revealed the fact that he had not resided in India for one year before making the application, the competent authority in this ministry would not have granted citizenship to him," a home ministry order said.

The officials of Income-Tax (I-T) Department on Wednesday conducted simultaneous raids on Ramanaidu Studios in Hyderabad and other premises owned by popular Tollywood producer Daggubati Suresh Babu. The searches are underway against another biggie S Radha Krishna, who owns production houses, Haarika and Hassine Creations and Sitara Entertainments.

According to information, the searches are on in 25 locations across Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai and Visakhapatnam

based film production house owners. Ironically, both production houses are readying to release their new films. Haarika and Hassine is all set to release its next movie 'Ala vaikunthapurramulo' starring Allu Arjun, while Sitara Entertainments' last production was Premam, remake of 2015 Malayalam film . The romantic drama featured Naga Chaitanya and Shruti Hasan.

According to sources, the sleuths are suspecting massive tax evasions in production, distribution and exhibition earnings. Ramanaidu Studio is set for a December release of 'Venky Mama' that stars the uncle-nephew duo Venkatesh and Naga Chaitanya.

The Congress has dissolved its party unit in Himachal Pradesh, a release issued by the party said on Wednesday.

However, the president of the state Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) shall remain unchanged, the release signed by party general secretary KC Venugopal said.

It added that Congress president Sonia Gandhi had decided to dissolve the executive committees of the PCC, DCC and BCCs in Himachal Pradesh with immediate effect.

In a state-level move, the Himachal Pradesh Youth Congress also dissolved executive committees of its two blocks in Bilaspur district.

The executive panels of Naina Devi and Jukhala blocks were dissolved with immediate effect, state Youth Congress president Manish Thakur said in a statement. Thakur said the executive panels were dissolved with the consent of the All-India Youth Congress secretary, Jagdev Ganga, as several of their members were above age.

The government has no proposal for linking Aadhaar with social media accounts of individuals, Parliament was informed on Wednesday.

"There is no such proposal with the government for linking Aadhaar with social media accounts of individuals," Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha.

He was replying to a specific query on whether the government proposes to enact a law for linking Aadhaar with social media accounts of individuals.

Prasad said that as a matter of policy and by design, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) precludes itself from aggregating information arising from the use of Aadhaar, tracking and profiling individuals.

"...the system by intent is blind to the purpose for which Aadhaar may be used at the

front end by the resident. Also, the core biometrics is encrypted at the time of enrolment/update. It is never kept unencrypted and is never shared," he added.

Prasad said Aadhaar is based on three core principles of "minimal information, optimal ignorance and federated database".

"In its whole lifecycle, an Aadhaar database contains only the information that the resident provides at the time of enrolment or update... The database may also have mobile and e-mail, if provided by the resident, during enrolment or update," he said.

Aadhaar database contains name, address, gender, date of birth/age, photograph and core biometrics (10 fingerprints and 2 iris scans) of the enrolled resident.

In response to another query, Prasad said non-resident Indians (NRIs) are entitled to obtain Aadhaar number after arrival in India.

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WhatsApp: CERT-In issues advisory, company says users unaffected

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

An Indian cyber security Agency has warned WhatsApp users against a "vulnerability" that can compromise their individual account without seeking permissions even as the popular social messaging app said users have not been impacted.

The Computer Emergency Response Team-India (CERT-In) has issued an advisory in this context calling the severity of the threat, being spread by an MP4 file, as "high".

The advisory comes in the backdrop of recent developments where WhatsApp had informed the Indian government in September that over hundred Indian users were targeted by the Israeli spyware — Pegasus.

"A vulnerability has been reported in WhatsApp which could be exploited by a remote attacker to execute arbitrary code on the target system," the latest advisory said.

The CERT-In is the nodal agency to combat hacking, phishing and to fortify security-related defences of the Indian internet domain.

A WhatsApp spokesperson said the company is constantly working to improve the security of their service.

"We make public reports on potential issues we have fixed consistent with industry best practices. In this instance there is no reason to believe

this vulnerability by sending a specially crafted MP4 file to the target system."

It added that this could trigger a buffer overflow condition leading to execution of arbitrary code by the attacker.

"The exploitation does not require any form of authentication from the victim's end and executes on downloading of malicious crafted mp4 file on victim's system," it said.

Successful exploitation of this vulnerability, it said, could allow the remote attacker to cause remote code execution (RCE) or denial of service (DoS) condition, which could lead to further compromise of the system.

It stated half-a-dozen WhatsApp software have been "affected" by the current vulnerability.

They have been identified as WhatsApp for Android prior to 2.19.274, WhatsApp for iOS prior to 2.19.100, WhatsApp Enterprise Client prior to 2.25.3, WhatsApp for Windows Phone prior to 2.18.368, WhatsApp Business for Android prior to 2.19.104 and WhatsApp Business for iOS prior to 2.19.100.



users were impacted," the spokesperson said.

The Indian cyber security agency's advisory suggested "upgrading" to the latest version of WhatsApp to combat or tide over the problem.

Describing the malicious action of the vulnerability in the popular social messaging app (application), it said, "A stack-based buffer overflow vulnerability exists in WhatsApp due to improper parsing of elementary stream metadata of an MP4 file. A remote attacker could exploit

the vulnerability by sending a specially crafted MP4 file to the target system."

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FROM PAGE 1

TALKS ON, BUT CONG SURE OF SENA GOVT

Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray will address the meeting which is expected to deliberate on the party's line of action in the backdrop of the three main non-BJP parties making efforts to form government in Maharashtra.

Asked about the meeting between the NCP and the Congress, Raut said there will be a "full stop to it", implying that the two parties have almost completed their discussions on Government formation.

Senior leaders of the Congress and the NCP held talks on Wednesday with a focus on firming up the modalities for taking a shot at government formation in Maharashtra. Congress leaders Ahmed Patel, Jairam Ramesh, Mallikarjun Kharge, Prithviraj Chavan, K C Venugopal and Balasaheb Thorat attended the meeting. NCP leaders Supriya Sule, Ajit Pawar, Jayant Patil and Nawab Malik were also present.

Both, the Congress president Sonia Gandhi and her predecessor refused to comment on the progress being made in the formation of a new government in Maharashtra. "No comments," Sonia said in Parliament House when reporters posed questions on the political situation in Maharashtra.

Shiv Sena threw another ring in the circle that the real picture of the Government formation in the State will become clear in the next two days.

Results of the October 21 Assembly polls were declared on October 24 and President's rule was imposed in the State on November 12 after no party or combine stated claim to form the new Government.

through one prism. He said the Lok Sabha had passed the Bill and the select committee had approved it, but the Lok Sabha had lapsed. "Now it will come again. It has no connection with the NRC," he said.

There has been opposition from various political parties to the Citizenship Amendment Bill. There have been protests across the Northeastern States over the Government's plan to table the Bill. In Assam, protesters have argued that the Citizenship Amendment Bill goes against the provisions of the Assam Accord that seek to safeguard the interests of indigenous people. There were protests and marches on Monday across seven States in the North-East against the proposed legislation.

guard officials for fraud and forgery over the fraudulent withdrawal of salaries of the force's personnel on November 13.

The First Information Report (FIR) was lodged under Indian Penal Code sections 409 (criminal breach of trust by public servant, or by banker, merchant or agent), 420 (fraud), 467, 468 and 471 (all three related to forgery of documents).

Part of the auxiliary force, home guards are not permanent employees and are recruited on a casual basis. They do not have any fixed monthly salary and are paid based on the number of days of duty.

Around 700 home guards are presently deployed in Gautam Buddha Nagar, the police said.

NRC ACROSS INDIA SOON: SHAH

They have the option of appealing to Foreigners' Tribunals and subsequently approach the court.

Shah said people whose names are missing from the draft list have the right to go to tribunals, which will be constituted across Assam. He added that those who can't afford lawyers to go to a tribunal will be provided financial help by the Assam Government.

The Modi Government plans to amend the Citizenship Act in the ongoing Winter Session of Parliament. The Citizenship Amendment Bill speeds up the process under which non-Muslims from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan can get Indian citizenship.

On the controversial Citizenship Amendment Bill, which seeks to provide citizenship status to non-Muslims refugees, the Home Minister said that the Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain, Christian, Parsi refugees should get Indian citizenship. "All refugees coming from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan on account of religious atrocities there will get citizenship (in India) under the Bill," he said.

The Home Minister said the NRC and the Citizenship Amendment Bill 2016, which lapsed on June 3, 2019, are two different issues and both should not be seen

WON'T ALLOW NRC IN BENGAL, SAYS DIDI

cautious against efforts to divide the State."

Alleging that the AIMIM was a "paid agent of the BJP" which was pouring money in Bengal to divide the people, Mamata said, "They are the biggest allies. They are coming with bags full of money from Hyderabad as your sympathisers but their aim is to divide you," to help the BJP come to power in the State.

Apparently telling the Muslims not to trust leaders visiting from outside and only repose faith on local leaders she said, "No one will fight for the cause of the people of the people of Bengal other than those who are from this State... don't trust outsiders who are posing as your friends and coming with money bags."

Mamata had made similar remarks from Coochbehar on Tuesday inviting a backlash from Owaisi. On Wednesday, AIMIM's Bengal unit president Zameerul Hasan said the Muslims were leaving Mamata as she always tried to use them as vote bank.

Accusing the Chief Minister of using the Muslims for votes and nothing else he repeated the charges made by Owaisi questioning "why the development index of the Muslims remains so low in this State" and "how the BJP could gain such huge support base in Bengal without your (TMC's) help."

"We were ready for the last parliamentary elections but our party president Asaduddin Owaisi had asked us not to contest as minority vote might get divided and TMC candidates might lose in minority dominated areas," he told reporters, adding Mamata had become nervous as AIMIM was increasing its support base in the State.

NORMALCY BACK IN VALLEY, SHAH TELLS RAJYA SABHA

144 is imposed. It has been lifted completely. As precautionary measures, it is imposed only between 8 pm and 6 am and that too in areas of very few police stations," he said.

Shah also cited a number of figures of healthcare facilities, school examination attendance, polling percentage in recently held Block Development Council polls, and of the landlines and mobile phones restored to argue that situation in Kashmir was 'normal'. The Home Minister said that incidents of stone pelting have declined from 802 last year to 544 so far this year. "The medicines are available to Kashmiris in ample supply. Hospitals and mobile vans are stocked fully. In Srinagar in September this year 7.66 lakh people checked into the OPD. While in October (a month after restrictions were enforced in the Valley) the number of OPD patients increased to 7.91 lakh. So there is no let-up in healthcare facilities."

"All 20,411 schools are open in Kashmir. In recently held 11th Class examinations 99.48 per cent students appeared. And in recently held 10th and 12th class examinations 99.7 per cent students appeared for examination," Shah said. Azad had pointed out that the number of students appearing in schools and colleges during routine class was between zero and five per cent only.

"Out of 316 Block Development Councils elections were successfully held in 307 BDCs with a polling percentage of 98.3 per cent. These elections were conducted in at atmosphere free of fear," Shah said.

"The sale of essentials like petrol, diesel, kerosene, LPG and rice has increased between eight to 16 per cent in the Valley. As far as apple production is concerned, this season a total of 22.58 lakh metric tonnes of apple produce is expected of which NAFED has already bought 6 lakh metric tonnes. All 93,247 landline connections have been restored. All 59 lakh mobile phone connections have been restored. In 10 districts, 280 e-terminals have been set up for internet. Urdu and English newspapers are working as usual. Banking is functioning smoothly. Shops are open throughout the day, except at noon. And the High Court has dealt with 52,000 cases since August 5," Shah said.

Disclose all details of electoral bonds to Parliament: Cong

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress demanded on Wednesday that the government must disclose all details about electoral bonds before Parliament, alleging that the scheme resulted in money laundering and destroyed transparency in the funding of political parties.

Describing electoral bonds as a "political bribery scheme", the opposition party said it was a scam that tarnished the image of the Indian democracy.

"What we are talking about today leads straight to the PM's office. The BJP govt is running 90 per cent of the business in this country with a few industrialists," senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad said.

He alleged that the scheme of electoral bonds resulted in money laundering and destroyed transparency in the funding of political parties.

Addressing a press conference here, Azad, along with party colleagues Randeep Singh Surjewala and Anand Sharma, said under the electoral bonds scheme, the donor buying the bonds could hide his identity and at the same time, a political party needed to share the details as regards from whom it got how much money.

"Our demand is that the PM must intervene and the government must disclose full donor information, who donated crores to the BJP coffers, and place this information before Parliament," Sharma said.

Parliament is in session and the government should make the disclosure before both the houses, he added.

Executive Engineer Construction Division No. 1, P.W.D Lucknow

Letter No. 3515/E-Tender/19-20 (E-Tender) Dated: 16-11-2019

Short Term Inviting Tender Notice

The Executive Engineer Construction Division-1, U.P.P.W.D. Lucknow on behalf of Government of Uttar Pradesh invites the percentage rate bids on the eligible and approved Contractors Signage work registered with UP PWD, class A,B,C & D. The Bidder may submit bids for any or all of the works. 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.

Sl. No.	DIS TRICT	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs. In Lakhs)	Bid Security (Rs. In Lakhs)	Cost of Bid Document	Time of Completion	Address of Executive Engineer of the Executing work	Address of Superintending Engineer	Address of Chief Engineer
1	Lko	Divider Repairing /Painting & Signage work on Itounga Maltona Kumbhrawa Karsi Deva Chintat road. Ch. 45.520 to 51.020 (Under Defence Expo)	26.00	2.60	854/-	1 Month	Construction Division-1, P.W.D. Lucknow	Lucknow Circle P.W.D. Lucknow	Chief Engineer Central Zone P.W.D. Lucknow
2	Lko	Curve Stone Painting work on Kanpur road to Hardoi road & Hardoi road to Sitapur road 6 Lane road Ch. 14.700 to 22.407 (Under Defence Expo)	33.20	3.32	854/-	1 Month	Construction Division-1, P.W.D. Lucknow	Lucknow Circle P.W.D. Lucknow	Chief Engineer Central Zone P.W.D. Lucknow
3	Lko	Repair of Over Head Sign Board & fixing of LDS on Kanpur road to Hardoi road & Hardoi road to Sitapur road 6 Lane road Ch. 14.700 to 22.407 (Under Defence Expo)	33.00	3.30	854/-	1 Month	Construction Division-1, P.W.D. Lucknow	Lucknow Circle P.W.D. Lucknow	Chief Engineer Central Zone P.W.D. Lucknow

► The Rate adopted in the boq are excluding GST Taxes.
 ► Cost of Bid Document (Tender Fee) :- Certificate of proof of payment in the account of UP E-tender online Account by
 ► Internet Banking which will be generated when payment made through e-tender portal by Internet Banking.
 ► Bid Security (EMD) :-Certificate of proof of payment in the account of UP e-tender online account by Internet Banking which will be generated when payment made through e-tender Portal by Internet Banking.
 ► As per order passed by Engineer-in-charge vide letter No. 91 त्रि म् २०३० विक्रम/०३ (३०१)/१९ dt. 14-08-2019 technical evaluation of bids to be done by chankya software. Bidders are advised to go through above said circular to comply the requirements, and upload the information on Chankya Software available on www.uppwd.gov.in
 ► Bids must be published/download online 9:00 AM on date 22.11.2019 and submitted online on or before 12:00 Noon on dated 27.11.2019 and the technical bids will be opened online dated 28.11.2019 at 12:30 PM and Financial bids of the qualified bidders will be opened on date & time as notified. According to the provisions of Government Order no. 11/2018/307/78-2-PW/142/172017 (22).
 Date 03-01-2018 after opening of the technical and financial bids, the bidder has to submit original documents personally in department/ office. In the event of non submission of original documents by the bidder, the appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the provisions of G.O.
 All terms & conditions can be seen on website <http://etender.up.nic.co.in>
 UP 145685 Date 18.11.2019
 विज्ञापन वेबसाइट www.upgpn.in पर उपलब्ध है।
 (A.K. Singh)
 Executive Engineer
 Construction Division-1, P.W.D, Lucknow

Myths about Kashmir

Facts and figures on J&K tabled in the House may paint a rosy picture but won't change ground realities



Kashmir's smokescreen becomes so dense by the day that in the end, it solidifies as the only truth, or a picture of it, so relentlessly it is pushed down our throats. And with stories of the non-cooperative Kashmiri and the Western media bias drowning out the validity of the ugly truth that does make it to the surface, the myth takes hold of the mindscape as it is easier to digest narratives that operate within simplistic binaries than raise complex questions. Like the response the Government has tabled in the Rajya Sabha, that

stone-pelting has subsided ever since the abolition of Article 370 in Kashmir and that tourist footfalls have increased, apparently generating an additional ₹25 crore as revenue since August. The first claim gets negated by the government's own admission that 700 plus people have been detained during the same period. And the bubble of a thriving tourist economy has been burst by a Kashmiri traders' association claim that the former State has suffered a ₹12,000 crore loss since the lockdown. Home Minister Amit Shah, too, painted a picture of normalcy, telling the Rajya Sabha how schools and colleges were open, the apple industry was recovering, any preventive curfew was only intended to disable Pakistan-sponsored militancy and that there has been no bloodshed since Kashmir became a Union Territory. As if alienation has been the sole byproduct of exported terrorism. He also defended the blockade of internet corridors, saying the fight against terror propaganda meant that security is prioritised over everything else. Yet, even going by the sanitised reportage from the Valley, communication remains a challenge with landlines operating in fits and starts and patchy internet even at media centres. Yes, the Centre through its agencies is picking up apples but truckers from the plains are being attacked randomly and crates are full of some bad apples, literally, with separatist messages imprinted on them. The entire economy is gasping with the lockdown affecting logistics and supply chain management. Existing small and medium-scale businesses are floundering, delivery service start-ups are on the verge of a meltdown with suspended services, the flight of labour and the absence of internet. No tourist, foreign or domestic, is knowingly planning a visit to Kashmir. Violence, either by militant groups, hitbacks of angry citizens or punitive strikes by security forces, makes for a bigger picture when one joins the dots. And the silence is deceptive in the absence of middle ground between polarities. With citizens also resorting to civil disobedience, refusing to open businesses or keeping their children away from school, it could be the proverbial lull before the storm, a fear psychosis or a siege mentality.

Facts and figures can be tweaked but the truth lies elsewhere as a figment, and that is costing us our credibility. While the world and even much of the domestic opinion, in principle, accepted the withdrawal of Article 370 as operable, the never-ending lockdown is raising more questions about our militaristic ambitions than democratic propriety. The Government's continued detention of politically elected representatives, who it says had done nothing to control militancy and played the Indo-Pakistan dynamic for their continued relevance, has stifled the only voice of the locals. Nothing explains why the most pro-India voice among them and somebody who has been the BJP's blue-eyed boy, Omar Abdullah, or even Sajjad Lone continue to be detained. Or why they are being psychologically worn out in dehumanised conditions. If the Government wants to peddle normalcy, then it has to prioritise civil and political engagement, no matter how chaotic or negative the result may be. Restoring civil rights is a must if it wants its governance agenda to not sound like a fable but intended action. A big move always generates big reactions but muzzling them won't help in a political economy called Kashmir. Egoism must make way for reasoned pragmatism and a majoritarian Government should have the strength to stomach the pitfalls than fogging out reality. The world could soon turn intolerant of us.

Turmoil in telecom

How long can companies overlook unsustainable charges? The Government must intervene on taxes



British telecom giant Vodafone's threat to quit India seems to have jolted a few officials in the Government. After all, if such a famous corporate name could be jolted by policies and unfair tax demands, how would smaller, less famous foreign investors fare in the country? There has been a degree of damage control exercise by both Vodafone and the Government after the first stories emerged in London newspapers but the single best thing that seems to have happened since then is that Indian telecom companies across the board

have realised that their current charges are unsustainable. They are now speaking of increasing tariffs next month onwards. This is on expected lines for, in real-money terms, telecom charges have been declining year after year even if data is excluded. Data charges per megabyte transmitted today are barely a per cent of what they were a decade ago. Low charges have helped put data in the hands of virtually every Indian but good times were never going to last forever.

While the quantum of the increase remains to be seen, after years of unsustainably low charges, coupled with the constant need to invest in new infrastructure, most telecom operators in India are bleeding. The desperation to be seen as the largest player in a huge market led to unsustainable rates, first for voice communications and later for data after the entry of Reliance Industries' Jio, which benefitted from several aspects of a late entry. It was able to invest in better and cheaper infrastructure, not needing to carry the can for low revenue consumers. Surely, the Supreme Court's ruling on taxes being applicable to "annual gross revenues" for telecom operators rather than for "revenues" must be seen as a harsh one. The Government should do something to mitigate the extent of the payment but an increase in call and data rates is much needed now. Complaints about call quality and lack of network connectivity have become far too common and networks need investment to improve services. For that, India needs a sustainable telecom industry. It is almost certain that with the Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) being taken up in droves by Government-owned telecom operators BSNL and MTNL, the State might be exiting the telecom space once and for all, keeping just a secure communications backbone for intelligence and military purposes. If that indeed is the case, the Government must ensure that all telecom operators are in good financial health. At the same time, the coming years will see next-generation 5G networks, with the Government expecting to make thousands of crores in the spectrum auctions, something that appears to be more of a pipedream than anything else right now. The Government runs the risk of killing the golden goose and finding a hollowed out shell inside. That means allowing operators to raise prices and most importantly, refute allegations of favouritism that tend to stick when it comes to Mukesh Ambani.

Neighbour's border envy

While China has undertaken multiple development projects near the Indian border, Delhi has been very slow and remains hesitant to see tourists in restricted areas



CLAUDE ARPI

Recently, the Indian media was agog with news about the latest deployment of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) close to the Indian borders. One website, the *Indian Defence News*, affirmed: "China strengthening military base near Uttarakhand's Lipulekh Pass, which is located near the tri-junction between Nepal, Tibet and India. It explained: "The new base has 20 parking hangars and also maintenance hangars. Medium-lift helicopters for the local Army aviation brigade have also been spotted... There are signs of a military build-up opposite Lipulekh Pass on the northeastern tip of Uttarakhand." It cited some intelligence sources saying that the PLA had built a helipad close to the pass and also "installed two surveillance cameras, a Long Range Reconnaissance and Observation System (LORROS) and a solar panel."

Some other reports mentioned model villages being built by Beijing near the Indian border. This is not new, though the scale should worry New Delhi. The information about Lipulekh Pass is probably linked to the new airport coming up near Purang (Taklakot); it will serve the Kailash/Manasarovar area.

On June 9, 2018, the Civil Aviation Administration of China and the Tibetan Autonomous Region's (TAR) provincial government announced that Tibet would soon have three new airports. An official communiqué stated: "Construction of the three airports, all above the altitude of 3,900 metres, should begin in 2019." The new airports are to be located in Lhunse county in Lhoka (called Shannan by the Chinese) area, north of the Upper Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh; the second will be between Tingri and Lhatse counties of Shigatse City, north of Zangmu, the border post with Nepal, and the last in Purang, near Lipulekh.

It was then announced: "The airports should be completed in 2021; by then, there will be eight airports in TAR." The news agency added: "At present, the preparatory work for the three airports is under way. The preferred sites have been determined; the idea is "to consolidate the border and to promote the deep integration of the military and the people." While tourism and "cultural" industries remain the pillars of the so-called stabilisation, defence is also vital for the Chinese authorities — one of Chinese President Xi Jinping's pet projects is the Military Civilian Integration (or "fusion")."

Another of Xi's favourite schemes is to make "patriotic" Tibetans "the protectors of their sacred homeland." The last two years have seen the mushrooming of model villages near the Indian border; they are known as "Xiaogang" or "moderately well-off villages." The pretext for building more than 100 such border villages is "poverty alleviation." Tibetans need to be pulled out of poverty (incidentally, is it not strange that 70 years after the arrival of the communists on the plateau



and the so-called liberation of Tibet, the populations still lives in such pitiable conditions?).

But "poverty" is not the only motivation. Xi once famously declared: "Govern the nation by governing the borders; govern the borders by first stabilising Tibet; ensure social harmony and stability in Tibet and strengthen the development of border regions." These villages are following the "double-support model city", which translates into full military and civilian integration.

The authorities have started implementing the theory of their boss by providing decent housing to the villagers and enticing the local recalcitrant Tibetan population to their side. Local satraps have a new leitmotif, the inhabitants of China's borders (with India) should be "the protectors of the sacred homeland and the builders of happy homes." The construction of "model" villages on the Tibetan side of the Indian border, mainly north of Arunachal Pradesh and also in Himachal and Ladakh, is the outcome of this. Several senior communist leaders have visited these new villages, either north of Kibithu in the Lohit valley; in Metok, north of Upper Siang district; in Yume (also written Yumai), north of Takshing in Upper Subansiri or in Lepo, Marmang and Tsona, north of Khenzimane and Tawang.

Take Metok County, for example. *China Tibet News* reported that there are 46 administrative villages (including one

multi-ethnic inhabitation area consisting of Monpa, Lhopa, Tibetan or Han) with a total population of 13,725: "In 2018, the county's GDP has reached 606 million yuan (\$99 million); farmers and herdsmen's per capita disposable income and cash income have reached 10,380 yuan (\$1,687) and 8,833 yuan (\$1,486) respectively."

In October, 133 villagers belonging to 29 households moved into their new houses. Reports said how "all the township's residents are living in free houses provided by the Government," in Puma Changthang township, north of the Bhutan border. "Sharing a 25-km border with Bhutan, where the average altitude tops 5,300 metres above sea level, the Puma Changthang township is in Nagartse county; it is renowned as the world's highest township."

The report explained: "Resettlement in new housing provided by the Government is part of its efforts to ensure the entire population lives comfortably in border areas... Project construction includes villagers' houses, party's committee offices, village clinics, water supply and roads" and, of course, these "multi-ethnic" villages will welcome Han Chinese.

Take another example. It was reported that Tibetans in Bayi village of Nyingchi City, north of Arunachal Pradesh, have come together and jointly "built a beautiful hometown as well as a better life." Incidentally,

places called Bayi (or 8-1 for August 1, the PLA anniversary) are usually under the Army's management.

The article said that by the end of 2016, 16 impoverished villagers were lifted out of poverty through pairing assistance (ie, with the support of a mainland province), through participation in the collective economy and self-employment: "Bayi Village improved farmers and herdsmen's cultural living standards, supported the construction of a "cultural" square, a village library and also organised various cultural and sports activities such as Tibetan circle dance, tug of war, lifting stones or archery."

But at the same time, a review committee in Tsona county warned: "All townships and villages must come together to improve the village rules and regulations [of the party], standardise the daily behaviour of the villagers and strengthen the rural revitalisation strategy goals."

"Standardise the daily behavior" is ominous. On the Indian side, everything moves slowly as usual. A welcome exception is the Sisseri River bridge in the Lower Dibang Valley of Arunachal Pradesh, recently inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. It will cut down travel time from Pasighat to Roing by about five hours. But the Government remains hesitant to see tourists in "restricted" areas. China does not have this problem.

(The writer is an expert on India-China relations)

“
WHILE TOURISM AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES REMAIN THE PILLARS OF THE SO-CALLED STABILISATION, DEFENCE IS ALSO VITAL FOR THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES — ONE OF CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING'S PET PROJECTS IS THE MILITARY CIVILIAN INTEGRATION (OR FUSION)
 ”

SOUNDBITE

The BJP had promised to build the country but it is working to make India's best organisations hollow and sell them. Sad.



Congress leader
—Priyanka Gandhi

We should use cinema to implant the thought of normalcy in people's mind, especially those who are not well-versed with the topic of homosexuality.



Actor
—Zareen Khan

The terror-crime nexus is an existential global threat. In order to combat this menace, the international community must keep ahead of new trends and technologies



Indian envoy
—Syed Akbaruddin

It was astonishing that my seating position in the Rajya Sabha was changed. This was done intentionally to humiliate me and my party's status in the House.



Shiv Sena leader
—Sanjay Raut

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Welcoming change

Sir — This refers to the article, "What lies ahead for Sri Lanka Tamils?" (November 20) by Kalyani Shankar. It is an intriguing story as to how the newly-elected Sri Lanka President Gotabaya Rajapaska, former Defence Minister and brother of former President of Sri Lanka Mahinda Rajapaska, led a brutal crackdown on Tamil Tiger separatists, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and cornered it during the Eelam War IV. This culminated in the elimination of LTTE leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran.

This is why Gotabaya came to be known as the "terminator" despite the fact that he carried the infamy of alleged staged killings of Tamil separatists as well as journalists in the civil war during his regime as the Defence Minister. The Lankan President's administrative strategy fructified at the end of the day and ended Sri Lanka's nearly 30-year civil war with the LTTE. His present election as the President is again a manifestation of his political sagacity.

The writer's plea about apprehensions being harboured by the Tamil minorities in Lanka, who did not cast votes in Gotabaya's favour, carries weight.

But now, as President, Gotabaya must think differently, keeping in mind the holistic

Make JNU a success model

This refers to the editorial, "Student uprising" (November 20). It is a truth that in today's polarised times, we have to pay through the nose for subsidising comforts and facilities enjoyed by our politicians. Even poor people have to share this burden in the form of indirect taxes that constitute a major part of our tax regime. But in return, can't we expect subsidy in education for our own children? It was unfortunate that the Delhi Police used brutal force against a number of students from the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), who participated in the protest march to Parliament, demanding a total rollback of the hostel fee hike. Students are of the view that two in five boarders cannot afford the hiked fees and as a result, this would hamper the aspirations of the young. This will further make education a commodity only for the rich and higher middle class people.

JNU's fee structure was designed in a way to provide low-cost, high quality education to all — cutting across caste, class and economic divisions — and, thus, make the country's education system a model of plurality. While it must be accepted that a reasonable fee hike is needed, it must also be ensured that the once highly-reputed university is not divested of its original pur-

development of the country and amelioration of one and all, irrespective of their political leanings, beliefs, faith, religion, regions, language or colour.



A country cannot prosper if the right of a large section of its population to education gets hijacked. Education is indeed the only way to break the vicious cycle of poverty. Now that a committee has been formed by the Centre to look into the impasse over fee hike, a noble way should be found to address the concerns of those students who are financially not able to pay their fees.

Sujit De
Kolkata

Television day

Sir — Though digital platforms have increased their presence in today's times, television is still the most important and the greatest

tool for entertainment.

It was in December 1996 that the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed November 21 as World Television Day. This day recognises the role and importance of television in our day-to-day lives. It has been at the core of the information revolution, driving reliable visuals, news and entertainment from across the globe at people's doorstep.

Falguni Aswani
Ujjain

Come to the rescue

Sir — It is unfortunate that a number of telecom giants have been registering eye-popping losses in the last quarter. This, coupled with intense competition and bitter disputes over policy compliance, has compelled them to raise tariffs. With no clarity over how they will pay their accumulated dues, the Government, which is examining this issue, must waive off penalties and interest against telcos.

Suchitra
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

No bad soldiers, only bad bosses

If thousands of policemen take to the streets to express their displeasure, it simply amounts to complete failure of command



ABHIJIT BHATTACHARYYA

Today, I am on cause of action, or lack of it, if any, pertaining to national interest. Not on prescribed judicial process or procedure, except to recall the universally accepted dictum: Justice is blind. Blind, because it cannot see and must never try to see colour, creed, caste, class, community, character, or distinguish/discriminate between either an erring cop or a roving counsel. Law punishes, after following due process thereof, the culprit. I am concerned over the nasty clash of November 2019 between policemen and counsels on the streets of Delhi, Capital of India's 1.3 billion people.

To start with, I don't belong to the Indian Police Service. Yet, I have had the rare privilege as junior "subaltern", to work directly with two legends of the Indian police, K Sankaran Nair in IX Asian Games 1982 and with RN Kao, for short stint, thereafter. Both of them were amazing and extraordinary professionals of superior, rare quality. Both were workaholics, who knew how to command and also demand in a stentorian manner, mission success. Both told a junior non-IPS officer like me at first sight: "There are no bad soldiers; there are only bad commanders." Their crisp advice: "Carry out the assigned task. I am with you always. In success or failure, don't worry." It was an unprecedented reassurance from two superiors in a span of two years. In retrospect, I see the success of my two commanders owing to their inherent ability to command, control, communicate with conviction, objectivity and fairness, and, yet with guts, to demand the impossible to turn defeat into victory; à la Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, General JN Chaudhuri and Lieutenant-General Zorawar Chand Bakshi. Not everyone, therefore, can command simply by wearing a commander's uniform. That's a harsh reality. Hence, recalling my 38-year-old experience, I froze seeing at least 7,000 police personnel taking to the streets, to express their grievances, defying their top brass, on live TV.

If thousands of subordinates of uniformed service take to the streets to express their displeasure and fury, it simply amounts to complete failure of command and the posting and deployment of the entire top brass of the force need a close re-look. It's time to transfer, re-train and reform. It reflects a complete disconnect between command and the corps. It's an abominable state of affairs for an aspiring superpower status-seeking State.

That the police rank and file is treated like doormats by all political hues is a reality too stark not to be noticed. One instance will suffice. On December 3, 2004, I was driving back to my office after attending the All India Revenue Sports Meet Zonal inauguration by Viren Shah, Governor West Bengal. At a traffic signal, there was a commotion owing to a brazen red light violation in the busy Dalhousie Square of Kolkata, adjacent to Writer's Building, the seat of the State Government. The traffic sergeant on duty showed exemplary promptness to flag down the errant cab driver and impose a fine. But the dutiful cop was pounced upon by the law-violating driver and five more cabbies. I just couldn't take the sight of the cop's bloodied face. I, as Commissioner Customs, went back and promptly wrote a demi-official letter to Kolkata Police Commissioner suggesting that the officer assaulted should be recognised at once and law violators be booked. A fortnight later in my office came three unknown visitors and one of them virtually fell at my feet to say thanks and broke down. I was dazed. It transpired that my letter to the Police Commissioner not only lifted the traffic sergeant's instant suspension "for gross dereliction of duty and rioting" but also brought him a reward and recognition. I felt happy that my letter gave justice to an honest professional in uniform.

I can go on. My four-decade-long diary has some real-life stories for the future. Nevertheless, the narrative would remain incomplete without one of the most macabre cases of murder of a 1971-batch West Bengal-cadre IPS officer Vinod Mehta that was masterminded, instigated, executed by the political class of this country. It was Sunday, March 18, 1984, a Holi holiday. Deputy Commissioner Port, Mehta was "on-call", along with two more Deputy Commissioners, with armed forces, in the vicinity to thwart anticipated trouble. Despite advance inputs, preparation and deployment, Mehta was lynched by a fanatic mob and none of his IPS colleagues came to his rescue. The Communist Chief Minister of West Bengal and his cohorts were busy scheming and manoeuvring the next move. Nothing happened in that murder case. No politician lost his chair. No criminal was punished. Only the words of my two legendary police bosses of yesteryears ricocheted and haunted me: "There are no bad soldiers; there are only bad commanders." The political bosses are commanders of India. They haunt me even today. Every day.

(The writer, alumnus of National Defence College, is the author of China in India)

FIVE YEARS AGO THE CHIEF MINISTER OF DELHI USED TO BE THE ONLY ONE COUGHING, BUT NOW THE WHOLE CITY AND HOUSE IS COUGHING.
 —BJP LOK SABHA MP
 PARVESH VERMA

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



THIS SHOWS BJP'S INTELLECTUAL BANKRUPTCY. IF THEY THINK PERSONAL ATTACKS ON CM'S HEALTH WILL END POLLUTION, THEN DO SO DAY AND NIGHT.
 —AAP SPOKESPERSON
 RAGHAV CHADHA

Not a RECiPe for disaster

India's perennial inward focus emerges across trade discussions. This is counter-intuitive, since the country has benefitted greatly from globalisation and liberalised market access



MOHIT KALAWATIA RAGHAV PRIYADARSHI

At the recently-concluded Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that despite seven years of negotiations, his Government had decided not to join this plurilateral regional trade bloc that was launched by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) leaders and six other countries during the 21st ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh in November 2012.

The objective of launching RCEP negotiations was to achieve a modern, comprehensive, high-quality and mutually beneficial economic partnership agreement among the ASEAN member States and its Free Trade Agreement (FTA) partners.

Announcing the country's decision to stay out, Modi said, "India stands for greater regional integration, as well as for freer trade and adherence to a rule-based international order. India has been pro-actively, constructively and meaningfully engaged in the RCEP negotiations since inception. India has worked for the cherished objective of striking a balance, in the spirit of give and take. Today, when we look around we see during seven years of RCEP negotiations, many things, including the global economic and trade scenarios, have changed. We cannot overlook these changes."

Modi's decision came in the backdrop of intense domestic pressure from various stakeholders, including political parties, State Governments and various industry lobbies. Indian decision-makers were persuaded to shun the free trade partnership due to shrill concerns that India would become a dumping ground for Chinese products, adversely impacting Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and also cripple its dairy industry due to the presence of majors such as Australia and New Zealand in this trade grouping.

Interestingly, India's decision to withdraw from the RCEP came despite the Ministry of Commerce's High-Level Advisory Group (HLAG) recommending that the country adopt an optimistic outlook towards RCEP. The HLAG, constituted under the chairmanship of Surjit Bhalla — Executive Director for India at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and former member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council — comprised other high-ranking members such as Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and former Commerce Secretary Rajeev Kher. The HLAG was tasked with recommending steps to boost the country's share in global merchandise and services trade, and formally came out with its recommendations only days before the Prime Minister announced India's withdrawal from RCEP. Since then, the Commerce Minister has clarified that India may still join the partnership if its concerns are addressed, though such an eventuality seems unlikely in the near future.

To an extent, India's decision to withdraw was also influenced by the perceived negative outcomes of earlier trade pacts it had entered into with Japan, Korea and the ASEAN. A central theme which emerges across trade discussions, of which India is a part, is the country's perennial inward focus. This stance is counter-intu-

TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS COHERENCE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD EXPLORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NODAL BODY, ON THE LINES OF THE ERSTWHILE TRADE AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE CABINET. SUCH A BODY CAN ENABLE CONSULTATIVE DECISION-MAKING, EFFICIENT INTER-MINISTERIAL COORDINATION AND BETTER DEFINITION OF THE COUNTRY'S TRADE PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES



itive since India has benefitted greatly from globalisation and liberalised market access, evidenced not only in its services exports but also through import of primary and intermediate goods for domestic value-addition and re-export.

Further, the impending stalemate at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), precipitated by the US's efforts to render the WTO appellate body comatose, necessitates an exploration of other routes for trade enhancement. Bilateral and plurilateral trade arrangements such as the RCEP have thus emerged as a preferred alternative. Since the beginning of the Doha Round of trade negotiations at the WTO in 2001, the number of such arrangements in force globally has grown more than three-fold. During the same period, India inked trade agreements with the ASEAN, Japan, South Korea and Singapore. However, since 2011, India has not signed any further bilateral or plurilateral trade agreements, primarily due to a growing perception that opening up of trade borders has not served the country well.

Contrary to this perception, such agreements have contributed immensely towards trade creation. For instance, India currently has a trade surplus of \$2.5 billion with Singapore. Similarly, India's trade deficit with ASEAN vis-à-vis its total trade deficit witnessed a continuous decrease from 9.9 per cent in 2007 to 6.6 per cent in 2017; despite the fact that ASEAN's share in India's total trade has remained more or less constant. Meanwhile, India's deficit with China, a non-FTA partner country, increased from 18 per cent of the total trade deficit in 2007, to 40 per cent in 2017. Even within the ambit of the WTO, the concept of flexible multilat-

eralism has found several supporters. Flexible multilateralism allows WTO members to advance and conclude plurilateral agreements where full consensus is not yet possible. Examples of such plurilateral arrangements include the Information Technology Agreements (ITA-I and II) — while India is a signatory to ITA-I, it has refrained from adopting the second iteration. More recently, taking forward the approach of flexible multilateralism, 76 countries decided to initiate discussions on trade related aspects of electronic commerce. India has so far not joined the discussion, citing the erosion of policy space and the digital gap between member countries among other reasons, for not doing so.

Looking ahead, if India wants to achieve its target of becoming a \$5 trillion economy by 2024, then considerable efforts and resources are required to push its exports. More importantly, the country will have to review its frozen approach towards bilateral and plurilateral arrangements. Indeed, along with other like-minded countries, the country should continue to ensure that the relevance of a multilateral trading system is maintained. However, it is also important that in light of changing global trade dynamics characterised by forward and backward linkages, it cannot afford to ignore preferential agreements, or even limited trade deals like the one it is currently exploring with the US.

Given India's political-economy compulsions, it is understandable that the country remains wary of entering into far-reaching trade agreements proposed by advanced jurisdictions. But India must nevertheless adopt an alternative strategy to advance its self-

interest. It is better to sit in the negotiating room and disagree than to leave the room altogether.

Going forward, the Indian leadership must resist the temptation of abstaining from decisions due to perceived costs in the short-run. To begin with, there is an urgent need to fix internal decision-making mechanisms. A more concerted and coordinated effort across Government departments in evaluating trade partnerships should be the way forward, instead of convening inter-ministerial discussions as a reactionary measure. Government departments should engage with the industry on a more frequent basis on issues of market access and to determine sub-sectoral competitiveness.

Further, the country's relative strengths and domestic industry participation in specific value chains should inform prioritisation of trade partner negotiations. At present, the Commerce Ministry reaches out to the industry for inputs only after the country has initiated trade discussions — this mechanism largely remains ineffective as it fails to solicit detailed and usable submissions within predefined timelines.

To ensure that there is coherence in the decision-making process, the Government should explore the establishment of a nodal body, on the lines of the erstwhile Trade and Economic Relations Committee (TERC) of the Cabinet. Such a body can enable consultative decision-making, efficient inter-ministerial coordination and better definition of the country's trade priorities and strategies.

(Kalawatia and Priyadarshi work at Koan Advisory Group, New Delhi. The views expressed here are personal.)

The creeping death that we must fight

All sources of NOx and NO₂, be it transport, industries and power generation, should be tackled keeping in view the health emergency that the country faces today



KOTA SRIRAJ

At a time when air pollution levels are becoming a constant threat in India and across the world, we need to deal with two most damaging gases, nitrogen oxides (NOx) and nitrogen dioxides (NO₂).

NOx and NO₂ are produced from the reaction of nitrogen and oxygen gases in the air during combustion, especially at high temperatures. Hence, in areas with high vehicular traffic, especially large cities, the amount of NOx and NO₂ emitted into the atmosphere as air pollution can be significant.

NOx and NO₂ gases react to form smog and acid rain as well as being central to the formation of fine

particles (PM) and ground level ozone, both of which are associated with adverse health effects. Exposure to PM pollution and deadly ozone, even for a short duration, can worsen respiratory conditions and asthma and lead to emergency hospital admission, especially for those with pre-existing heart or lung disease and in the elderly and children.

India, too, is in the crosshairs of spiralling NOx and NO₂ levels. The *Air Pollution Global Cities Ranking Report* released by Greenpeace found that 15 of the 20 most polluted cities in the world are located in India, highlighting the country's air pollution crisis.

The organisation analysed the satellite data generated using the methodology of Tropospheric Monitoring Instrument (TROPOMI), which monitors vertically integrated amount of several atmospheric trace gases, including NOx and NO₂. Based on the analysis of this satellite data, Greenpeace India put the culpability of rising NOx and NO₂ levels on transport and indus-



trial clusters which are creating India's worst nitrogen dioxide hotspots such as Delhi, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Hyderabad, given the fact that these cities have high vehicular population and petrol/diesel consumption.

According to the satellite data collected between February 2018 and May 2019, coal consumption and industrial clusters like Sonbhadra-Singrauli in Madhya Pradesh, Korba

in Chhattisgarh, Talcher in Odisha, Chandrapur in Maharashtra, Mundra in Gujarat and Durgapur in West Bengal were also found to be equally polluting when it comes to NOx and NO₂ emissions.

In January 2019, *Airpocalypse III*, another report by Greenpeace India, identified 139 cities where air pollution levels exceed national standards but were not included in the National Clean Air Programme

(NCAAP) that was recently released by the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

The report states that even if we are optimistic and assume that air pollution across India can be reduced by 30 per cent by 2024, 153 cities will be left with pollution levels exceeding the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and only 12 cities will comply with World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines.

To highlight the severity of the crisis, even after a 30 per cent reduction, PM10 levels in Delhi will still be about 168 µg/m³, almost three times the national standard of 60µg/m³.

India is already paying a price for the current nitrogen dioxide levels with increasing cases of asthma, lung damage, heart attacks and lung cancer. NO₂ also contributes to the formation of PM2.5, a dangerous air pollutant.

It is estimated that air pollution, ambient PM2.5, household and ozone air pollution collectively caused 3.4 million deaths worldwide

in 2017 and over 1.2 million in India. PM2.5 alone resulted in more than 6.7 lakh deaths in India in 2017.

The proliferation of NO₂ levels and the consequent increase in PM2.5 levels require urgent intervention and action from the Government. All sources of NO₂, be it transport, industries and power generation, should be tackled keeping in view the health emergency India faces today.

Additionally, the emission standard deadlines for coal-based power plants and industries must be strictly adhered to, even as the industrial and electricity sectors' transition to cleaner alternatives for power generation must be speeded up.

In fact, according to a 2015 report by IIT-Kanpur, a 90 per cent reduction in NO₂ from power plants in a radius of 300km from Delhi can reduce nitrates by 45 per cent, which will effectively reduce PM10 and PM2.5 concentrations in Delhi and help us breathe better.

(The writer is an environmental journalist)



FOREIGN EYE



BRING OUR KIDS BACK FROM SYRIA

Those who joined IS should be punished. Their children should not. It shames the UK that IS' downfall, the closure of a vicious chapter which should have heralded progress, appears instead to have hardened attitudes in such a way as to place civilised values in doubt. It is one of the UK Government's first duties to protect blameless British children from harm. Those trapped in Syria must be repatriated without delay.

(The Guardian editorial)

Sensex perches near all-time high, Nifty ends just shy of 12k-mark

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The BSE Sensex darted up 182 points to close just shy of its lifetime high on Wednesday, propelled by index heavyweight Reliance Industries, Sun Pharma and IndusInd Bank.

After scaling a new intraday record of 40,816.38, the 30-share index ended 181.94 points, or 0.45 per cent, higher at 40,651.64. It is just 2 points shy of its all-time closing high, hit on November 7, 2019.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty closed just below the crucial 12,000-mark, advancing 59 points, or 0.49 per cent, to end at 11,999.10.

Reliance Industries led the gains on the Sensex in value terms, settling 2.47 per cent higher after touching its lifetime high of ₹1,571.85 (intraday). The shares have gained after the company's telecom arm, Reliance Jio, announced it will increase mobile phone call and data charges in the next few weeks, following similar announcements by Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea.

Among other gainers, Sun Pharma rallied 5.73 per cent, IndusInd Bank 5.50 per cent and Yes Bank jumped 2.65 per cent.

L&T, Maruti, Tech Mahindra, ITC and PowerGrid

RIL m-cap inches closer to ₹10 lakh crore-mark

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The market valuation of Reliance Industries, the country's most valued firm, is fast nearing the ₹10 lakh crore mark helped by continuous rise in its share price.

At the close of trade on Wednesday, the company's stock rose 2.47 per cent to ₹1,547.05 on the BSE. During the day, it jumped 4.10 per cent to ₹1,571.85 — its record high. On the NSE, it climbed 2.56 per cent to close at ₹1,548.50.

The rally in the company's scrip helped its market valuation or market capitalisation (m-cap) rise to ₹9,80,699.59 crore. During the day, it zoomed to ₹9,96,415 crore.

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio on Tuesday said it would increase mobile phone call and data charges in the next few weeks in compliance with rules, as it followed similar announcements by Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea on tariff hike.

too ended on a positive note. On the other hand, Kotak Mahindra Bank dropped 1.49

In terms of traded volume, 11.40 lakh shares of the company were traded on the BSE and 1.98 crore shares on the NSE during the day.

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) on Tuesday achieved another milestone, becoming the first Indian firm to hit m-cap of ₹9.5 lakh crore.

Last month, RIL hit the ₹9 lakh crore m-cap mark in intra-day trade, first by any listed company.

In August 2018, it became the first Indian firm to cross the ₹8 lakh crore m-cap mark. So far this year, RIL's share price has jumped over 37 per cent.

TCS is the country's second most valued firm with a market valuation of ₹7,91,002.70 crore followed by HDFC Bank with m-cap of ₹6,98,227.03 crore, Hindustan Unilever (₹4,38,796.58 crore) and HDFC (₹3,79,950.64 crore).

The m-cap figures of companies change daily with stock price movement.

Airtel too finished in the red.

"Markets usually run ahead of macros and price future growth. There are three positive indicators for growth — reduction in corporate tax rate, proposed divestment of large public sector units, and a possible resolution of the US-China trade impasse. Therefore we see growth coming back in 2020," said Sanjiv Bhasin, director, IIFL Securities.

Sectorally, BSE energy, healthcare, oil and gas, industrials and capital goods indices rose up to 2.10 per cent.

BSE realty, consumer durables, power, telecom and utilities lost up to 1.36 per cent.

Broader BSE midcap and smallcap indices gained up to 0.25 per cent.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul settled significantly lower after US President Donald Trump on Tuesday warned that failure to get a trade deal with China will prompt more tariffs.

European equities were also trading on a negative note in their respective early deals.

Meanwhile, the Indian rupee depreciated 10 paise to 71.81 against the US dollar.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, slipped 0.11 per cent to USD 60.84 per barrel.

'India offers huge biz opportunities for Central, Eastern European cos'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi (PTI): India, with its 1.3 billion population, offers huge business opportunities for the companies of Central and Eastern European countries, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Wednesday. He further said both India and Europe also offer an opportunity to help kick-start economic growth in the world.

"We have lots of opportunities together and I hope we can look for a greater engagement. We have both comparatives and competitive advantages," Goyal said here while addressing the India-Europe 29 Business Forum, organised by industry body CII.

Seeking investments, the minister said India provides several incentives including low tax rates for investors. "We offer incentives, we have cut down tax rates. We have 1.3 billion people market who are aspiring for a better quality of life," Goyal said.

Indian and Central and Eastern European companies can enhance cooperation in areas like artificial intelligence, renewable energy and new age manufacturing.

Speaking at the function, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic and Demography Policy, Bulgaria, Mariyana Nikolova too sought investments from India.

Moody's assigns Baa1 rating to ONGC's proposed senior unsecured notes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Moody's Investors Service on Wednesday said it has assigned a 'Baa1' rating to the proposed senior unsecured notes to be issued by Oil and Natural Gas Corp under its USD 2 billion medium-term note programme.

The outlook on the rating is negative, Moody's said in a statement.

"The notes' rating is in line with ONGC's Baa1 issuer rating, which is in turn primarily driven by its standalone credit profile as captured by the company's Baa1 Baseline Credit Assessment (BCA)," says Vikas Halan, a Moody's senior vice president.

The rating reflects ONGC's position as the largest integrated oil and gas company in India with significant reserves, production and crude distillation capacity as also its substantial operating cash flow generation capacity. It also factors the firm's solid credit metrics that have improved but remain constrained by volatile — although range-bound — oil prices and high shareholder returns.

At the same time, Moody's expected that ONGC will not be asked to share fuel subsidies, as long as oil prices stay below USD 70 per barrel. "ONGC's issuer rating also

incorporates the company's high likelihood of extraordinary support from and very high dependence on the Government of India, in times of need. However, this assumption of government support has not resulted in any rating uplift, as the sovereign's rating is below ONGC's BCA," it said.

Given ONGC's strong credit metrics and status as a government-owned company, it enjoys strong access to debt capital markets and has substantial financial flexibility through equity stakes in Indian Oil Corp and GAIL India, which together were valued at about ₹21,000 crore as on November 14, 2019.

Moody's ratings for ONGC are based on the full consolidation of Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) which includes the full consolidation of HPCL's 49 per cent-owned joint venture, HPCL-Mittal Energy.

The government owns 62.98 per cent of ONGC's equity and has the ability to appoint all of its board of directors.

"The negative outlook on ONGC is in line with the negative outlook on the Government of India's rating and reflects Moody's view that ONGC's ratings will be downgraded if India's sovereign rating is downgraded to Baa3 from Baa2," Moody's said.

Swiggy to expand cloud kitchens to 12 new cities by March 2020

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Food ordering platform Swiggy on Wednesday said it has set up over 1,000 cloud kitchens for its restaurant partners and plans to have more such facilities in 12 new cities by March next year.

In a span of just two years, the company has invested in over a million square feet of real estate space across 14 cities to help large, medium and small restaurant partners expand to more locations both within their city and across new cities through cloud kitchens, Swiggy said in a statement.

"Swiggy has always maintained that cloud kitchens will be the future of food delivery. Very soon, India will have the second-highest number of cloud kitchens in the world, only next to China," Swiggy New Supply CEO Vishal Bhatia said.

The milestone of Swiggy successfully creating over 1,000 partner kitchens shows the faith the restaurant partners have in the concept and bolsters company's pioneering efforts in enabling more success stories in the restaurant ecosystem, he added.

In a cloud kitchen concept, operators prepare, package and deliver food without providing any dine-in facility to end-consumers.

NIFTY 50

Table with columns: SCRIP, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists top 50 Nifty stocks including ZEE, SUNPHARMA, INDUSINDBK, BPCL, DREDDY, YESBANK, RELIANCE, CIPLA, COALINDIA, TECHM, MARUTI, ADANIPORTS, NESTLEIND, ITC, POWERGRID, UPL, ICICIBANK, GRASIM, HDFCBANK, ONGC, JSWSTEEL, BAJAJ-AUTO, ASIANPAINT, ULTRACEMCO, AXISBANK, HEROMOTOCO, INFY, TCS, M&M, BAJFINANCE, HCLTECH, NTPC, TATAMOTORS, BRITANNIA, TITAN, BHARTIARTL, VEDL, WIPRO, HINDUNILVR, HDPC, SBIN, GAIL, HINDALCO, BAJAJFINSV, TATASTEEL, EICHARMOT, KOTAKBANK, IOC, HINDALCO, SIEMENS, BHEL, BRITANNIA, AUROPHARMA, HEROMOTOCO, SBILIFE, PNB, ESCORTS, L&FHT, ASIANPAINT, NTPC, GAIL, CONCOR, HINDPETRO, NMDC, SHREECEM, PETRONET, ASHOKLEY, DIVISLAB, BIOCEN, GODEFRIP, HDPCAMC, NHPC, HAVELLS, ICICIGI, HDCLIFE, BOSCHLTD, PEL, MCDOWELL-N, SBILIFE, OFSS, AMBUJACEM, INDIGO, BERGEPAINT, UBL, SRTANSFIN, COLPAL, PAGEIND, ICICIPRULI, ACC, PGH, BANKBARODA, MARICO, PNC, PEB, HINDZINC, BAJAHLING, L&FHT, DMART, DLF, MOTHERSUMI, SIEMENS, BANDHANBANK, IULHSGFIN, GICRE, NIACL.

BSE 500

Table with columns: Script, Open, High, Low, LTP, SPARC, SUVEN, SWANENERGY, VENKYS, PAGEIND, JSWENERGY, NAVINFLOOR, BALKRISIND, POLYCAP, BLISSGVS, JUBILANT, ALDRABANK, SUZLON, EXIDEIND, ADVENZYMES, MINDTREE, SYNBANK, INFIBEAM, OBOROIRLT, RCOM, MARICO, SRTANSFIN, HUDCO, RADICO, IPCALAB, M&MFIN, PIND, AMBUJACEM, RCF, GICRE, DALBHARAT, PETRONET, PGHL, ADANIGAS, UBREALES, TORNTPOWER, AMARAJAPAT, CRETTACC, MMT, RAMCOCEM, DBL, NOCIL, PRETAIL, RAKEIN, TAIN, BIPIND, VEDL, TRENT, KAJARIAGAS, FORCEMOT, RELINFRA, COMMININD, JCTYRE, HKTRE, BALMIWORE, VINATLORIA, INDIANTRANS, EIHOTEL, INOXLESIRE, CENTRALBK, ITDC, GLAXO, WELCORP, METROPOLIS, THOMASCOOK, MEGH, ASATRAZEN, RVNL, HAL, KTKBANK, CYIENT, IOB, PARAGMILK, BALRAMCHIN, TEAMLEASE, ABFRL, TRIDENT, KALAPPAPWR, KEEL, HINDSEBERG, RALLIS, INVENTURES, GILLETTE, J&K BANK, GNFC, PEIZER, PHILIPCARB, TATAMETALI, NIACL, FSL, HEXAWARE, IFCI, KIRCON, BALRCORPN, BAJAJELCB, SOUTHBANK, EIDIPARRY, MIDCAP, CANFINHOME, JAGRAN.



NIFTY NEXT 50

Table with columns: SCRIP, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists 50 Nifty Next 50 stocks including IDEA, LUPIN, DABUR, AUROPHARMA, ADILPHIND, CADILAH, CONCOR, HINDPETRO, NMDC, SHREECEM, PETRONET, ASHOKLEY, DIVISLAB, BIOCEN, GODEFRIP, HDPCAMC, NHPC, HAVELLS, ICICIGI, HDCLIFE, BOSCHLTD, PEL, MCDOWELL-N, SBILIFE, OFSS, AMBUJACEM, INDIGO, BERGEPAINT, UBL, SRTANSFIN, COLPAL, PAGEIND, ICICIPRULI, ACC, PGH, BANKBARODA, MARICO, PNC, PEB, HINDZINC, BAJAHLING, L&FHT, DMART, DLF, MOTHERSUMI, SIEMENS, BANDHANBANK, IULHSGFIN, GICRE, NIACL.

RUPEE vs Dollar



RUPEE vs Dollar

Table with columns: SCRIP, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists 50 Rupee vs Dollar stocks including SHOPERSTOP, TRITURBINE, IULISL, INOXWIND, GRINDWELL, SHILPAMAD, TITMADAY, VTL, TNPL, ZENSARTECH, SUPRAJIT, SHK, MAHSEAMER, MASFIN, CHALET, JSWHL, SHIRRAMCIT, LUXIND, RATNAMANI, JCHAC.

India calls for zero-tolerance for terror-crime nexus

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

India has called for a zero-tolerance approach, without any "double standards", to combat the existential global threat of the terror-crime nexus, under which UN-sanctioned terror groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammed continue to "destabilise regions through their cross-border financing" and propaganda.

"We have heard today how the twin scourges of terror and organised crime feed off the same lifelines. The nature of their relationship may vary, but they are sustained by the same malignant forces that seek to undermine governance, development and social cohesion through the illegitimate use of violence," India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin said here on Tuesday.

Speaking at a high-level special event of the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) on 'Cooperation to promote peace, security and stability: preventing the linking of terrorism with organised crime and its financing through drug trafficking', Akbaruddin said, "The terror-crime nexus is an existential global threat, the contours of which are mutating everyday."

In order to combat this menace, Akbaruddin said the international community will need to keep ahead of the new trends and technologies — "something that can only be achieved if we work together, with a zero-tolerance approach, bereft of double standards".

Akbaruddin emphasised that an added challenge in the nexus between terror and organised crime is the role of new and emerging technologies, including virtual currencies, encrypted communications and artificial intelligence.

"Such technologies are making networks loosely associated on the ground, closely intertwined in cyber-space," he said. The Indian envoy said UN-designated terrorist organisations such as the ISIL, the Al-Shabab, the Al-Qaida, the Boko Haram, the LeT and the JeM "continue to destabilise entire regions through their cross-border financing, propaganda, and recruitment, including by using — rather abusing — evolving global public goods such as the cyberspace and social media".

He stressed that terrorist organisations are engaging in lucrative criminal activities such as human trafficking to raise funds. At the same time, he said, criminal groups have joined hands with terrorists to provide illicit financing through drug trafficking, arms dealing, selling looted antiquities, money laundering and counterfeiting.

According to the Afghanistan Opium Survey by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), out of an estimated 29 million dollars generated in "illegal taxation" of opium revenues in Afghanistan in 2018, 21 million dollars were collected by anti-government elements, including the Taliban.

"The cross-border nature of such fused entities and their financing activities poses a serious challenge, as coordinated international response is too slow to be effective in most cases," Akbaruddin said. He underlined the importance of global frameworks

such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and need for Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) to combat the terror-crime nexus.

"Terrorist organisations have to recruit and train fighters, buy weapons and equipment, wage propaganda campaigns, and plan and carry out operations. These activities cost money, so understanding how groups raise, store, move, and spend that money helps bringing terrorists to justice and deters others from harbouring them or funding or joining their organisations," he said, adding that the UN needs to increase cooperation and coordination with such bodies.

At the same time, there also needs to be much greater rigour and transparency in the implementation of instruments already at the disposal of the UN, such as the

Security Council regimes targeting terrorist entities and individuals, Akbaruddin said.

"The efforts at concluding the CCIT have seen little progress at the UN and require to reinvigoration," he said. He noted that addressing these challenges requires increased sophistication and a coordinated international response, with real time intelligence sharing, capacity building and technology assistance. Akbaruddin lamented that while there is an expanding body of international legal instruments to prevent transnational organised crimes in specific sectors, there is still no common global strategy to curb criminal activities in cyberspace.

However, the Christchurch Call, which brought technology companies and governments together to commit to "eliminate terrorist and violent extremist

content online" is one way forward, he said, referring to the commitment launched in the aftermath of the terrorist attack on two mosques in New Zealand's Christchurch town in March 2019. The attack, which was live streamed, killed 51 people and injured 50.

India, which joined the SCO in June 2017, has acceded to the 'SCO Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Illegal Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursors', which provides for cooperation in the analysis of crimes related to illicit narcotic-trafficking and harmonization of national legislation in the fight against narcotic trafficking. Akbaruddin said India looks forward to organising an SCO event in India on combating illegal financial flows related to narcotics trafficking in 2020.

Two US troops killed in Afghan helicopter crash

AFP ■ KABUL

Two American service members have been killed in a helicopter crash in Afghanistan, US forces there said Wednesday, adding that the crash appeared to be an accident, though the Taliban claimed they had shot it down.

A statement from US Forces Afghanistan said the crash on Wednesday was being investigated, "however preliminary reports do not indicate it was caused by enemy fire".

It did not reveal the crash location and said it was withholding the names of those killed until next of kin could be told. "The Americans wanted to raid a mujahideen base, but their helicopter was shot down and caught fire. All on board were killed," their main spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said.

Imran Khan-led govt's days are numbered, warns Fazlur Rehman

PTI ■ KARACHI

Firebrand cleric-cum-politician Maulana Fazlur Rehman has fired a fresh salvo at Prime Minister Imran Khan, saying the "Gorbachev of Pakistan" was heading a government that has its days numbered.

Speaking at a sit-in in Bannu city in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tuesday, the hard-line cleric and leader of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) hit out at the prime minister for calling opposition leaders "thieves", alleging that the "selected" government has offered National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) to Khan's sister.

Rehman claimed the time for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government led by Khan was running out.

"The roots of this government have been cut. They have only a number of days left," Rehman warned.

"Imran Khan has given his sister an NRO. Give us a similar sewing machine which can earn you Rs 70 billion in one year," he was quoted as saying by the Geo News.

National Reconciliation Ordinance was an ordinance issued in October 2007 granting pardon to politicians, political workers and bureaucrats accused of corruption, embezzlement, money laundering, murder, and terrorism.

Rehman said Khan was trying to be the "Gorbachev of Pakistan". He used the same expression to describe Khan earlier this month when he gave the prime minister two days deadline to tender his resignation.

The JUI-F chief was responding to Khan's tirade from the previous day where he



Supporters of a religious party chant anti government slogans during a sit-in protest in Lahore, Pakistan

labelled Rehman's anti-government protest as a "circus".

Prime Minister Khan said on Monday that a "circus" took place in Islamabad in the name of 'Azadi March' protest.

He said the protesters could not even stay for a month in the capital as opposed to his party's 2014 protest of 126 days.

Khan said the opposition leaders had ulterior motives, which is why they resorted to dharna politics on containers.

Earlier, Rehman led a massive anti-government protest rally, dubbed 'Azadi March', aimed at toppling the incumbent government.

The firebrand cleric had lambasted the government for

failing on key domestic and foreign policy fronts. He said only Pakistan's economy was going down whereas the economies of all other regional countries were going up.

Rehman launched his protest on October 27 from Karachi and arrived in Islamabad on October 31, leading a caravan of tens of thousands of followers.

He repeatedly said that the protesters would stay until Khan resigned and new elections were announced. The government also engaged him in talks but failed to make any headway as he refused to budge from the key demand of resignation of the Prime Minister.

Despite failure to achieve

the objective immediately, it is believed that he gained politically by showing his power to assemble large crowds. The discipline and peace of the protesters were also acknowledged even by his opponents.

The opposition parties, including the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan People Party (PPP), had also thrown their weight behind the massive anti-government rally comprising thousands of protesters in Islamabad.

Rehman claimed on Tuesday that the protest had achieved its target and added the JUI-F did not go to the federal capital without any purpose.

Lankan Prez names brother Mahinda as PM after Wickremesinghe resigns

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Wednesday named his elder brother and former strongman Mahinda Rajapaksa as the new prime minister after incumbent Ranil Wickremesinghe announced his resignation from the post following the election debacle.

Mahinda, the current main opposition leader, will assume duties soon after incumbent Wickremesinghe steps down formally on Thursday, AFP reported.

Mahinda was appointed the Prime Minister on October 26, 2018 by the then President Maithripala Sirisena, who sacked Wickremesinghe in a controversial move that plunged the country into an unprecedented constitutional crisis.

He resigned in December as two crucial Supreme Court decisions made the former strongman's efforts to cling to premiership untenable.

The apex court later unanimously declared that the dissolution of Parliament by Sirisena was "illegal".

Mahinda 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.

The two brothers led a decisive campaign that helped end the island nation's three decade long civil war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Wickremesinghe announced his resignation, days after the ruling party's candidate lost the presidential election to Rajapaksa.

Rajapaksa defeated Wickremesinghe's deputy Sajith Premadasa.

In a special statement in Sinhala language, the Prime Minister said that he had met President Rajapaksa on Tuesday and discussed the future of Sri Lanka's Parliament, Colombo Gazette newspaper

reported.

He said that while his Government still has the majority in Parliament it was decided to respect the mandate given to Rajapaksa at the Presidential election and step down.

"I will step down to allow the new president to establish a new government. I will officially inform him of my decision tomorrow," Wickremesinghe said.

He has been the leader of the United National Party (UNP) since 1994 and served as Sri Lanka's prime minister for a total of three terms.

He was under pressure to quit and handover the government to the opposite camp after Rajapaksa won the presidential election on Saturday.

The UNP leader faced a revolt since Premadasa's defeat, a regular occurrence during the last 25 years whenever the UNP lost a major election.

Harin Fernando, a minister from the party's younger brigade, told reporters that

Mahinda, the current main opposition leader, will assume duties soon after incumbent Wickremesinghe steps down formally on Thursday

they want Wickremesinghe to quit the party leadership and name Premadasa his successor for both the party leadership and the post of the main opposition leader.

"We will form our own party if he did not make the necessary changes this time," Fernando told reporters.

There will be a caretaker cabinet of 15 members to run the government until Rajapaksa will be constitutionally able to dissolve parliament after February 2020.

Rajnath visits Kranji War Memorial

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday visited the Kranji War Memorial in Singapore and paid tributes to those who laid down their lives in the line of duty during the World War-II.

Dedicated to the men and women from India, the UK, Australia, Canada, Sri Lanka, Malaya, the Netherlands and New Zealand who died defending Singapore and Malaya against the invading Japanese forces during the second World War, the memorial comprises the War Graves, the Memorial Walls, the State Cemetery and the Military Graves.

Malaya united with North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore in 1963 to become Malaysia. In 1965, Singapore was separated from the federation.

"Visited the Kranji War Memorial in Singapore today and paid tributes to those men and women who laid down their lives in the line of duty during the Second World War. Deeply humbled by the undying spirit of valour and sacrifice of these brave men and women," Singh tweeted.

3 dead as Bolivian military lifts fuel blockade

AFP ■ LA PAZ

Three protesters were killed and 30 wounded in clashes Tuesday with Bolivian security forces lifting an opposition blockade of fuel supplies to La Paz, the public ombudsman's office reported.

Troops and police had moved to lift the siege on a fuel plant in El Alto by supporters of ex-president Evo Morales that has caused acute shortages in nearby La Paz.

A spokesman for the ombudsman's office said two of the dead had been hit by gunfire, including a 31-year-old man.

"We are asking the authorities for an investigation," the spokesman told AFP, adding that 30 people had been wounded, all of them supporters of Morales.

The army said in a statement that "agitors and vandals" had attacked and partially destroyed the Senkata fuel plant in El Alto, "using high-powered explosives".

The deaths bring to 27 the number of people killed since unrest began in the wake of October 20 elections, according to a tally by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. A convoy of around 50 fuel tankers was able to leave the Senkata plant for the first time in more than a week after police and military forces using armoured vehicles secured the route to neighbouring La Paz. The convoy included gasoline, diesel and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tankers.

Morales supporters erected barricades around the El Alto plant last week to protest what they said was a coup by interim President Jeanine Anez.

The blockade caused serious fuel shortages in La Paz, the scene of daily protests against the new government. Public trans-

port has largely been paralysed by the shortages.

Morales condemned the deaths in a tweet from Mexico, which granted him political asylum after his November 10 resignation.

"I denounce to the world that the de facto government in the style of military dictatorships is again killing my brothers in El Alto, who are peacefully resisting the coup and are fighting in the defense of life and democracy," Anez, the 52-year-old former deputy speaker of the Senate, declared herself the country's interim president last Tuesday, filling a vacuum left by Morales' departure and the resignations of several ministers.

Since the resignation of Morales — the country's first indigenous president — his supporters have demonstrated daily in the streets of La Paz and in some provincial cities to demand Anez's departure.

The deadliest clashes occurred last Friday in the central city of Cochabamba, where nine people were killed in a confrontation with the army and police.

Riot-police fired tear gas to disperse several thousand pro-Morales demonstrators near Cochabamba on Monday.

Hand-in-hand with the protests have been blockades of the main roads leading from agricultural regions to La Paz and other major cities. Agricultural produce like meat, chicken and eggs was running short in high-altitude La Paz. "There is no more chicken, there is only soup," said Eduardo Mamani, an employee at a restaurant specializing in chicken dishes.

Wilfredo Rojo, a minister in the interim government, said the Air Force was organising an "airlift" to deliver meat to the city.

UN 'regrets' new US position on Israeli settlements

United Nations (PTI): United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres has regretted the announcement made by the Trump administration that it no longer believes the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories are illegal.

"I can say for our part our position remains unchanged," the UN chief's spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told reporters here on Tuesday in response to questions on the announcement made by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on the Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory.

"We regret the decision and the announcement made by the United States," Dujarric said.

In a major policy shift, Pompeo on Monday announced that the US no longer believes the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories are illegal, asserting that the previous argument that such structures were inconsistent with international law has not helped the peace process at all.

Migrants found alive in refrigerated truck

AFP ■ THE HAQUE

A ferry crew found 25 migrants in a refrigerated container on a boat sailing from the Netherlands to Britain on Tuesday, emergency services said.

The cargo vessel bound for Felixstowe returned to the Dutch port of Vlaardingen, near Rotterdam, as soon as the stowaways were found, they said in a statement.

The people found in the container received medical attention at the port and two were taken to hospital for further treatment for possible hypothermia.

The discovery comes the month after 39 Vietnamese people were found dead in a refrigerated truck in Britain, again laying bare the risks of illegal migrant routes to Europe.

"On board a ship it turned out that several people were found in a cooling container. The ship returned to the harbour," said the Rotterdam region emergency services on Twitter.

"The 25 people were taken off the ship and given the medical care they need. Earlier the message came from the ship that no people died. Two people were transported to hospital for extra medical care. Twenty-three people were transferred to a police location after a medical check-up," it said.

DFDS Seaways, which operates the cargo ferry, said that the migrants had come on board on a lorry trailer, De Telegraaf newspaper said.

The driver of the truck had been arrested, it added.

A bus took away the mainly male group, some of whom

were wrapped in silver thermal blankets.

Their nationalities were not immediately known.

The mayor of Vlaardingen, Anemiek Jetten, said "more and more" people were trying to cross the Channel and had not been put off by the deaths of the Vietnamese migrants.

"I think people are so desperate that they keep trying, despite the tragic events in the UK not so long ago," Jetten told broadcaster NOS.

She added it was not clear if more people were trying to get to Britain before immigration laws become tougher after its scheduled exit from the EU next year.

Separately on Tuesday Dutch border police intercepted a bus carrying 65 Moldovan nationals, including children who were planning to claim asylum, Dutch media reported.

Israel strikes military sites in Syria: Army

AFP ■ JERUSALEM

The Israeli army confirmed it carried out strikes on Syrian and Iranian "terror targets" near Damascus on Wednesday, in response to fire from Syria the day before.

The Israel Defense Forces, who blamed Tuesday's rockets on "an Iranian force", said it holds Damascus responsible for attacks launched from Syria into its territory.

Syria's state media earlier said Syrian anti-aircraft defences intercepted a "heavy attack" by Israeli warplanes over the capital in the early hours of Wednesday morning.

Israel has carried out frequent air and missile strikes against Iranian targets inside Syria since the country descended into civil war in 2011, but rarely comments on them.

"We just carried out wide-scale strikes of Iranian Quds

Force & Syrian Armed Forces targets in Syria in response to the rockets fired at Israel by an Iranian force in Syria last night," the Israel Defense Forces tweeted.

During the attack the Syrian government's defence missile was fired "despite clear warnings to refrain from such fire", it added. As a result, a number of Syrian aerial defense batteries were destroyed. "We hold the Syrian regime responsible for the actions that take place in Syrian territory and warn them against allowing further attacks against Israel," the army said.

"We will continue operating firmly and for as long as necessary against the Iranian entrenchment in Syria."

An AFP correspondent in Damascus heard several large explosions in the early hours of Wednesday morning. "Our air defence con-

fronted the heavy attack and intercepted the hostile missiles, and was able to destroy most of them before reaching their targets," Syria's SANA news agency quoted a military source as saying.

SANA added that the aggression was carried out from "Lebanese and Palestinian territories". Israel sometimes launches its attacks on Syria from planes flying over neighbouring Lebanon.

Triggered by the repression of demonstrations by President Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian conflict has been complicated by the involvement of foreign powers.

Wednesday's air raid comes a day after Israel's defences intercepted four rockets fired from Syria.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Tuesday's rockets were fired from positions around the capital held by groups loyal to

the Damascus government.

The flare-up follows a major escalation in and around Gaza last week when Israel carried out the targeted killing of a top commander of Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad, which is allied with Damascus.

The killing was accompanied by a second strike, unconfirmed by Israel, on an Islamic Jihad leader in Damascus that killed his son and another person.

The hundreds of strikes carried out by Israel in Syria have mostly been against Iranian targets or positions of Iran's Lebanese ally, Shiite militant group Hezbollah.

Both are sworn enemies of the Jewish state and both have backed the Syrian president's forces with advisers or fighters.

The war in Syria has killed more than 370,000 people and displaced millions.

US Senate unanimously passes HK Human Rights and Democracy Act

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

In a show of solidarity with pro-democracy supporters in Hong Kong, the US Senate has unanimously passed a legislation that would force the Trump administration to assess whether political unrest in the vital global financial hub justifies changing its unique treatment under the US law.

The Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 that was passed on Tuesday would also require the Secretary of State to certify at least once a year that Hong Kong still retains enough autonomy to warrant the special US trading consideration that bolsters its status as a world financial center.

The US treats semi-autonomous Hong Kong, which has its own legal and political systems, differently from the Chinese mainland when it comes to trade and export controls. The bill — if it

becomes law — will demand greater scrutiny of the city's special status.

The bill, which among other things prohibit the commercial export of certain munitions to the Communist party-controlled Hong Kong Police Force, would provide sanctions against officials responsible for human rights violations in Hong Kong. The House of Representatives passed a similar legislation in October.

"This bill sends an important message of bipartisan support from the US Congress for the democratic aspirations of the broad majority of the people of Hong Kong," Senator Dick Durbin said.

Senators Jim Risch, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Marco Rubio, Ben Cardin, and Bob Menendez, ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, praised Senate's passage of their bill.

"The US Senate took a stand today in support of the Hong Kong people. Passing this legislation is an important step forward in holding the Chinese Communist Party accountable for its erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy and its repression of fundamental freedoms," said Risch.

Rubio said the passage of the bill was an important step in holding accountable those Chinese and Hong Kong government officials responsible for Hong Kong's eroding autonomy and human rights violations.

Both the United States Senate and the House of Representatives have now demonstrated bipartisan solidarity with the people of Hong Kong as they stand up for their freedoms and basic human rights, said Cardin.

"It's what we do as a democracy — support each other, especially when authoritarian regimes try to impose

their will on free peoples. As the situation in Hong Kong deteriorates, China must understand that the United States of America is committed to the promised freedom and autonomy for Hong Kong," he said.

Noting that the Senate has taken a momentous step forward in America's long history of standing up for democracy and human rights across the world, Menendez said with the situation in Hong Kong nearing a breaking point, this legislation will hopefully be a shot in the arm for the millions who have been patiently waiting for the US to once again serve as a beacon of light and solidarity in their push to defend their basic rights and autonomy.

"Hong Kong authorities must de-escalate this situation by taking the appropriate steps to address the democratic desires of the people of Hong Kong, including forming an

independent commission to investigate police violence. This legislation makes it clear that the US will stand firmly and unambiguously with the legitimate aspirations of the people of Hong Kong," he said.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said the bipartisan legislation will safeguard Hong Kong's democracy and autonomy and hold accountable those responsible for any human rights abuses in the Chinese-ruled financial center.

"We have sent a message to President Xi (Jinping): your suppression of freedom, whether in Hong Kong, in northwest China or anywhere else will not stand. You cannot be a great leader and you cannot be a great country when you oppose freedom, when you are so brutal to the people of Hong Kong, young and old, who are protesting," Schumer said.

"When you are so brutal to the Uyghurs in northwest

China, and when China is censored so the Chinese people can't get the truth. History has shown that that always fails, President Xi. Always fails, and yet China has taken dramatic steps backward in the curtailment of freedom," he said.

Annie Boyajian, Director of Advocacy at Freedom House, said over the last six months of protests, one has seen increasingly aggressive treatment of demonstrators by police, and intensifying violations of the 'one country, two systems' model by the Chinese Communist Party.

The bill would address these issues by requiring annual US government certification that Hong Kong remains sufficiently autonomous to merit special treatment under US law.

It allows for sanctions on perpetrators of human rights abuses, which would leave them unable to vacation or study in the US, access funds in

Beijing warns US diplomat of strong measures in retaliation

Beijing (AFP): China's foreign ministry on Wednesday summoned a top US diplomat over the Senate's passing of a Hong Kong rights bill, warning of "strong" countermeasures against the United States should the legislation be signed into law.

Vice foreign minister Ma Zhaoxu called in acting charge d'affaires William Klein to lodge a "strong protest", the ministry said in a statement.

"We strongly urge the US side to immediately take effective measures to prevent this bill from becoming law" and stop meddling in China's internal affairs, the statement said.

"Otherwise, the Chinese side will take strong measures to resolutely counter it, and the US side must bear all the consequences," it said.

US bank accounts, work with US business, or carry out dollar-denominated transactions. Sanctioned parties would additionally face difficulty in banking at any institution with strong ties to the US, Boyajian said.

Since June, Hong Kong has seen massive, regular demonstrations, which started

in opposition to a proposed bill that would have allowed its citizens to be extradited to the mainland. The protests quickly morphed into wider calls for democracy and opposition to growing Chinese influence.

Beijing denies interfering in Hong Kong's affairs and has blamed Western countries for stirring up unrest.

Last campus protesters hold out as Hong Kong schools reopen

AP ■ HONG KONG

Hong Kong schools reopened Wednesday after a six-day shutdown but students and commuters faced transit disruptions as the last protesters remained holed up on a university campus.

City officials tried to restore a sense of normalcy as primary and secondary classes resumed. They sent inspectors to examine the damage to a major road tunnel targeted by protesters, but it was unclear when it could be reopened.

A small group of protesters refused to leave Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the remnants of hundreds who took over the campus for several days. They won't leave because they would face arrest. Police have set up a cordon around the area to prevent anyone from escaping.

The occupation of Polytechnic capped more than a week of intense protests, the latest flareup in the often violent unrest that has gripped the semi-autonomous Chinese city for more than five months.

Since a police siege of the campus began Sunday, more than 1,000 people have been



A protestor holds a sign reading 'Carrie Lam has been shamefully silent on police brutality' during a demonstration in the financial district in Hong Kong on Wednesday. Hong Kong schools reopened Wednesday after a six-day shutdown but students and commuters faced transit disruptions as the last protesters remained holed up on a university campus. AP

arrested and hundreds of injured treated at hospitals, authorities said.

There were scattered incidents of protesters stopping trains by opening emergency doors and blocking traffic Wednesday but on a much

smaller scale than last week. Some train stations remained shut because of damage from earlier protests.

A group of protesters, joined by students in uniform, blocked traffic at one intersection. Others in the area argued

with them, removing some of the metal barriers that protesters carried into the street.

Even as the latest violence wound down, a fundamental divide suggests the protests in the former British colony are far from over.

Impeachment sham completely debunked, says White House

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump has claimed victory as the Democratic Party-controlled House of Representatives concluded its third public hearing on the impeachment proceedings against him for allegedly abusing his office for political gain in the run up to the 2020 presidential election.

The impeachment hearings are an effort by Democrats to establish whether Trump withheld US military aid to Ukraine to pressure the country's President Volodymyr Zelensky into announcing a corruption inquiry into Joe Biden, Trump's leading Democratic rival in the poll.

The Democrats are alleging that Trump's call with his Ukrainian counterpart was irregular and inappropriate and abuse of his office for political gain.

"A great day for Republicans, a great day for our Country! In the end we will win and save our Country from certain destruction," Trump tweeted soon after the House Select Committee on Intelligence concluded its third public impeachment hearings on Tuesday.

In the morning, Democratic lawmakers grilled Lt Col Alexander Vindman, a Ukraine specialist on the National Security Council (NSC), and Jennifer Williams, a top national security aide to Vice President Pence on Trump's July 25 phone call with Ukrainian President Zelensky. Later in the day, Kurt Volker, former special envoy to Kyiv, and Tim Morrison, another top NSC aide, testified before the powerful House Committee.

The White House called the impeachment process a sham.

"Today's second hearing is over, and the Democrats central allegation in this impeachment sham has again been completely debunked," White House Press Secretary Stephanie Grisham said at the conclusion of the testimonies. "Specifically, Ambassador Volker confirmed under oath that he had no indication whatsoever of anything that resembled a quid-pro-quo, corroborating his previous deposition testimony that 'there was no linkage like that,'" she said.

Grisham urged the American public not to tolerate the pretence of the

Democrats. "With the Democrats' poll-tested 'quid-pro-quo' and 'bribery' narratives in shambles, the American public should not be forced to endure this charade for one more second," Grisham said.

"We have learned nothing new in today's illegitimate 'impeachment' proceedings. However, buried among the witnesses' personal opinions and conjecture about a call the White House long ago released to the public, both witnesses testified the July 25 transcript was 'accurate' and nothing President Trump has done or said amounts to 'bribery' or any other crime," she added.

Grisham also accused the Democrats of being blinded by their hatred for President Trump. "Today's hearing only further exposes that Chairman Schiff and the Democrats are simply blinded by their hatred for Donald Trump and rabid desire to overturn the outcome of a free and fair election," Grisham said.

However, both Vindman and Williams told lawmakers that Trump's request to Ukrainian president to investigate Democratic rivals was inappropriate.

Volker and Morrison said that the call with Zelensky were not in line with American national security goals.

"Frankly I couldn't believe what I was hearing. It was probably an element of shock that may be in certain regards my worst fear of how our Ukraine policy could play out was playing out and how this was likely to have significant implications for US national security," Vindman said. Williams said the phone call was unusual and inappropriate.

"I believe what I found unusual or different about this call was the president's reference to specific investigations. That struck me as different than other calls I had listened to," she said.

"I thought that the references to specific individuals and investigations such as former Vice President Biden and his son struck me as political in nature given that former Vice President is a political opponent of the president," Williams said.

"I can't speak to what the president's motivation was in referencing it, but I just noted that the reference to Biden sounded political to me," she said in response to a question.

Son of former German prez stabbed; dies

AFP ■ FRANKFURT AM MAIN

An assailant has stabbed to death the son of former German president Richard von Weizsaecker in attack at a Berlin hospital that left one other person seriously injured, police said Wednesday.

The motive for the attack on Fritz von Weizsaecker, 59, on Tuesday evening was unclear.

Von Weizsaecker, a doctor, had just delivered a lecture on liver diseases at the Schlosspark hospital in the western Berlin neighbourhood of Charlottenburg when he was stabbed, a police spokesman said.

He died at the scene despite efforts to save him.

The suspect was overpowered by other people present, one of whom was severely injured by the attacker.

Police opened an investigation and were expected to release information about the assailant and the possible motive.

Chief of the liberal FDP party, Christian Lindner, voiced his grief about his friend on Twitter, saying that "once again we ask ourselves what sort of world are we living in."



Pope Francis greets as he arrives at Military Air Terminal of Don Muang Airport, in Bangkok, Thailand, on Wednesday. AP

Pope lands in Thailand on two-country Asian tour

AFP ■ BANGKOK

Pope Francis arrived in Thailand on Wednesday greeted by cheering faithful, the first leg of an Asian tour that will sweep in Japan and carry a message of interreligious dialogue and nuclear disarmament.

The pontiff landed just after midday (0500 GMT) at Bangkok's Don Mueang International Airport, where he stepped off the plane and was met by his missionary cousin Sister Ana Rosa, who has lived in Thailand for decades.

"I am happy to see you and that you are able to be my translator," he told her, as dozens waved Thai and Vatican flags.

The welcome party included Thailand's deputy prime minister Somkid Jatusripitak and children in traditional ethnic minority dress, one of whom Francis stopped to hug.

This will be the pope's third trip to Asia — and his 32nd abroad — taking him to two Buddhist-majority countries with minority Catholic populations both evangelised by Jesuit missionaries in the 16th century.

Francis is the first pontiff in nearly four decades to visit

Thailand where the nearly 400,000-strong Catholic community makes up a little more than 0.5 per cent of the population.

The last visit from a pontiff came in 1984 by Pope John Paul II.

Before his departure, Francis praised the Southeast Asian country as a "multi-ethnic nation", and hoped his trip would strengthen the Catholic community's bonds of friendship with "many Buddhist brothers and sisters".

"I trust that my visit will help to highlight the importance of inter-religious dialogue, mutual understanding and fraternal cooperation," the Pope said in the video marking his November 20-23 visit.

Francis' visit has stirred excitement among Thailand's Catholic community, who made a strong show of force on Bangkok's streets Wednesday near the Vatican City embassy waiting for his motorcade.

They included a costumed mascot made to resemble Francis and children yelling "Sawadee Pa! (Hello Father)".

On Thursday, he will meet with the 20th Supreme Patriarch Somdej Phra Maha Muneewong

— the head of Thailand's Buddhist clergy.

He will also have meetings with Thailand's prime minister Prayut Chan-O-cha and King Maha Vajiralongkorn.

His day will end with a holy mass at the national stadium, where tens of thousands are expected to attend from many walks of life, including ethnic Karen Christians from northern Thailand, Vietnamese Catholic refugees living in Bangkok, and faithful from all over Southeast Asia.

On Friday the pope's day will be filled meeting with priests and bishops of Thailand, and it will end with a youth-oriented mass at a cathedral.

On Saturday, the pontiff will fly to Japan where he will later visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki, two cities devastated when the US dropped atomic bombs at the end of World War II in 1945.

More than 140,000 people were killed in Hiroshima, while the port city of Nagasaki suffered a death toll of 74,000.

The pope, who years ago had hoped to be a missionary in Japan, has made strong calls for the ban of the "immoral" use of nuclear weapons.

Lankan Prez accepts Pak invitation

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Newly-elected Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has accepted Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's invitation to visit his country, the Pakistan High Commission here said on Wednesday.

Khan on Tuesday telephoned Rajapaksa to congratulate him on his electoral win and invited him to visit Pakistan at his earliest convenience.

The Sri Lankan president will travel to India on November 29 at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Tuesday.

This is likely to be his first official visit abroad after assuming office.

Jaishankar arrived here on Tuesday on an unannounced two-day visit. He became the first foreign dignitary to call on President Rajapaksa.

According to Sri Lankan officials, the minister carried a letter of personal congratulations to Rajapaksa from Prime Minister Modi and the invitation to visit India.

More countries affected by terrorism even as deaths fall: Index

AFP ■ PARIS

The number of global deaths from terrorism fell 15.2 per cent in 2018, even as the number of countries affected by extremist violence continued to grow, the 2019 Global Terrorism Index showed.

From a high of 33,555 deaths in 2014, when the Islamic State (IS) group lured tens of thousands of jihadists to

the Middle East, the number of terrorism deaths has more than halved to 15,952 in 2018, the index published by the Sydney-based Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) showed.

The largest declines in 2018 were recorded in Iraq, which proclaimed a military victory over IS the previous year, and Somalia, where US forces have been conducting airstrikes against Shabaab extremists

since 2017. For the first time since 2003, Iraq was not the country worst-hit by terrorism, according to the index which defines terrorism as "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation".

Afghanistan, where the Taliban succeeded IS as the

world's deadliest terror group, topped the table with 1,443 attacks killing 7,379 people, ahead of Iraq with 1,131 attacks that left 1,054 dead and Nigeria, with 562 attacks that killed 2,040 people.

Syria, which counted 131 incidents that claimed 662 lives, ranked fourth.

In Europe, where no major terror attack was recorded in 2018, the number of deaths fell

from over 200 in 2017 to 62.

"The collapse of ISIL (IS) in Syria and Iraq was one of the factors allowing Western Europe to record its lowest number of incidents since 2012, with no deaths attributed to the group in 2018," IEP executive chairman Steve Killelea wrote in a statement accompanying the report.

"However, the situation still remains volatile, with large

parts of Syria being contested and many smaller groups sympathetic to ISIS philosophies being active, leaving the possibility of further Islamist attacks in Europe," he added.

The report also noted that while "the intensity of terrorism is still widespread and increasing."

In 2018, 71 countries suffered at least one terrorism-

related death, the second-highest number since the beginning of the century. The index meanwhile noted a huge leap in the deaths caused by far-right terrorism in Western Europe, North America and Oceania, with the number of deaths growing by 320 per cent over the past five years.

It cited the March attacks on two mosques in the New Zealand city of Christchurch,

which killed 51 people, as an example of far-right ideology spreading to a country with "almost no prior history of terrorist activity".

In the US, the increase in far-right terrorism was mirrored by an increase in hate crimes, the report found.

But an overwhelming majority of terror attacks took place in countries involved in violent conflict.

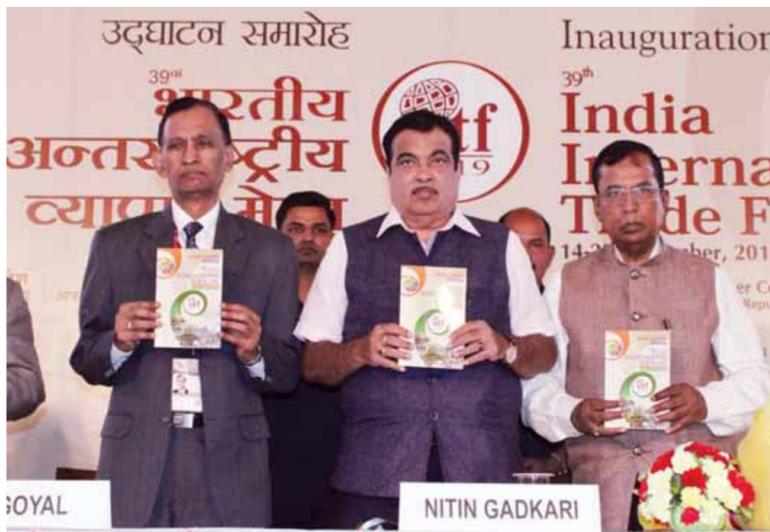
A FAIR OF THE WORLD

The 39th edition of IITF focusses on MSME as a growth engine

A business conducive infrastructure such as the world class International Exhibition-cum-Convention Centre (IECC) at Pragati Maidan is crucial for the growth and export promotion of MSME sector in India and we need at least 30 to 40 of them in the country," said Nitin Gadkari, the Minister of MSME, Road Transport and Highways, while inaugurating the 39th edition of the India International Trade Fair at Pragati Maidan.

Complimenting ITPO for holding the IITF with its theme *Ease of Doing Business* for the 39th edition of the fair, Gadkari informed that the Ministry was taking initiatives to create an online dedicated marketing portal for the sale of MSME products. He pointed out that in order to compete globally, there is a need to focus on quality through skilled and trained manpower. He informed that the Prime Minister had identified 150 economically backward districts which needed maximum involvement to maximise the production for alleviation of poverty.

Speaking on the occasion, Som Parkash, the Minister of State for Commerce and Industry said that the IITF has carved a niche for itself in the global calendar



Inauguration ceremony of the 39th edition of the India International Trade Fair at Pragati Maidan



Dance performance at Haryana Pavilion



Lighting of lamp



Performance by world's first Sikh magician

besides occupying an eminent position in the Asian continent. He elaborated that reforms and policy initiatives have ensured that the

country has improved in "Ease of Doing Business" global rating. The Minister said that events such as IITF are crucial to doubling farmers income by 2022 and transforming India into a US\$ 5 trillion economy by the year 2024.

CMD, ITPO indicated that the next edition of the fair would accommodate around five times more participants next year by increasing the area from 25,000 sqm space to 1.25 sqm lakh space.

Senior representatives from the

'Partner State' Bihar, Narmadshwar Lal and the 'Focus State' Jharkhand, Aboobacker Siddique presented details of the achievements of their States, the policy initiatives towards "Ease of Doing Business", reforms and export potential.

Agrawal, ED, ITPO highlighted the salient features of the fair.

Also present on the occasion was Tahir Qadiri, Charge d' Affaires, Embassy of Afghanistan in India.

In his welcome address, Rajesh

Cementing old relationships



The Days of Moscow in Delhi warmed up over a cultural evening where vocal group Kvatro enthralled the audience with classical and fusion presentations, followed by noted dancing ensembles



Delhi Tourism, Government of Delhi in association with Government of Moscow celebrated 'Days of Moscow in Delhi' featuring a variety of activities including art, culture, heritage, sports and other areas of mutual co-operation on November 18 and 19. This was a part of the twin city agreement for tourism and education between the

Government of NCT of Delhi and Government of City of Moscow. 'Days of Moscow in Delhi' received an enthusiastic response, be it young students from Delhi Govt Schools who put up a commendable show while playing with Grandmaster Ivan Popov, or students from IIT and other technical institutes, who made the best out

of the opportunity to interact with none other than Russian cosmonaut, Sergey Reviv.

The cultural extravaganza was orchestrated with the stellar performances of 'Berezka' and 'Kvatro' at Siri Fort, regardless of any language barrier.

Giving business communities from both countries the impetus

and direction to expand, the Conference presented an apt platform under the ever-expanding gamut of 'Days of Moscow in Delhi'. The extensive cultural programme undertaken further bolstered the bilateral ties between the two city governments and explore the immense potential for future partnerships across multiple spheres.

IGNCA celebrates foundation day

The Union Minister of State (independent charge) for Culture and Tourism, Prahlad Singh Patel said that centre is preserving the dying form of art and culture.

As the chief guest at the 32nd foundation Day celebration at Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts, (IGNCA) he talked about cultural heritage and river Narmada. He also released 20 new books and six DVDs on the occasion. The programme was attended by Nirupama Kotru, joint secretary (culture), Adwait

Gadnayak, DG National Gallery of Modern Art, Dr Sachchidanad Joshi, member secretary IGNCA Sudhamahalingam, Ajay Deshpande and many others.

On the occasion, two important exhibitions were also organised. One exhibition was based on Mahatma Gandhi showcasing oil paintings of Elizabeth Sass Brunner and her daughter Elizabeth Brunner and a

photo exhibition of DRD Wadia and Shambhu Shah who photographed many life aspects of Mahatma.

The second exhibition was focussed on the Tiji festival. It is an important festival of the Mustang region of Nepal and Tibet and is based on the victory of good over evil. Celebrated Indian piano artist Enoch

Denials showcased his performance.

During the Tiji exhibition, there was also a performance of *Kabir Gayan* by Bheru Singh Chauhan. There was a discussion on the 13th century dance genre, Nritiyawali and the recital of the rare instrument Sundari.

Carnatic musicians and singers performed with instruments like violin, tabla, pakhawaj, mridanga, ghatam, sitar and flute.



Meghalaya Tourism was awarded the Conde Nast Traveller India Readers' Award 2019 under the 'Favourite Emerging Destination' category

District collector inspects cleanliness work

Collector Dr Sanjay Alung along with commissioner Prabhakar Pandey and other officers of Bilaspur Municipal Corporation (BMC) reviewed cleanliness at different places on Monday. Alung instructed the cleaning contract company, Lions Private Services, to pick the garbage.

The collector briefed the cleaning staff to pick up all the scrap and garbage while they inspected the bus stand area. Large quantities of plastic, water pouches and other waste things were found. The collector expressed his anger on the zone commissioner and the officers of the Lions Services and requested them to start issuing notice.

During the inspection, people complained of the dirty water coming from the *salabh* complex. The collector directed the zone commissioner to immediately change the toilet pipe and present the report.

The collector then directed all the zone commissioners to carry out a continuous inspection in their respective areas. He said that he will conduct

surprise inspections from time to time and will take strict actions against the concerned zone commissioner, cleaning officer and employees on receipt of complaints from citizens.

During the inspection, the Superintendent Engineer of the Municipal Corporation, GS Tamarkar, Deputy Commissioner Khajanchi Kumhar, Zone Commissioner DK Sharma, Health Officer Dr Omkar Sharma, Executive Engineer Mr PK Panchayati, Manager of Lion Services SK Singh and other officials were present.

BAJAJ FINANCE

PERSONAL LOAN

Finance your dream wedding

While weddings are one of the biggest occasions of our lives, planning them can be quite stressful, especially when it comes to figuring out how you'll pay for the best venue, catering services, photographer, your outfits, food, jewellery and much more. And given the number of things you need to spend on, you may want to look beyond your savings to cover the costs.

That's where a personal loan for wedding comes in. For instance, Bajaj Finserv, a financing solution, lets you borrow up to ₹25 lakh without furnishing any collateral and repay it over flexible tenors that suit your repayment strategy.

You can use this loan to manage all your planned and unplanned expenses. Here are some features of a Bajaj Finserv, Personal Loan:

LOAN UP TO ₹25 LAKH

With such a big sanction, you can plan everything from the catering, venue to decorations and even an exotic honeymoon.

FLEXIBLE TENORS OF UP TO 60 MONTHS

Convenient tenor options are available. You can repay your wedding loan accordingly. In fact, you can even use the handy EMI calculator to measure how much installment would be comfortable with and adjust loan parameters as per your affordability.

USE THE FLEXI LOAN FACILITY

Under this, you also get to pay interest only on the amount that you have utilised. Moreover, you have the option to pay interest-only installments for the initial part of the tenor. This helps you reduce your EMIs by up to 45 per cent.

EASY ELIGIBILITY TERMS

Bajaj Finserv has a very simple eligibility criteria. To avail a personal loan, you need to be:

- Between 23 and 55 years of age
- Citizen of India
- A salaried employee working in a reputable MNC, public or private company
- Meet the monthly salary criteria based on the city you live

Once you meet the eligibility criteria, you only need to fill up an online application form and submit your basic documents to avail the money.

Trend Slazer

Jawaani Jaaneman postponed

Jawaani Jaaneman, starring SAIF ALI KHAN and TABU, has been postponed. The film, which was earlier scheduled to release on November 29, will now hit the screens on February 7 next year.

"It's rightly said, age is just a number... Jawaani Jaaneman in cinemas on February 7, 2020," tweeted the film's co-producer Jacky Bhagnani on Wednesday.

In the film, Saif plays a 40 year-old father and Alai is his teenage daughter, while Tabu portrays an important pivotal character. The romantic comedy is directed by Nitin Kakkar.



'After hearing the narration (of Hum Bhi Akele, Tum Bhi Akele), I realised how significant the story is. Though Section 377 has been decriminalised, society's generation is certainly not okay with the reality that homosexuals are as normal as all of us. It is just another sexual orientation and nothing more. Unless society is supportive, how will the youth live freely?'

—Zareen Khan

Actress PREITY ZINTA is back in action and that too on the American show Fresh Off The Boat.



Preity, who will feature as a guest star in an upcoming episode, has already starting shooting for the show.

Announcing her new project, she took to social media and wrote, "And so it begins... On location to shoot Fresh Off The Boat. Now that the first day of shoot is over and I'm still alive and not shaking with nervous energy... here is a photo... It's amazing how a change of scene can make you feel like a newcomer. Loving it all."

Kevin is happy to join work again

Actor-comedian KEVIN HART looked healthy and in good spirits as he took the stage to surprise the audience before the screening of Jumanji: The Next Level here, and said he was glad that he could recover from his horrific car accident earlier this year, and be part of the Jumanji journey.

Hart, who is still recovering from the crash that left him hospitalised in September, surprised all when he walked onto the stage with castmates including Dwayne Johnson, Jack Black, Karen Gillan, Awkwafina and film's director Jake Kasdan.

He said, "I have never been more excited to be a part of something and see something grow."



Recreating the sequel to an iconic film can be tough, especially when its song has become an anthem for empowering people. IDINA MENZEL talks about the power of *Let It Go*

POWER OF MUSIC

When Idina Menzel first started performing *Let It Go* live in concerts, she thought the lyrics and soaring vocals would empower all those young girls in the audience dressed up as Elsa.

Instead, Menzel said she often walked away from those performances feeling just as inspired.

"I feel an extreme sense of pride about it," said Menzel, the Tony Award-winning performer who voices Elsa, a fiercely independent queen with the magical ability to manipulate ice and snow. The song especially resonated with her because at the time she was juggling several shows on Broadway and going through a divorce while "trying to put one foot in front of the other."

"But you see a little girl in a blue dress in the second row," she said and continued, "That's when you realise the song and film represents them. It's giving them permission to take ownership of who they are, and everything that makes them unique and different. But it's a reciprocity. It's coming back to me exponentially because I need to hear it too."

Menzel believes *Frozen 2* has the capacity to empower young girls, boys and others of all ages in the same way. The new film comes six years after the original broke box office records for an animated film, amassing \$1.2 billion in worldwide ticket sales. It was bolstered by *Let It Go*, which won a Grammy and two Oscars.

Jennifer Lee, co-director and writer of both films, said she didn't anticipate the success of *Frozen*. Lee said a conversation with a stranger demonstrated the film's impact.

"I met a woman wearing a handmade 'Let It Go' necklace, but she didn't have any idea who I was," Lee said. "She was talking, and I observed. She embraced the movie for herself. She felt the music spoke to her. It seemed to empower her. That's our goal."

Menzel is unsure if the sequel can generate the same astronomical numbers as the original. But she is hopeful the story and music can resonate with viewers and further the themes of the original, including showing that female characters don't necessarily need their male counterpart to rescue them from distress.

"I think it'll move people," she said. "I think the film is powerful. I don't know what the success of the music will be outside the film. But I know how I felt when



I heard (the songs). I know how much I loved recording them and getting inside of them. I think people will learn from Elsa who is always overcoming her fear to take the next step and risk."

In *Frozen 2*, Elsa finally embraces her powers, but she finds herself haunted by an unsettling voice from afar that no one else can hear. She ends up going on a dangerous journey to seek answers with her sister Anna, played by Kristen Bell. Also joining them are Anna's boyfriend Kristoff (Jonathan Groff), his reindeer friend Sven and the bubbly snowman Olaf, voiced by Josh Gad.

Co-director Chris Buck said the sequel has moments of being "fun and humorous," but the story also delves deep into Elsa and Anna's emotions. He said the main characters are trying to find their meaning in life. The film expands on challenges facing Elsa's kingdom of Arendelle, with Sterling K Brown joining the cast as a military officer and Evan Rachel Wood voicing the sisters' mother.

"The first film is more like Act 1 of a musical where you're setting up the characters' wants and who they are," Buck said. "In this one, we can do Act 2. Usually, those songs go deeper and they're more emotional. You find out more. The struggles are harder. We had that sort of template. That helped us shape it."

Several deadlines were "blown past" while creating the story line that had at least 50 versions of rewrites, the directors said.

Bell applauded the creative team for taking their time. "They didn't just try to

come up with the follow up for whatever monetary or marketing sake," the actress said. "You can see a follow up from anything and you know in your soul, in your gut whether or not you connect to it. Like 'Oh those are the same characters I loved but didn't connect to them.' They waited to find something that people would connect to."

Lee said the biggest breakthrough came when husband-and-wife songwriting team Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Bobby Lopez delivered the song *Into the Unknown*.

"That changed everything," Lee said. "It was the most active song. It's a song that says to Elsa 'You've got to act. You've got to have the guts to follow what your life could be.' You see the change in her from the beginning to the end of the song. It started the whole engine for the whole movie."

Anderson-Lopez agrees. She said the music and film should compel women to trust their instincts in times of conflict.

"We're continuing to say that women need to listen to their gut and follow their gut," said Anderson-Lopez, who won two Oscars with her husband for *Let It Go* and *Remember Me* from the film *Coco*.

"You are powerful in your own unique way by speaking truth and rising up from the floor," she continued. "When the worst thing happens to you really does happen, you learn to do the next right thing. You take one step then another step, then another and stumble blindly toward the light. One breath. One step at a time."

Frozen challenge



Frozen 2 co-directors Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee say creating a sequel of the 2013 blockbuster hit *Frozen* was very tough, as they wanted to explore new places and introduce new characters without losing the essence of the story.

Set in fantastical land of Arendelle, *Frozen* is a story of two sisters Elsa and Anna who are on a path of finding acceptance and love, while trying to save their kingdom infused with heart-touching music and emotions. Elsa is struggling to accept her magical icy powers and effervescent Anna is trying to find a bond with her sister.

Frozen 2 brings back their story as they continue on the journey of finding their own self, by tracing their past and piecing it together with their present.

"Making the sequel was extremely challenging. We wanted to have our characters go to a different place and go outside of Arendelle. And we knew we wanted to have new characters to expand this world a bit," Buck said.

"The challenge is how to stay true to the characters and let them grow. We have a map going on in our head of all these things," he explained further.

Frozen won an Oscar for Best Animated Feature. It became the highest-grossing animated film before remake of *The Lion King* took that position in 2019. And with great success comes great responsibility.

"When *Frozen* came out, it wasn't just our movie but the movie of the world. That was exciting to us and but that comes with a lot of expectations for the sequel. But truthfully, we agreed that we would keep that pressure outside the room and build

Frozen 2 the same way we built *Frozen*, which is really talking about character first and then plot and then having the songwriters get involved and let the songs come from the story," Buck noted.

To this, Lee added: "It was the exact same team who built 'Frozen' and we made a pact that we're going to build it exactly as we did the first one. The challenges were much greater in terms of where do you go from here. But you have the foundation of these characters. The characters were a little bit of us and we all knew them so well."

The second part of the Disney franchise promises to be more intense as it traces the past of Princesses Anna and Elsa, voiced by Kristen Bell and Idina Menzel in Hollywood version, respectively, and piece together their present. *Frozen 2* will release in India in English, Hindi, Tamil and Telugu on November 22.

What's the message for children in the second part? "The thing I love about my characters is that they never give up, no matter how many challenges we throw at them. They're incredibly strong. I think that's a really powerful message for everyone, not just young people," Buck said.

Lee feels *Frozen* doesn't tackle good versus, but looks at fear and love. "The first one looks at that through being different and I think the second one looks at that with change. Change is one of the hardest things in life to cope with. The fear of change can make you not act on the thing that's most important to you. So, that's the rustle of love and fear," she said.

The gender wars

The divide between men and women is more of a recent creation rather than something that has been passed on down the ages, says SAKSHI SHARMA

Are men from Mars and women from Venus? Contemporary literature would have us believe this. But if you travel back in time, Hindu mythology is replete with examples of the sacred feminine, a force that is to be reckoned with while inhabiting a sphere which is exclusive and sacred.

Urdu literature too is peppered with women being celebrated in ways that had nothing to do with their beauty. Kaifi Azmi's *Aurat* written more than 75 years emphasised, "Uth meri jaan, mere saath hi chalna hai tujhe, qalb-e-mahoul mein larzaan sharar-e-jang hain aaj," (Arise, my love, for now you must march with me, flames of war are ablaze in our world today). It, of course, has become a part of folklore that the then-unmarried Shaikat decided that she would only be the wife of the poet.

At the InKpot India Conclave's session on *Gender Inequality: Men Are From Mars and Women From... Subjugation?* author Neelima Adhar, recited Kaifi's lines, raising the question that why is there a need to fight for equality when there are such men who are sensitive towards women, and want them to walk beside them?

Neelima didn't agree to the idea of a conversation on this topic. She said, "I don't subscribe to this title that men are from Mars and women are either

from Venus or subjugated. I am not a feminist. I am a happy and proud woman." Neelima argued that there is nothing like being equal or subjugated. "Every gender has a different space. And everyone wants that space to be respected," added she.

Other panelists disagreed and pointed out that Indian women are subjugated and confined to their homes and child rearing. They are exploited sexually and men (even a lot of other women) often are misogynistic in their treatment. Though Neelima agreed to this but she questioned the point of the conflict? "You have a space, occupy that, we have a space we'll occupy that," said she.

Talking about the Hindu mythology, she said, "In ancient times, women were the power centres because they could procreate. They were powerful. They could have as many husbands as they liked and change partners." But she agrees to the fact that

somewhere down the line the Hindu ethos has changed.

Neelima pointed out that attempts are being made to empower women and make them aware of their rights. Even in the government departments there are think tanks and ministries whose job is to empower women. There's rapid change in the mindset of the people. Social change too is taking place. Exposure and communication have become so vast and intense that women refuse to be subjected to atrocities. The momentum of change will keep on gaining strength and intensity.

"I am a privileged citizen. So I can say that I don't care about gender inequality. But the average Indian still feels that they suffer because of it," she said.

Pointing towards films that are being made she said that the awareness about women's rights has become profound. There is a shift in the attitude that 'we don't want a girl child.' Though we may



not agree, as the male gaze in commercial films is intense and sexualises women.

Another panelist, Nandini Bhalla, editor of a magazine believes that even though women are now doing so much more and breaking the glass ceiling, they are not taught the word "ambition" as whenever a woman mentions the word, it carries a negative connotation. We think that she is shrewd or a difficult person but we don't see it the same way when it comes to men. She said, "If a man says he is ambitious, he is seen as a go-getter. So women should be taught that it is good to

be ambitious. There are so many of them who don't want to be seen as too career-oriented. But it cannot be emphasised enough that there is nothing wrong in it. We have to sensitise women about being comfortable with ambition. Only when we feed these thoughts in their mind, we can achieve equality."

Female mentorship is also critical. Various studies have found that most of the women do not want to work with female bosses. But Bhalla feels that this is a huge flaw as women can be the best mentors for other women as they have fought for their

rights. When women support their own kinds and teach them skills, it can help us bring about a change.

Even today there is a serious pay gap which signals that there is a need to talk about equality. Bhalla said that if there was equality we wouldn't have been having this conversation. But it is good to have conversations as they lead to change.

She talked about how feminism is often being misunderstood as dominating men. But instead it means being equal to them. "There is no equality, so we need feminism."



Kartik Aryan, Bhumi Pednekar, Ananya Panday and singer Tulsi Kumar launched the song *Akhiyan Se Goli Maare* at PVR Plaza Connaught Place from the film *Patni Patni Aur Woh*. The actor climbed in front of the poster display areas at the cinema hall, shook a leg and asked the people assembled there to watch the film which releases on December 6.



GINI IN A BOTTLE

Wijnaldum becomes first Dutch midfielder to score hat-trick since Johan Neeskens in 1972; Ramsey takes Wales to Euro 2020

"It doesn't get any better. It's one of the best days of my life."
—RYAN GIGGS

"We had the time of our lives in France (at Euro 2016). We inspired a nation last time out so we wanted to do it again."
—AARON RAMSEY

"He's (Ramsey) a world class player. It's great to have him back and he showed tonight what a great player he is."
—GARETH BALE

"We are playing some very, very good football. We are going to the finals confident and with a good run behind us. The team is young, but we're all having a lot of fun."
—SERGE GNABRY

"This is obviously a dream come true, to play for the national team and score on your debut. I can't claim that I should be in the squad for the Euro finals, I just have to show what I can do."
—MYRON BOADU

AFP ■ CARDIFF



Georginio Wijnaldum made another stand against racism and after opening the scoring in the sixth minute he and Frenkie de Jong joined on the sidelines to bring their arms together to draw attention to their different skin colour

Aaron Ramsey sent Wales to Euro 2020 with a brace to give them a 2-0 win over Hungary and a spot in next summer's finals, while Belgium completed their perfect qualifying campaign with a mauling of Cyprus.

Juventus midfielder Ramsey hit his decisive double either side of half-time at the Cardiff City Stadium to ensure that Ryan Giggs's side leapfrogged Tuesday's opponents into second place in Group E to snatch a spot at the multi-host tournament.

"I missed a lot of this campaign but it was all worthwhile to chip in with a couple of goals tonight," Ramsey told Sky Sports.

"We had the time of our lives in France (at Euro 2016). We inspired a nation last time out so we wanted to do it again."

PERFECT BELGIUM

The win gave Wales the final automatic place, with 20 teams

ready to contest the finals and another four spots set to be decided via the playoffs in March next year.

One of the favourites for the tournament which kicks off in Rome on June 12, Belgium, made it a perfect 10 wins from 10 with a 6-1 thrashing of Cyprus that saw Christian Benteke score twice.

The Crystal Palace forward is yet to score in the Premier League but opened Belgium's account in the 16th minute with a tap-in two minutes after Nicholas Ioannou stunned the Group I winners with a superb run and shot. He rounded off the scoring in

the 68th minute when he collected a neat through ball from Kevin De Bruyne — who also scored twice — and slotted past Neofytos Michael.



Tuesday's stroll means off in Roberto Martinez's side finish the qualifying phase as top scorers with a whopping 40 goals, with an average of four goals a game.

Russia, who finished two points behind Belgium, thumped San Marino 5-0 in one of a host of dead rubbers.

Germany and the Netherlands thumped Northern Ireland and Belarus to close their campaigns in style.

GNABRY 'CONFIDENT'

Serge Gnabry said Germany were heading to the Euros in a positive mood after hitting a hat-trick that sank the Northern Irish 6-1 and gave them top spot in Group C.

"We are playing some very, very good football," said Gnabry, who came off to a standing ovation on 80 minutes.

"We are going to the finals confident and with a

NUMBER GAME

8 No player has scored more goals for Oranje in 2019 than Georginio Wijnaldum (Memphis Depay second with 6 goals).

2 Georginio Wijnaldum is the first Netherlands player to score 2+ goals in consecutive appearances since Robin van Persie in 2013.

18 Myron Boadu (18y 309d) is the youngest player to score for Oranje since Ryan Babel (18y 97d) in March 2005 (v Romania)

4 Georginio Wijnaldum has scored what his first competitive hat-trick for club or country in four years and 32 days, when he scored four in a Premier League game against Norwich City while playing for Newcastle United in October 2015

3 Serge Gnabry is the first player to score a hat-trick against Northern Ireland since Cristiano Ronaldo for Portugal in a World Cup qualifier in September 2013

13 Serge Gnabry became the first player to score 13 goals in his first 13 selections with Germany since Gerd Müller 50 years ago.

3 Wales' 2-0 win over Hungary secured their qualification to EURO 2020, only the third major tournament (World Cup and European Championship) they have qualified for, after the 1958 World Cup and EURO 2016

60 Aaron Ramsey has netted what is his first brace for Wales in his 60th appearance for his national side; he has scored as many goals tonight as he had in his previous 12 international matches.

good run behind us. The team is young, but we're all having a lot of fun."

Georginio Wijnaldum meanwhile made another stand against racism as he also scored three times in the Netherlands' 5-0 crushing of Belarus.

And after opening the scoring in the sixth minute he and Frenkie de Jong joined on the sidelines to bring their arms together to draw attention to their different skin colour.

Myron Boadu made it a night to remember by scoring on his international debut to make it five three minutes from the end, collecting Kevin Strootman's pass before colly slotting home.

"This is obviously a dream come true, to play for the national team and score on your debut," said the 18-year-old. "I can't claim that I should be in the squad for the Euro finals, I just have to show what I can do."



Mauricio Pochettino hugs Jose Mourinho at the end of PL match AP/File Picture

Mauricio out, Mourinho in

Former Chelsea & Man Utd boss handed task of reviving struggling Tottenham's fortune

AFP ■ LONDON

SPURS SLIDE

Jose Mourinho on Wednesday was appointed to replace the sacked Mauricio Pochettino at Tottenham, with a brief to revive the flagging fortunes of a club languishing in the lower reaches of the Premier League.

The former Chelsea, Real Madrid and Manchester United manager has signed a contract until the end of the 2022/23 season.

"I am excited to be joining a club with such a great heritage and such passionate supporters," said Mourinho, who has won domestic league titles in Portugal, England, Italy and Spain.

"The quality in both the squad and the academy excites me. Working with these players is what has attracted me."

Mourinho's glittering CV includes Champions League titles with Porto and Inter Milan. The 56-year-old also won three Premier League titles over two spells in charge of Chelsea, and returned to England to manage Manchester United in 2016.

"In Jose we have one of the most successful managers in football," said Spurs chairman Daniel Levy. "He has a wealth of experience, can inspire teams and is a great tactician."

"He has won honours at every club he has coached. We believe he will bring energy and belief to the dressing room."

The club tweeted a picture of their new Portuguese boss holding a Spurs shirt ahead of his first match in charge — a London derby at West Ham United on Saturday.

Mourinho was sacked by Manchester United last December following a poor run and has been without a club since, most recently working as a TV pundit.

He remains a big name but there will be questions over whether his pragmatic style can mesh with Tottenham's tradition of attacking football, a problem he also faced at Old Trafford.

Argentine Pochettino was dismissed on Tuesday, with Spurs struggling in the league after picking up just three wins from 12 games.

The 47-year-old had transformed the club's fortunes since arriving in 2014, and although he failed to win a trophy, he took Spurs to the Champions League final for the first time in their history just six months ago.

But that masked indifferent domestic form in the second half of last season, and Pochettino was unable to reverse the slide in this campaign.

As well as tumbling down the league, they were knocked out of the League Cup by fourth-tier Colchester United and suffered an embarrassing 7-2 defeat at home to Bayern Munich in the Champions League.

Mourinho arrives with the club 11 points outside the Premier League top four, though they are well placed to reach the last 16 of the Champions League.

TRIBUTES

The job done by Pochettino was all the more remarkable given the tight budget for transfers and wages in comparison with Tottenham's Premier League rivals, as the club built a new stadium at a cost of more than £1 billion (\$1.3 billion).

Much of Pochettino's success came from nurturing a squad of young players into household names such as Harry Kane, Dele Alli and Christian Eriksen.

A series of Spurs players paid warm tribute to their departing manager.

Tottenham and England forward Kane tweeted: "Gaffer. I'll be forever thankful to you for helping me achieve my dreams."

South Korean forward Son Heung-min said in an Instagram post that "words are powerless to express my gratitude".



Indian coach Igor Stimac speaks during post match press conference IFT/Twitter

Stimac wants India to play without fear

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Blue Tigers head coach Igor Stimac, after the narrow 0-1 defeat to Oman in Muscat, pronounced that he wants his team to "play without fear" against any opponent they face.

"I want my India (team) to play without fear against anyone. Irrespective of whoever you are playing against, you always have a chance to win the game. We need to grab that," Stimac stated in the post-match press conference in Muscat on Tuesday.

He added, "If you are trying to change (your gameplan) according to your opponents, it shows your team's weakness — which is the last thing I would want for my team. We stick to our system and we are working on the players' strengths and conditioning."

The coach stated that India was the better team in the second half and while they have been doing good work in open play and creating opportunities to score, the lack of accuracy in the finishing is a problem they are facing.

"We were the better side in the second half but couldn't find the way to score a goal. This is our main problem which has been haunting us always. We are moving well, we are fighting, we are doing what's necessary but

when we come inside the box, the decision making is not at par and the accuracy is not there as well. We need to get used to this, cut the numbers of mistakes down and try to get better results in the future," he said.

India's hope of getting a positive result from Muscat got heavily affected when Pranay Halder and Adil Khan had to be substituted inside the first 40 minutes owing to injuries. Pranay, who suffered a shoulder injury, was replaced by Vinit Rai in the 27th minute whereas the coach introduced Anas Edathodika after withdrawing Adil Khan in the 36th minute.

Stimac stated: "Today, our only player who is a tough tackler (Pranay) suffered a shoulder injury. He was the main player who could fight for the second ball and his absence killed us in the second half."

He continued, "When you are forced to make two substitutions due to injuries in the first half, it upsets the team. You need to compromise with the work which you have done before the game and it reduces your chances to tweek with your plan in the second half. Even I was hesitant to make the third change thinking of another injury which could have happened anytime. It was a big risk and we are facing this for long."

Euro format blasted 'scandal'

AFP ■ LONDON

The format for UEFA's continent-wide Euro 2020 has been labelled "a scandal" by Belgium star Kevin De Bruyne as European football's governing body faces a headache to ensure all host nations who qualify get to play at home.

For the first time, next year's European Championship will be played in 12 different host cities in 12 different nations, with Wembley staging the semi-finals and final.

The draw for what will be the second 24-team Euro will be held in Bucharest on Saturday, November 30.

Wales became the 20th nation to secure their spot when they beat Hungary on Tuesday, with the remaining four places going to the winners of play-offs to be held next

SEEDINGS FOR EURO 2020

Pot 1	Pot 2	Pot 3	Pot 4
Belgium, Italy, England, Germany, Spain, Ukraine	France, Poland, Switzerland, Croatia, Netherlands, Russia	Portugal, Turkey, Denmark, Austria, Sweden, Czech Republic	Wales, Finland, winners of four play-offs - Draw to be held in Bucharest on November 30

PLAY-OFF LINE-UP

Path A	Path B	Path C	Path D
Iceland plus three from Bulgaria, Israel, Hungary and Romania	Bosnia and Herzegovina v Northern Ireland; Slovakia v Republic of Ireland	Scotland v one of Bulgaria, Israel, Hungary or Romania; Norway v Serbia	Georgia v Belarus; North Macedonia v Kosovo - Play-off draw to be held on Friday, Nov 22

March. However, with UEFA having to ensure that host nations play group games on home turf while also keeping certain teams apart for geopolitical reasons, much of the suspense has already been removed from the draw. For example, Ukraine and

Russia cannot face one another due to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. That means Belgium already know they will face Russia and Denmark — both of whom will host games — in Group B, leaving little suspense come the draw for the finals.

"It is a scandal, honestly," Manchester City star De Bruyne told Belgian television after his side's 6-1 win over Cyprus.

"Football is not really football anymore, it's becoming a business."

Belgium, Italy, England, Germany, Spain and Ukraine are the top seeds for the draw, while World Cup holders France find themselves in pot two along with the Netherlands. Reigning European champions Portugal are in the third pot.



Bale poses new problem for Zidane

AFP ■ CARDIFF

Zinedine Zidane faces another crossroads in his handling of Gareth Bale, who appeared to mock Real Madrid after Wales' 2-0 victory over Hungary on Tuesday.

After sealing qualification for Euro 2020 with a wild win in Cardiff, an ecstatic Bale celebrated next to his team-mates behind a flag that read "Wales. Golf. Madrid. In that order."

The flag was taken from the crowd after Welsh fans made a slogan out of comments made by former Real Madrid player Predrag

Mijatovic during an interview with the Spanish radio station Cadena Ser last month.

"Bale thinks first about the Wales national team, then about golf and then about Madrid," said Mijatovic. "I have not talked to him but that is the impression I get."

Zidane must now decide whether to punish Bale and what form that punishment should take.

Bale is due to return to Madrid on Wednesday before joining up with the team again on Thursday at Vallebebas, ahead of Real Madrid's La Liga game at home to Real Sociedad on Saturday.

Srikanth, Sameer progress in Korea

PTI ■ GWANGJU

India made a promising start at the Korea Open with shuttlers Kidambi Srikanth and Sameer Verma advancing to the second round of the men's singles competition here on Wednesday.

The sixth seed Srikanth defeated Hong Kong's Wong Wing Ki Vincent 21-18, 21-17 in match that lasted 37 minutes.

The former world No 1 Srikanth now enjoys a dominant 11-3 head-to-head record over the Hong Kong shuttler. He will face Kanta Tsuneyama of Japan in the second round.

Sameer Verma also reached the second round after his opponent Japan's Kazumasa Sakai retired midway with the score reading 11-8 in favour of the Indian.

However, it was end of the road for Sourabh Verma, who went down after winning the first game to local favourite Kim Donghun 21-13, 12-21, 13-21.

Sameer will take on Donghun in the second round.

Pak pick two 17-year-olds to play against India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Pakistan has been forced to pick two rookie 17-year-olds for their Davis Cup encounter against a full-strength Indian squad, after senior players Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi and Aqeel Khan pulled out protesting against the tie being shifted to a neutral venue.

The Pakistan Tennis Federation named teenagers Huzaifa Abdul Rehman and Shoab Khan, both of whom are ranked as lowly as 446 and 1004 respectively in the junior ITF ranking list for the November 29-30 tie that is shifted from Islamabad to Kazakhstan capital Nur-Sultan.

Yousuf Khan and Ahmad Kamil, also teenagers, along with Amjad complete the squad. With Pakistan's top players

Aisam and Aqeel pulling out of the tie in protest against shifting out of matches to a neutral venue, the PTF was left with no option but to pick junior players.

"It could have been a good tie but for India."

We are sending junior players. Our senior Davis Cup team is not coming. We are sending our junior Davis Cup team. They are all 16-17 years old and will gain some experience," PTF President Salim Saifullah Khan said.

"India wanted to win this tie, so now they can win this tie easily. Everyday hundreds of Indians are coming to Pakistan. Our hotels in Islamabad are full of Indians but the six Indian players can't come. It's a shame," Khan added.

The winner of the tie will make it to the 2020 Davis Cup Qualifiers, from where the winning team will strive to make it to the World Group.



Shami deadly on any surface: Saha



Indian pace trio of Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami and Umesh Yadav pose with the pink ball during team's first practice session at Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Wednesday. BCCI/Twitter

PTI ■ KOLKATA

India wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha on Wednesday brushed aside concerns about pink ball being a challenge for bowlers like Mohammed Shami who, according to him, can be trusted to come good irrespective of the ball's colour or the nature of the surface.

Shami had a match-haul of seven wickets among the Indian pace attack's collective haul of 14 scalps in the home team's innings and 130-run victory over Bangladesh in the first Test in Indore.

"With the form they (Shami, Ishant Sharma and Umesh Yadav) are in, the pink ball is not a factor. Especially (Mohammed) Shami, he can be deadly on any wicket. He has pace and is able to extract reverse swing," Saha said when asked whether colour of the ball will make more difference.

Saha said that they haven't yet checked how much movement is on offer as far as pink ball is concerned. "We are yet to see the movement of the pink ball. But the colour of the ball won't matter with the current form of our pacers," Saha added.

A handful of Indian players,

Star will telecast India's training today

IANS ■ KOLKATA

The excitement in the City of Joy is clearly visible and while the first four days of pink ball Test is already sold out, fans have also been coming to the Eden Gardens to watch the Indian and Bangladeshi players train for the Test which starts tomorrow. And for those who cannot make it to watch Virat Kohli and boys train on the eve of the game today can witness

including Bengal's Shami and Saha, have pink ball experience in domestic cricket but the wicketkeeper pointed out that it was a Kookaburra.

"The only change is the colour of the ball. It's made differently. There's also a change in the timing and picking the ball a bit difficult in twilight. It may help the pacers but will be challenging for the batsmen," Saha said.

NEW BEGINNING

Senior Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin feels Day/Night

the practice live.

A Star official confirmed that this will be the first time that the training session on the eve of the game will be telecast by the host broadcasters.

"Yes, we will be telecasting Kohli and boys' training on Thursday (today) as we wish to give the fans a feel of what goes on hours before the two teams actually walk out to play their maiden Day-Night Test," the official said.

Tests will mark a new beginning for the traditional format in the country as the spectator count will improve drastically owing to the match timings.

The daily proceedings in the match will start at 1pm and wind up by 8pm.

"I just hope this marks the beginning of where we get huge crowds coming into the stadium and Test cricket gets its credit and obviously with the change in timings people can afford to finish their work and come into the game, watch it and enjoy it," Ashwin

"The pitch looks good. I am very excited. When have you last seen a Test match where first four days' tickets have been sold out."

—SOURAV GANGULY

said on Star Sports. His teammate Mohammed Shami is focussed on the challenges that await him in the game.

"The middle session should be the main focus for batsman while using the pink ball unlike the morning session that is usually considered the most important in a test match as it will have more of a swing in Eden Gardens," he said.

Shami said the bowlers will have to work very hard to extract any assistance from the pink ball. "...The pink ball is only useful when there is a hard and grassy wicket because the ball goes straight."

"Pink ball is a very different ball and doesn't work like the white or red ball at all so there is a very low possibility that in the last session we get a swing or reverse so we will have to work very hard," he said.

Finest cricketers to grace pink ball Test



Sourav Ganguly inspects the ground with other officials. AP

KOLKATA: India's finest cricketers including Sachin Tendulkar, Sunil Gavaskar and Kapil Dev will assemble during the country's first-ever day-night Test against Bangladesh, starting in Eden Gardens tomorrow.

The iconic Eden Gardens is all set to witness a musical extravaganza in the presence of former cricketers, celebrities and politicians during India and Bangladesh's first-ever pink ball Test.

According to BCCI President Sourav Ganguly, the second Test of the two-match series will be one to remember.

"Sachin (Tendulkar), (Sunil) Gavaskar, Kapil (Dev), Rahul (Dravid), Anil (Kumble) everyone will be there. In tea time, there will be carts going around the stadium with former captains in them," Ganguly said on Wednesday.

"There is a musical performance at tea time and at the end of the day there is a felicitation. Both the teams, former captains, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Chief Minister will be there.

"Runa Laila will be performing, Jeet Ganguly will be performing. I am very excited. Just see the excitement, four days are already sold out in a Test match," he added.

The Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) and BCCI have put in place several plans to mark India's maiden pink ball Test.

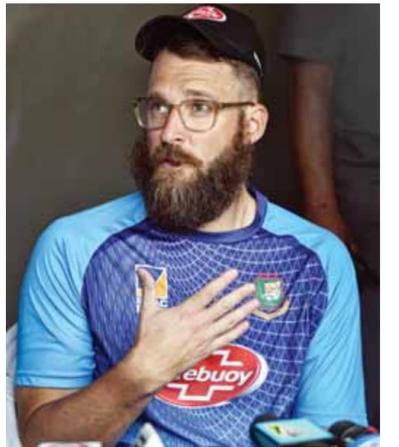
Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to ring the 'Eden Bell' along with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on the first day of the match.

Besides, a host of sporting starts, including star shuttler P V Sindhu, chess ace Viswanathan Anand and tennis sensation Sania Mirza are expected to grace the occasion.

As per plans, paratroopers are expected to fly into Eden to hand a pink ball each to captains Virat Kohli and Mominul Haque just before the toss.

The CAB has also organised a talk show featuring the 'Fabulous Five' of Indian cricket — Sourav Ganguly, Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Anil Kumble and V S Laxman during the 40-minute dinner break. They will talk about the historic 2001 Test win against Australia at the Eden.

The CAB also plans to felicitate sporting stars, including Olympic champion Abhinav Bindra, Sania Mirza, Sindhu and six-time boxing world champion MC Mary Kom. PTI



Daniel Vettori speaks during press conference on Wednesday. PTI

Tigers wary of early sunset

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Bangladesh's spin bowler Saif Hassan is done dwelling on the "negatives" and wants his team to feel excited about competing in its maiden Day/Night Test even though it happens to be against a formidable-at-home India.

"We are excited to play rather than think about the negatives," Vettori told reporters ahead of the Test. "Visibility is fine, but the only anecdotal conversation I have heard is around being a little bit hard to pick up from point and square-leg. It will be interesting to find out if slips, gully and umpire is picking it up well. They say there's a small halo effect," he pointed out.

While a handful of players from India have played a pink-ball game in domestic cricket, Bangladesh's only experience with that was a one-off Day/Night four-day match in 2013 but none of the current team players were a part of that fixture.

Vettori conceded that early sunset in Kolkata could pose a massive challenge for his team's batsmen during the twilight hours. "Pink ball plays normal at this time of the day, and in this light. I think the challenge will be when the Test is under lights. Sunset is quite early here — I think 4:30 pm. I think that'll be the time when we see the pink ball come into play," the former New Zealand captain said.

Vettori has not been a part of any Day/Night Test but he feels batting during the twilight period will be challenging. "The twilight hour, dusk is when it seems to do a little bit more. My experience is only from watching on TV. It will be the period of the Test match when tactically things might do a few different things," he said.

"The wicket will be pretty good and that last session will be very interesting with the pink ball." With the pink ball expected to help seamers more, Vettori said Bangladesh pacers are equally excited. "The four fast bowlers are very excited. It is a nice thing. Bangladeshi fast bowlers don't get to be excited a lot. I think they are coming to grips with a slightly different ball. It is the SG pink ball.

"I think most guys have limited experience with the Kookaburra one. But I think there's real optimism," he said.

The former New Zealand spinner is also hopeful that tweekers would come into play, especially in the first two sessions each day.

Team for WI series to be announced today



PTI ■ KOLKATA

Vice-captain Rohit Sharma's workload management and opener Shikhar Dhawan's poor form are expected to dominate the deliberations when the national selection committee meets here today to decide on India's limited-overs squads for the home series against the West Indies.

If all goes well, Rohit may get some well-deserved rest during the three-match ODI series against the Caribbean team so that he is fresh and rejuvenated for the tough tour of New Zealand next year where India will play five T20 Internationals, three ODIs and two Test matches.

Rohit's workload will be the prominent point of discussion as he has played close to 60 competitive matches (including IPL) this year.

While the onus will also be on Rohit to give his viewpoint, the possibility of him being given a break in at least one of the two formats looks strong.

The other person, who might feel the heat is senior opener Shikhar Dhawan. Dhawan hasn't been in the best of forms since he returned to cricket after sustaining an injury during the World Cup.

Mayank Agarwal's stupendous form in Test cricket and a very good List A career average of

50-plus and an above 100 strike-rate makes him a good choice to partner KL Rahul in case the selectors think of looking at the third opener's option.

The soon-to-be 34 Dhawan is also not expected to be around for a long time.

Ditto for Rishabh Pant, who will don the big gloves with Sanju Samson close on his heels.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni has already started training and if Pant can't seal it during the upcoming series, he might face stiff competition from the 38-year-old legend once IPL comes calling.

With Hardik Pandya (stress fracture), Jasprit Bumrah (back surgery), Navdeep Saini and Bhuvneshwar Kumar (side strain) still recovering from their respective injuries, Shivam Dube and Shardul Thakur are expected to continue in the squad.

Spin bowling all-rounders Washington Sundar and Krunal Pandya — are also under the scanner due to their underwhelming performances.

With Yuzvendra Chahal doing well and if Ravindra Jadeja is not given another break, one among the two could get the axe.

India's new T20 sensation Deepak Chahar is expected lead the pace attack but Khaleel Ahmed's economy rate has been a problem.

'Ashwin deserves limited overs comeback'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Spin great Harbhajan Singh feels Ravichandran Ashwin deserves a comeback in India's limited overs set-up as a reward for his recent exploits with the red ball.

With the management and selectors exploring options ahead of the T20 World Cup next year, opportunities have been given to the likes of Washington Sundar and Rahul Chahal.

As the selectors meet to pick the ODI and T20 squads for the West Indies series next month, Harbhajan said Ashwin should get another chance in the shorter versions of the game.

"This is what I feel, if you are looking to bowl a spinner upfront (which Sundar has been doing in T20s), you rather have a wicket-taker which Ashwin is. Why not (give him a chance)? He has also done a good job with the red ball



R Ashwin bowls at nets in Kolkata. PTI

recently," Harbhajan said on Tuesday.

"Ashwin spins the ball, he has got more variations. Someone like a Sundar needs to learn. I want him to do well. I am all for bleeding in youngsters but they must learn else they will be replaced, considering the stiff competition," said the 39-year-old.

Ashwin last played a limited overs game for India in July 2017, following which he and Ravindra Jadeja were overlooked for the shorter formats with wrist-spinners Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Chahal replacing the finger-spinners. Jadeja was able to make a comeback but Ashwin hasn't.

Harbhajan, though, also believed that both Chahal and Kuldeep remain India's best bet for providing breakthroughs.

"They are your wicket-takers. People who are wicket-takers will always be in the game, be it Kuldeep or Chahal or whoever."

"You need to ask the management (if they should be playing every game). They (management) probably want to see what combination works well for them but good to see Chahal back and hopefully Kuldeep will be back too. In my opinion, they are your two best options," he said.

Malinga does u-turn on retirement

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka captain and veteran pacer Lasith Malinga has had a rethink on his decision to retire after next year's Twenty20 World Cup, saying he can carry on for another two years.

Malinga, in March, had stated that he wanted to retire after the Twenty20 World Cup scheduled in October-November in Australia next year. But the 36-year-old, who captains Sri Lanka in the shortest format, now says he can play on beyond that.

"T20 is four overs and I feel with my skill, I can manage T20 as a bowler. As a captain, because I've played so many T20s around the world that I feel I can manage that period for maybe another two years," Malinga told 'ESPNCricinfo'.

Naseem to make Test debut

BRISBANE:

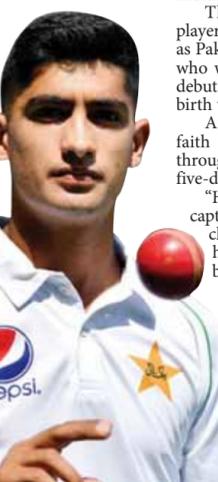
Teenage bowling sensation Naseem Shah will become one of the youngest cricketers to play a Test after Pakistan captain Azhar Ali confirmed on Wednesday the 16-year-old will make his debut at the Gabba.

Shah, who opted to remain on tour after his mother died, made the grade for today's first Test after impressing with an eight-over spell against Australia A in Perth.

"We are definitely looking to play him — he is bowling really well," Azhar said.

Only handful of players have made their

Australia vs Pakistan Live from 5:30am IST SONY SIX NETWORK



debut aged 16, including Sachin Tendulkar who went on to become an Indian batting legend.

The youngest Test player is listed by Cricinfo as Pakistan's Hasan Raza, who was 14 on his 1996 debut, though his date of birth was later disputed. Azhar said he had faith in Shah's abilities through a high-pressure five-day game.

"He's very fit, I have captained him in first-class matches and he has overs under his belt," he said.

"I'm sure that he can do that in Tests as well, I have no doubts in his fitness and his bowling skills." AFP

Focus on Dhawan, Shaw in Super League stage

PTI ■ SURAT

The spotlight would firmly be on the likes of Shikhar Dhawan and young Prithvi Shaw when the Super League stage of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament begins here today.

The focus will be on Dhawan, who has not had a great run in recent times as well as Shaw, who recently returned to competitive cricket after serving an eight-month retrospective ban.

Dhawan is currently going through a rough patch. The Delhi batsman had scores of 0(9) against Jammu & Kashmir, 9(6) against Jharkhand, 19(18) against Sikkim and 35(33) against Odisha in the league stage of the national T20 championship and he would be more than keen to turn things around.

Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Live from 2:20pm IST STAR SPORTS 2 NETWORK



Mumbai opener Prithvi Shaw in action against Assam. PTI

Another promising opener who would want to make most of the opportunity is Shaw, who returned with a bang from a doping ban, slamming a half-century against Assam in the last game of the league stage for Mumbai.

Twenty-year-old Shaw will have to make optimum use of the Super League stage if he has to impress the national selectors and make a comeback to the national team.

In all probability, Shaw will open for Mumbai, replacing an in-form Jay Bista, with senior pro Aditya Tare.

His teammates and three India players — Shreyas Iyer, Shivam Dube and Shardul Thakur — also have an opportunity to cement their places in the Indian T20 squad with good outings.