

OPINION 8
A RIDE INTO
MILITARY SCHOOL**AVENUES 10**
OPT FOR A
VOCATIONAL COURSE**WORLD 12**
TRUDEAU WINS
CANADA VOTE

LUCKNOW, WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 23, 2019; PAGES 16 ₹3



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75% rise in fake notes post DeMo

₹28.1 crore FICN seized in 2017, it was ₹15.9 crore in 2016

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fake currency continued to remain in circulation in a big way in the country even after demonetisation.

The value of fake Indian currency notes seized in 2017 was estimated to be at ₹28.1 crore, clocking a significant 76.5 per cent increase from 2016, when ₹15.9 crore worth of counterfeit currency was seized by law enforcement agencies, according to the latest data released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for 2017.

As per the data, almost ₹14.98 crore, more than half of the total value of money seized, was in the form of ₹2,000 notes, which were introduced in November 2016 after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the demonetisation of ₹500 and ₹1,000 currency notes.

A total of 3,55,994 notes worth ₹28,10,19,294 were seized under Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN) during 2017. As per the NCRB data, in 2017, cancelled ₹1,000 notes were printed as FICN, reflecting in seizure of ₹6.57 crore such notes.

Similarly ₹5.14 crore worth of cancelled ₹500 notes were seized from fake currency printers. In 2017, new ₹500 fake currency were printed for value of ₹44.39 lakh. The new 200 and 100 notes were also printed by fake currency operators. As per the registered



cases across the country in 2017, ₹17.7 lakh fake notes in the denomination of ₹200 notes and ₹83,000 fake notes in the denomination of ₹100 notes were seized.

Most of the old ₹1,000 and ₹500 fake notes were found by the banks when people tried to exchange it through banks soon after demonetisation. The latest NCRB data shows that the fake currency operators are engaged in ₹2,000 note printing.

Majority of the fake note cases were registered in Gujarat

in terms of the value. More than ₹9 crore valued fake notes were seized from Gujarat, followed by Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.

The NCRB data of 2017, released on Tuesday evening shows that biggest populated State Uttar Pradesh topped in the registration of FIRs. UP is followed by Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Delhi. Overall, 30,62,579 cases were registered across the country in 2017, up from 29,75,711 in 2016 and

NATIONAL CRIME RECORDS BUREAU

- Overall, 30,62,579 cases were registered across the country in 2017, up from 29,75,711 in 2016, according to the latest data released by the National Crime Records Bureau for 2017
- UP, also the most populous state, registered 3,10,084 cases during the year and had the highest share of 10.1 per cent in the country
- Maharashtra, which accounted for 9.4 per cent of crime in the country, registered 2,88,879 FIRs in 2017
- Certain States like UP and Delhi have provided citizen-friendly service of online registration of FIR under certain category of offences like 'vehicle theft' and 'other thefts'. 'This may have increased the crime reporting under such heads in these states,' NCRB said

29,49,400 in 2015, according to the annual data which was released last night after a delay of more than one year.

Uttar Pradesh also the most populous State, registered 3,10,084 cases during the year and had the highest share of 10.1 per cent in the country, it stated. The data showed an upward trend for straight third year in UP, which had recorded 2,82,171 cases in 2016 and 2,41,920 in 2015.

Maharashtra, which accounted for 9.4 per cent of crime in the country, registered 2,88,879 FIRs in 2017 while it was 2,61,714 in 2016 and 2,75,414 in 2015, according to the NCRB. Madhya Pradesh registered 2,69,512 FIRs in 2017 and accounted for 8.8 per cent overall cases. It had lodged 2,68,614 cases in 2015 and 2,64,418 in 2016.

The NCRB said certain States like UP and Delhi have provided citizen-friendly ser-

vice of online registration of FIR under certain category of offences like 'vehicle theft' and 'other thefts'.

"As this may have increased the crime reporting under such heads in these States, they become statistically non-comparable with other States not having such online registration facility," it added.

Fourth on the list was Kerala which registered 2,35,846 cases, while Delhi followed it closely with 2,32,066 cases, it stated. Bihar, which had 1,80,573 cases in 2017 and 5.9 per cent share in crimes, stood sixth on the list, while West Bengal was seventh with 1,63,999 cases and 5.4 per cent share, the data stated.

The NCRB, under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, is responsible for collecting and analysing crime data as defined by the Indian Penal Code and special and local laws in the country.

Prime suspects in Kamlesh murder case nabbed

Gujarat ATS nets duo from Gujarat-Rajasthan border

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/AHMEDABAD

After a five-day-long hunt, the Gujarat Anti-Terror Squad (ATS) on Tuesday night nabbed prime suspects Ashfaq Husain and Moinuddin Ahmad of Surat in connection with the murder of Hindu Samaj Party president Kamlesh Tiwari in Naka on October 18.

They two suspects were arrested from near Shamlaaji on the Gujarat-Rajasthan border when they were about to enter Gujarat on Tuesday evening, said Himanshu Shukla, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS).

Primary interrogation of the accused revealed that they had committed the crime "in retribution to the purported statements by Tiwari," an ATS release said.

Their location was traced through technical surveillance as they contacted their family members and friends after running out of cash, Shukla said.

He said the duo will be handed over to the Uttar Pradesh police, probing the sensational killing of Tiwari, who headed a little known outfit, Hindu Samaj Party (HSP).

While Shaikh, a resident of the Limbayat area in Surat, used to work as a medical representative, Pathan, a resident of Umarwada, was employed as a food delivery boy, the release said.

"After committing the crime, the duo went to Nepal and then started their journey back to Gujarat after reaching Shahjahanpur (in Uttar Pradesh).

"Since they ran out of cash, the accused duo contacted their family members and acquaintances for more money. Based on technical and physical surveillance, they were eventually traced Tuesday evening," said the release.

Six persons, including three from Surat and one from Nagpur in Maharashtra, have already been taken into custody in connection with the murder case.

On Friday, in a joint operation, the UP police and Gujarat ATS had arrested three suspects in the case from Surat — Maulana Mohsin Shaikh, Faizan and Rashid Pathan.

Meanwhile, a team of the Uttar Pradesh police landed in Surat on Tuesday to conduct further probe into the killing of Tiwari.

The Surat link came to light after the UP police found a box of sweets, bearing the logo of Dharti Sweets located in the Udhna area of the diamond city, from Tiwari's house, where he was gunned down by assailants.

Sources in the Surat police revealed a team of the UP police landed in the south Gujarat city and visited the sweet shop to get some more clues from CCTV footage.

The UP team also visited Limbayat and Navsari Bazar areas to question people who know the accused arrested from Surat, the sources said.

In Lucknow, the SIT got four-day police custody remand (PCR) of the conspirators, three of whom were detained a day after the incident. A spokesman said the police were granted the PCR of Maulana Mohsin Sheikh, Faizan Yunus and Rashid Ahmed who were rounded up in Surat.

On late Monday night, the sleuths of Anti-Terror Squad rounded up a cleric from Bareilly and had brought him to Lucknow for quizzing and to make him face the murder conspirators at the ATS headquarters on Tuesday.

Sources disclosed that that the ATS sleuths had rounded up three persons from Bareilly and two from Shahjahanpur in different raids conducted on Tuesday.

Earlier, a team brought Sayyed Asim Ali who was nabbed in Nagpur and interrogated him at ATS headquarters in Lucknow.

On the other hand, SSP (Lucknow) Kalandi Naithani was summoned to the UP DGP office where he presented the details of investigation made in the case so far on Tuesday. Also, SIT team members, including the IG (Lucknow Range), quizzed the suspects in police custody.



Japan's Emperor Naruhito, left, and Empress Masako, right, host the court banquet, in Tokyo on Tuesday. Japan's Naruhito proclaimed himself Emperor during an enthronement ceremony at the Imperial Palace, declaring himself the country's 126th monarch

AP

In Net-free Valley, ultras connect via Bridgefy app

Offline messenger works within 100m

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Amid Internet restrictions in Jammu & Kashmir post-abrogation of Article 370, the terror groups have found out a way to circumvent the curbs by using a mobile application Bridgefy to facilitate communication with their cadre.

The app is effective within a radius of 100 metres and can operate without WiFi or Internet service. The app uses Bluetooth function to enhance the range of the message. Through the app, all kinds of data, including audios, videos and texts, can be transferred, officials said.



The app was extensively used by the anti-China protesters in Hong Kong, making it difficult for Beijing to contain the movement. According to reports, there has been an increase of 4,000 per cent in usage of the app in Hong Kong in the last two months.

While the mode of communication through the app becomes a little circuitous due to the network range limitation, it has given a way out to terror networks to spread messages emanating from the handlers of Pakistan Army-ISI combine.

The app has the potential to put a limitation on the surveillance and monitoring capacities of the security agencies that are already facing hassles in gathering technical intelligence (Techint) as the telecom networks in the Valley are operating with varying degrees of restrictions in different districts of the State.

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JCO martyred in Pak BAT strike in Rajouri

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) of the Indian Army attained martyrdom in a daring strike by the Border Action Team (BAT) of the Pakistan Army, comprising hardened terrorists and elite commandos of Special Services Group (SSG), in Kalal area of Nowshera sector in Rajouri district in the afternoon on Tuesday.

According to ground reports, "Heavily armed BAT team breached the LoC and entered approximately 400-500 inside the Indian territory

and targeted one of the forward posts in which one JCO succumbed to his injuries."

Before one of the forward Indian posts was targeted, mysterious blast took place in the same area, officials said.

However, Indian Army authorities did not confirm the reports till the time of filing the report. Local police officers said they received independent reports claiming heavily armed terrorists, supported by regulars of the Pakistan Army infiltrated into the Indian territory and targeted one of the forward posts.

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CAPSULE

PM MODI, ABHIJIT HOLD EXTENSIVE INTERACTION

New Delhi: Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee on Tuesday called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and held a "healthy and extensive" interaction on various subjects.

ED ARRESTS CLOSE AIDE OF IQBAL MIRCHI

Mumbai: The Enforcement Directorate has arrested a close aide of late gangster Iqbal Mirchi in connection with a money laundering case, officials said on Tuesday.

GOVT SHOULD PAY \$20 'JAZIA TAX': CONGRESS

New Delhi: Labelling the \$20 service fee proposed by Pakistan for each Kartarpur pilgrim as "jazia tax", Congress leader Manish Tewari said on Tuesday that the BJP Government should bear the cost as a Sikh devotee paying for the visit to the gurdwara goes against the grain of "khule darshan".

ASHOK MALIK APPOINTED POLICY ADVISER IN MEA

New Delhi: Ashok Malik, former press secretary to the president, has been appointed policy adviser in the Ministry of External Affairs with the rank of additional secretary, an order by the Department of Personnel and Training said on Tuesday. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Malik.

Singh is king(maker) in Canadian politics

Jagmeet Singh-led NDP in reckoning as Trudeau poised to form minority Govt

PTI ■ OTTAWA

Indian-origin Canadian Jagmeet Singh-led New Democratic Party (NDP), which won 24 seats in the general election, is likely to emerge as the "kingmaker" where Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party held onto power in a nail-biting poll, albeit as a weakened minority Government.

In the just-concluded Canadian general election, the results of which were declared on Tuesday, the Liberal Party bagged 157 seats, the Opposition Conservative 121, Bloc Quebecois 32, NDP 24, Green Party 3 and one Independent.

Trudeau would now require at least 13 legislators from his left-leaning rival parties to reach the "magic number" of 170 to form a Liberal Party-led minority Government in the 338-seat House of Commons.



"The New Democratic Party is poised to play king-maker in a minority parliament after Jagmeet Singh spear-headed a turnaround on the federal campaign trail that may have saved his leadership and pulled his party from the brink of irrelevance," the Toronto Star newspaper reported.

With 24 seats in its kitty, the NDP has lost nearly 50 per cent of the seats it had won in 2015. The party, led by Thomas Mulcair, had won 44 seats, becoming the third-largest party in the House of Commons in 2015.

Despite the drop in seats, Singh in a celebratory speech on Tuesday said his party will now be "working hard" to deliver on the "priorities that Canadians have".

Continued on Page 4

Infosys shares tank 17% on 'unethical practices' claims

Nilekani pledges thorough probe

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of IT services firm Infosys on Tuesday plummeted nearly 17 per cent, wiping ₹53,451 crore from its market valuation, on concerns over a whistleblower complaint which alleged that two top executives of the company were indulging in unethical practices to increase short-term revenue and profits.

The scrip tanked 16.21 per cent to close at ₹643.30 on the BSE. During the day, it tumbled 16.86 per cent to ₹638.30, the most since April 2013.

On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), it plunged 16.65 per cent to close at ₹640. The sharp fall in the scrip wiped out ₹53,450.92 crore from the company's market valuation which now stands at ₹2,76,300.08 crore.

It was the worst-hit among the frontline companies on both Sensex and Nifty. In terms of traded volume, 117.70 lakh shares of the company were traded on the BSE and over 9 crore shares on the NSE.



Infosys on Tuesday said it is investigating claims by anonymous whistleblowers accusing CEO Salil Parekh of "unethical practices" to shore up profits through irregular accounting, sending its shares to their worst intra-day fall in over six years.

Infosys chairman and co-founder Nandan Nilekani pledged a full probe, saying the complaint had been placed before the audit committee on October 10 and before the non-executive members of the board the next day.

Nilekani, in his statement on Tuesday, said the company was made aware of another letter (dated October 3) that was purportedly written to the Office of Whistleblower programme,

Washington DC. This letter referred to the September 20, 2019, complaint, and to emails and voice recordings in support of the allegations.

"These complaints are being dealt with in an objective manner. The undated whistleblower complaint largely deals with allegations relating to the CEO's international travel to the US and Mumbai," Nilekani pointed out.

The audit committee began consultation with independent internal auditors EY, and has retained law firm Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co. To conduct an independent investigation, Nilekani noted in his statement to the stock exchanges.

Meanwhile, mounting troubles for Infosys, US-based Rosen Law Firm has said it is preparing a class action lawsuit to recover losses suffered by Infosys investors.

In a statement, Rosen Law Firm said it is "investigating potential securities claims on behalf of shareholders of Infosys Ltd resulting from allegations that Infosys may have issued materially misleading business information to the investing public".

Related report on P10

SC grants bail to PC in CBI case but he stays in ED custody

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday granted bail to former Finance Minister P Chidambaram in the INX Media corruption case filed by the CBI saying he is neither a "flight risk" nor is there a possibility of "his absconding from the trial".

Chidambaram is currently under the custody of the Enforcement Directorate (ED), and he can't walk free till he gets bail in the ED case too.

Brushing aside the CBI contentions, a Bench headed by Justice R Banumathi said, "The CBI has no direct evidence against the appellant (Chidambaram) regarding the allegation of appellant directly or indirectly influencing the witnesses."

The Bench said statement made by the CBI that Chidambaram has influenced witnesses and there was likelihood of his further influencing them cannot be the ground to deny bail to him when there was "no such whisper" in six remand applications filed by the agency before the trial court. The Bench, also com-



prising justices AS Bopanna and Hrishikesh Roy, set aside the Delhi High Court's September 30 verdict denying him bail.

"The appellant is ordered to be released on bail if not required in any other case, subject to the condition of his executing bail bonds for a sum of ₹1 lakh with two sureties of like sum to the satisfaction of the special judge, CBI-06, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi," the Bench said.

"The passport if already not deposited, shall be deposited with the special court and the appellant shall not leave the country without leave of the special court and subject to the order that may be passed by the special judge from time to time," it said.

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Govt to bring UP State Septage Mgmt Policy

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the entire state heading towards becoming open defecation-free, the state government has decided to bring a new UP State Septage Management Policy for treatment of waste of the septic tanks in 652 urban local bodies by the year 2023.

The decision was taken on Tuesday in the state cabinet meeting which was chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The cost will be borne by the consumers and the new policy will have three phases. Till the end of 2019, the target of the septage management will be assessed and by 2021-end, the second phase will be completed when the data is completed and by 2023, the whole process will be implemented.

Briefing mediapersons, state government spokesperson Sidharth Nath Singh said the new policy would cover around 5 crore people living in 652 urban local bodies.

“Presently, against the demand to dispose of 5560 MLD of sewerage through ODF and other schemes, there is a process to dispose of 3300 MLD sewerage through the existing STP while a 1280 MLD STP is under construction. The policy will revolve around seven Rs — re-cycle, re-design, recover, refine, reduce, refurbish and re-guide,” Singh said.

Recently, a media report had said that the government was planning to collect Rs 500 from each house per year for disposing of septage.

In another decision, the government approved the third phase of AMRUT scheme for Rae Bareilly to the tune of Rs 187.17 crore. The third phase of the scheme will be completed within six months. The government has already sanctioned Rs 49.83 crore for the first phase and Rs 62.05 crore for the second.

The UP government also decided to approve 7th Pay Commission wages to government-aided techni-

Cabinet accords ‘state fair’ status to Deepotsav

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Touted as an international event, ‘Deepostav’ at Ayodhya during Diwali has been accorded the status of a state-level function, and the government will now bear the cost of the three-day event. A decision to this effect was taken at the cabinet meeting in Lucknow on Tuesday.

Earlier, UP Tourism department spent funds from its own budget for ‘Deepostav’ at Ayodhya but now, the Yogi government will directly fund the function through district administration.

Briefing mediapersons on Tuesday, state government spokesperson Srikant Sharma said this year, ‘Deepostav’ would be a state government affair while it was organised by Tourism department in the last two years.

“Government has sanctioned a sum of Rs 133 crore for this year’s ‘Deepostav’ and over 5.51 lakh ‘diyas’ will be lighted on October 26,” he said.

cal educations while pay scale of the vice-chancellors of three technical universities has been hiked to Rs 2.10 lakh per month. The government also changed the process for selection of principals of government-aided technical institutes as now the governing body head will be the chief of the selection committee while a representative of Technical Council will be its member.

The state government also approved a proposal to give an alternative land to Nirmal Math in Varanasi, whose land at Lahori Tola will be acquired for Kashi Vishwanath temple corridor. The Math will be given around 400-500 sq metre of land outside the corridor.



Srikant Sharma and Sidharth Nath Singh addressing a press conference after the Cabinet meeting at Lok Bhawan on Tuesday

By declaring ‘Deepostav’ a state-sponsored programme, the Chief Minister also announced that the funds spent on the event would be

audited as per norms.

Meanwhile, the UP government have made elaborate arrangements for ‘Deepostav’ which will be graded

by the Chief Minister on October 26. The Speaker of Parliament of the Republic of Fiji is likely to be the chief guest on the occasion.

The government has already sanctioned Rs 398.33 crore for the corridor in which of the total 298 buildings identified, 247 have been demolished.

The government has also decided to set up a fishery welfare fund to the tune of Rs 100 crore for the benefit of fisheries communities, including creation of job opportunities to the youths. The government sanctioned Rs 25 crore on Tuesday.

The state cabinet has also prorogued the state legislature which was called for a special session for two days from October 2 on the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Yogi Adityanath passed a reso-

lution in the cabinet that the government is committed to making efforts to implement the 16-point UN resolution in the state.

JP ASSOCIATES TO GET 470 HECTARE LAND IN CHUNAR

After much delay, the Uttar Pradesh government has decided to provide around 470 hectares of land to JP Associates in Chunar (Mirzapur) for setting up a cement factory with the brand name ‘Ultratek’. The land was given to the company in exchange of the forest land possessed by it in Sonbhadra. The UP cabinet on Tuesday approved the deal which also got the NGT nod.

Earlier in 2016 and 2017, the

company demanded around 586.178 hectares of land in exchange of their forest area, but now the state government has approved 470.304 hectares of land for the project. A government spokesperson said on Tuesday that the cabinet also strictly said that the cost of development of the area would be borne by the company.

GST EXEMPTION FOR BOLLYWOOD FILM

The government approved a proposal for giving state Goods and Services Tax (GST) exemption to Bollywood film ‘Saand Ki Aankh’, made on the life of ‘Shooter Dadi’ of Baghpat district. The cabinet gave its nod for GST waiver to the film which

Woman jumps into well along with 4 children



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a tragic incident, a 27-year-old woman jumped into a well along with her four children in Uldana Khurd village of Madnapur police station area in Lalitpur on Monday evening. Later, police recovered the bodies of Vimla, Buri (2), Arushi (7), Nayan, and Koshani (4) from the well.

Madnapur SHO Alma Ahirwar said that Vimla had an argument with her husband Rajesh Kushwaha a few days ago after which she went to her parents’ home and returned on Saturday. Rajesh’s financial condition was not good and the couple would often have arguments over the issue. “Prima facie, it appears to be a case of suicide but all angles are being probed,” the SHO said.

Elsewhere in Banda, two persons were killed and four injured when their car ramed into a stationary truck at a village in Chilla police station area around Monday midnight. The car was on its way to Kanpur. All the injured were rushed to a hospital where Phoolchand (55) and Ravi (31) succumbed to injuries while the condition of two others was stated to be critical. Sources said Phoolchand was going to collect the body of his son who had died in a mishap on Monday afternoon.

‘Bring down debt level to 25 per cent of GSDP’ Finance panel asks UP govt

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The 15th Finance Commission asked the UP government to substantially bring down the debt level to 25 per cent of gross domestic state product (GSDP) by enhancing annual economic growth and efficiency. The debt burden on the state is likely to cross the Rs 5 lakh crore mark by the end of current fiscal. Speaking to newpersons in Lucknow on Tuesday, Finance Commission chairman NK Singh said, “UP government needs to substantially bring down the debt burden to 25 per cent of the GSDP by increasing annual growth rate.”

Asked about the possible relief by the finance panel to bail out the public finance of UP, the chairman said, “The commission always reserves the best for the last.”

UP is the 27th state to be visited by the commission and it will also visit Goa and Jammu and Kashmir. The Finance Commission had a long discussion with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his cabinet colleagues in Lucknow on Tuesday.

The commission was concerned about the rising outstanding debt to GSDP Ratio, on compliance with state’s Financial Responsibility and Budget Management Act and declining capital expenditure. The state is exhibiting a rising trend in its outstanding debt to GSDP which has increased from 31.57% in 2012-13 to 34% in 2017-18.

During 2017-18, there was an overall decrease in capital expenditure of Rs 30,701 crore (44 per cent) over the previous year, mainly due to reduction in expenditure under roads and bridges, power, food storage and warehousing and major irrigation projects.

There is also a high burden of pension and interest on the state due to 7th Pay Commission. Besides, state PSUs have been suffering increasing losses. Of the 107 PSUs, accounts of 100 PSUs are in arrears. Losses of working PSUs and corporations have increased from Rs 62,901 crore in 2012-13 to Rs 125,325 crore in 2017-18.

In spite of the fact that significant investment has been made by the state g government in power sector PSUs, losses have peaked from Rs 11,829 crore in 2012-13 to Rs 18,415 crore in 2017-18.

In the implementation of UDAY Scheme in DISCOMs, the state has achieved 100% progress in Feeder Metering and Rural Feeder Audit. However, the state’s performance was not satisfactory and was way below targets for parameters like bringing down aggregate transmission and distribution losses and metering of rural connections, and smart metering.

The Finance Commission chairman pointed out that though the state has shown significant improvements in key outcomes of health and education, UP lags

behind in infant mortality and low rate of institutional delivery of pregnant women as compared to the all-India average. He said the UP government needs to make efforts to bridge this gap.

The commission was appreciative of the fact that the state has shown improvement over Sustainable Development Goal-I and poverty in UP has declined from 40.9 % in 2004-05 to 29.4% in 2011-12.

The GSDP growth has been in line with the GDP growth in the past years. The trend growth rate of the state in 11.09% during 2011-2018 whereas GDP at current prices had a trend growth rate of 11.56% in the same period.

Net earnings of UPSRTC have started moving to a positive trajectory from 2017-18. There have been significant improvements in earnings per kms and significant reductions in cost per km. According to Forest Survey of India, the state has shown 1.51% increase in forest cover in 2017 as compared to 2015, which indicative of the state’s commitment towards maintaining ecological cover.

Also, there has been substantial progress in development of Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) in the state. The Finance Commission chairman concluded that if India had to achieve the 5 trillion USD economy, it was not possible without making the size of UP economy to USD one trillion.

Govt seeks special state-specific grant of ₹1,02,138 crore

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

UP government placed a demand to the 15th Finance Commission for special state-specific grant of Rs 1,02,138 crore. A memorandum of demand submitted by the government to the commission, asked for Rs 30,000 crore for power, Rs 10,000 crore for drinking water in Bundelkhand & Vindhyanal, Rs 3,000 crore for rural sanitation, Rs 3,900 crore for promotion of tourism and Rs 10,400 crore for construction of roads & bridges.

The state has asked for additional funds for teachers’ salary under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, Rs 7,736 crore for basic infrastructure development in schools, Rs 357 crore for forensic science laboratories, Rs 1,750 crore for police lines in new districts, Rs 1,050 crore for jails in new districts, Rs 2,500 crore for urban development, Rs 1,422 for conservation of forest & environment, Rs 5,720 crore for medical education, Rs 13,846 crore for medical & health, Rs 4,262 crore for pre-metric & post-metric scholarships, and Rs 92 crore for conservation of archeological works. The government also demanded Rs 4,35,090 crore for rural and urban local bodies.

According to 5th Annual Employment-Unemployment Survey 2015-16 (Ministry of Labour and Employment), among the major states, Uttar Pradesh had a high unemployment rate of 7.4 per cent as against the all-India average of 5 per cent. The state government mentioned in its memorandum that it had the largest proportion of young population which will have to be provided with not only education and health but also with proper job opportunities so that they may contribute to the overall growth of the country. The ongoing programmes for skill development and employment generation should be effectively implemented so as to equip the youth for finding better employment. Other important facts brought to the notice of the commission by the government are about the 5th State Finance Commission (SFC). In 2015, the 5th SFC submitted its report on October 31 last year, and the key recommendations were under consideration of cabinet sub-committee. UP is currently implementing recommendations of the fourth SFC report. Special focus has to be on aspirational districts of Bahraich, Balrampur, Chandauli, Chitrakoot, Fatehpur, Shravasti, Siddharthnagar, Sonbhadra (8 out of 117 aspirational districts) across the country. The commission assured the state that all issues would be looked into and addressed in the best possible way in the report.

Cover children with serious ailments under Ayushman scheme: Guv

PTI ■ AMETHI

Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandi Ben Patel on Tuesday stressed on the need for a survey to identify children suffering from serious ailments and to provide them medical treatment under the Ayushman Bharat Yojna.

“The Central government’s Ayushman Bharat Yojna is proving to be a boon for the poor. A survey need to be undertaken to identify children suffering from serious ailments so that



UP Governor Anandi Ben Patel and Union Minister Smriti Irani distribute cards among the beneficiaries of Ayushman Bharat Yojana in Amethi district on Tuesday

they can be provided treatment under the scheme,” said the governor who visited Amethi along with local MP and Minister for Women and Child Welfare Smriti Irani.

Speaking at a function at the Malik Mohammad Jaisi District Hospital here after distributing golden cards to beneficiaries of the Ayushman Bharat Yojna, Patel said such schemes strengthen the society and country.


“The scheme provides treatment up to ₹ 5 lakh a

year and people need to use this facility,” she said.

The governor also pointed out the need for a proper publicity of the scheme and suggested setting up hoardings before hospitals selected for providing medical care under the Central government’s scheme.

She inspected the hospital and also met the patients.

Patel and Irani also inspected the old age home at Gauriganj town near here and took inputs about the facilities available there.



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The details regarding qualifications, publications, experience, screening guidelines and indicative proforma etc. are available on the College website along with this advertisement. The applicants are required to read these details before filling up the form.

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National Office: DHFL, HDIL Towers, B-Wing, 6 th & 8 th Floor, Anant Kanekar Marg, Bandra (East), Mumbai – 400 051. Regional Office: Office No. 211 and 212, 'Titanium' Shalimar Corporate Park, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow – 226010				
APPENDIX IV POSSESSION NOTICE (for immovable property)				
Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited (DHFL) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, Demand Notice(s) issued by the Authorised Officer of the company to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) mentioned herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of the Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement rules, 2002. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of DHFL for an amount as mentioned herein under with interest thereon.				
S.N.	Name of the Borrower(s) /Co Borrower (s)	Description of Secured Asset (Immovable Property)	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Date of Possession
1.	(LC No. 00003283 of our Varanasi Branch) Jitendra Kumar (Borrower) Sumitra Devi (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing Gata No. 417, Village Jaitupur, Pargana And Tehsil ,Raebareilly,Rae bareilly-229001	24/10/2018 Rs. 22,10,750/-	17-10-2019
2.	(LC No. 00002988 of our Varanasi Branch) Devendra Singh (Borrower) Suman Yadav (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing Gata No-414 Vill- Jaitupur Pargana & Tehsil Distt-raebareilly,Raebareilly,Rae bareilly-229001	24/10/2018 Rs. 24,05,414/-	17-10-2019
3.	(LC No. 00002412 of our Varanasi Branch) Dharmendra Kumar Sonkar (Borrower) Beenu Sonkar (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing Gata No. 392 Village Ratapur Paragana & Tehsil ,Raebareilly,Rae bareilly-229001	27/12/2018 Rs. 23,89,571/-	17-10-2019
4.	(LC No. 00002172 of our Gorakhpur Branch) Deepak Kumar Tiwari (Borrower) Sadhna Tiwari (Co-Borrower)	Plot that part and parcel of the property bearing Plot Situated At Part Of Gata No.46, Mauza- Gaurapatti, Ward- Niyawan, Ward No. 51, Pargana- Haveli Awadhi,tehs ile- Sadar, Faizabad. Faizabad Uttar Pradesh 224001	23/04/2019 Rs. 6,95,905/-	17-10-2019
5.	(LC No. 00000781 of our Allahabad Branch) Raj Kumar Malviya (Borrower) Radha Malviya (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing House On Part Of Arazi No. 1016 Mauza Mauza Mohabbatganj Upahar, Pargana Arazil Tehsil Karchana Allahabad,Allahabad-211008	30/07/2019 Rs. 27,41,343/-	17-10-2019
6.	(LC No. 00003209 of our Varanasi Branch) Guru Prasad (Borrower) Ashwani Yadav (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing Gata No 1473/3, Chak Ahmadpur Nazooli (gandhi Nagar), Pargana & The ,Raebareilly, Rae bareilly-229001	27/12/2018 Rs. 25,48,267/-	17-10-2019
7.	(LC No. 00000621 of our Allahabad Branch) Shakil Ahmad (Borrower) Saida Bano (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing Plot on Part of Arazi No. 1016 Mauza Mohabbatganj Upahar, Pargana Arazil Tehsil Karchana Allahabad,Allahabad, Allahabad-211008	30/07/2019 Rs. 26,53,241/-	17-10-2019
8.	(LC No. 00000758 of our Allahabad Branch) Kallu Trivedi (Borrower) Manju Trivedi (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing Plot on Part of Arazi No. 1016 Mauza Mohabbatganj Upahar, Pargana Arazil Tehsil Karchana Allahabad,Allahabad, Allahabad-211008	30/7/2019 Rs. 17,91,170/-	17-10-2019
9.	(LC No. 00003106 of our Lucknow Branch) Sanjay Mishra (Borrower) Harshita Mishra (Co-Borrower)	House On Portion Of Nagar Mahapalika Portion Of Plot No 09, Police Line, Khairabad Sitapur Sitapur Uttar Pradesh 261001	26/07/2019 Rs. 13,92,920/-	17-10-2019
10.	(LC No. 00006552 of our Lucknow Branch) Rohit Kumar Verma (Borrower) Shalini Varma (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing House Constructed On Plot No 08, Part Of Khasra No. 1049, Gram- Goyalga, Mahona Tehsil- Bakshi Ka Talab, Lucknow, Lucknow -226020	25/01/2019 Rs. 16,32,918/-	17-10-2019
11.	(LC No. 00000835 of our Allahabad Branch) Hansh Raj (Borrower) Pushpa Devi (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing House On Part Of Arazi No. 1016, Mauza Mohabbatganj Upahar Pargana Arazil, Tehsil Karchana, Allahabad Allahabad Uttar Pradesh 211008	30/07/2019 Rs. 22,03,849/-	17-10-2019
12.	(LC No. 00003139 of our Varanasi Branch) Manoj Srivastav (Borrower) Karishma Rani Shrivastav (Co-Borrower)	All that part and parcel of the property bearing Arazi No. 315, Mauza Dhanpalpur, Pargana Kaswar Sarkari, Tehsil Rajatalab, Varanasi, Varanasi-221103	24/10/2018 Rs. 17,54,517/-	17-10-2019
Place : Uttar Pradesh Date : 23/10/2019			Sd/- Sorabh Pahwa (Authorised Officer) For Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited	

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Temple priest found dead

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A priest of Shani Dev temple in New Hyderabad Colony was found dead on a bench near Khatu Shyam temple in Mahanagar on Tuesday. The deceased was identified as Ram Suresh Tiwari of Bahraich by one Abhishek Kumar of New Hyderabad locality. Abhishek told the police that he got information about the death of a priest and he reached the place where the body was found lying. "I identified him. He worked at the Shani temple in New Hyderabad locality," he told the police.

The police said Tiwari visited lane number 4 in Nishatganj to attend a 'katha'. "Local residents said Tiwari visited the 'katha' venue on Monday evening and felt some uneasiness. He sat on the bench to take rest and was later found dead," said sub-inspector Chandrakant, who is investigating the case. He said

the family of the priest was informed and the body was sent for autopsy. "Investigations is underway and the autopsy will ascertain the cause of death," he said, ruling out the possibility of foul play.

Meanwhile, the woman, whose body was recovered from near a hospital in Anaura village of Sarojininagar on October 16, was killed by an acquaintance who was nursing a grudge against her for meddling into his family issues and framing up him in a case owing to which he was jailed. Police expedited the probe a day after the deceased was identified as Rekha Gautam. The accused, Shahid Ali of Gonda, and was arrested from near his house in Kanshiram Colony in Daroga Kheda locality of Sarojininagar on Tuesday.

ASP (East) Suresh Chand Rawat said the police got a lead from villagers and the mystery was unravelled. "We were told that they had seen the woman

with a man the previous night. We contacted victim's family and collected details about persons with whom Rekha and her family had enmity. This way, we zeroed in on Shahid and a team was asked to keep tab on his activities. On Tuesday, we nabbed him when he was planning to flee the city," he said.

Shahid told the police that he had been acquainted with Rekha and her family for a long time. As per Shahid's confession, Rekha poisoned his wife's ear against him and it resulted into their divorce. Rekha, who was of a dominating nature as per Shahid, framed him up in a case of tempo theft and he had to spend three months in jail. Shahid alleged that when he was languishing in jail, Rekha took his minor daughter in confidence by expressing sympathy and later helped her in eloping with a youth of the locality. Shahid told the police that he came to know about Rekha's devious

plan after he was released on bail and planned to eliminate her. He said he managed to take Rekha to the forest cover near the hospital where he attacked her with a sharp-edged weapon at later strangulated her with her dupatta. Shahid left the body on the spot and fled the scene after hiding the dupatta and the weapon in the forest cover.

The police recovered the dupatta soaked in blood and the sharp-edged weapon on Shahid's disclosure and sent the same to forensic lab.

On the day of incident, the Sarojininagar police had claimed that the woman had died in some road mishap even as some mediapersons pointed out that the wounds were inflicted by some sharp-edged weapon. The villagers had also suspected foul play, pointing out it was inexplicable that a woman unknown to the locality would move on the road alongside the forest cover for some work.



With Diwali round the corner, shops selling firecrackers have come up at Rastogi Inter College ground in Aishbagh

Pioneer

Culture policy should include heritage from Vedic period: Yogi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that Uttar Pradesh has played an important role in preserving culture from Vedic to modern period.

"Culture should not be limited to theatre and folk arts, and its policy should include cultural heritage from the Vedic period till now," the Chief Minister said. He directed officials to discuss and seek advice from experts and incorporate their opinion in the policy.

The Chief Minister's directive came after a presentation of UP Culture Policy-2019. The Chief Minister said if the culture policy of the Centre or any state government is there, it should also be studied.

"Include their good things in your policy," he directed the officials. "Overall, the way Uttar Pradesh is culturally rich, it should also have its own culture policy. If the policy is good, this culture will be protected and promoted. Also, we will be able to inspire the new generation by telling it through various mediums," he added.

Prior to this, the department made a preliminary presentation of the UP Culture



Policy-2019 to the Chief Minister. UP will be the first state to frame such a policy.

The policy includes, among other things, cooperation with in the government, among voluntary organisations and entrepreneurs to preserve culture, create talent search competition to create awareness among children, proposal to set up a Cultural Research Fund with Rs 10 crore, coffee-table book, annual magazine publication etc. During the presentation, besides departmental minister Neelkanth Tiwari, senior officials of the department and CM office were present.

'All-weather road should be constructed near Indo-Nepal border'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that an all-weather road should be constructed near Indo-Nepal border with collaboration with PWD, SSB and Forest department. "For this, Public Works Department, Forest department and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) must conduct a joint survey in the forest and plain areas near the border and present a report to the government," he said.

At a meeting of different departments on Indo-Nepal road, the Chief Minister said the border road should be constructed along Nepal border so that security posts get connected with each other and forest mafia and elements that harm the wildlife could be strictly dealt with.

"Some people associated with anti-national powers try to misuse the open Indo-Nepal border. With the construction of border road, our security posts will be connected to each other and it will be easy to monitor suspicious elements. We have to take special care of wildlife and trees while making the border road so that they do not get harmed," the CM said.

Air pollution on the rise

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The air pollution levels have started increasing in the city. The Air Quality Index on Tuesday was 269, which is categorised as poor. A senior scientist from Indian Institute of Toxicological Research said that pollution levels increase at this time because of decreasing temperature and no wind blowing. "This is the time when people start burning garbage also because of which the pollution levels rise. There is a need to check pollution at the source itself," he said.

Higher levels of air pollutants, including metals, have adverse effects on human and environmental health.

The scientist said that air pollution creates significant health issues such as premature death, aggravated asthma, acute respiratory symptoms, and decreased lung function in the form of shortness of breath and chronic bronchitis etc.

"Further fine particles can remain suspended in air and travel long distances across regional and international borders without sinking and settling. Numerous epidemiological studies indicate that an increase in particulate matter concentration is associated with increased mortality, increased hospitalisation for respiratory and cardiovascular



The Air Quality Index on Tuesday was 269, which is categorised as poor

diseases, increased respiratory symptoms and decreased lung functions," he pointed out.

PM10 and PM2.5 levels increase mortality and morbidity. "The exact mechanism for the toxicity of air-borne particles is yet to be known. The degree of effectiveness depends on the physicochemical properties of the PMs, which depend on the level of associated trace metals, organic chemicals as well as other pollutants. Overall, the toxicity depends on the synergistic effects of physicochemical properties of PMs and environmental circumstances, including receptors conditions," he said. He added that fine air-

borne particulate matter for the diameter 2.5 µm, when inhaled, penetrates beyond the larynx. "Small particles penetrate deep into the lungs and can cause respiratory diseases such as emphysema and bronchitis, and aggravate existing heart disease. Ultra-fine particles ranging from 0.001 to 0.1 micron in diameter are able to penetrate deep into the lungs and to the alveolar sacs where gaseous exchange occurs. Further, these particles increase the rate of blood flow and vascular permeability to white blood cells, elevating clotting activity, constriction of the airways and fever induction," the IITR scientist said.

KAMLESH MURDER CASE

SIT in search of those who helped assailants escape

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Special Investigating team (SIT) is also keeping an eye on those who helped Hindu Samaj Party leader Kamlesh Tiwari's killers in fleeing the city.

As per an official communiqué, the fourth culprit in the murder conspiracy, Sayyed Asim, was thoroughly interrogated. The team has quizzed as many as 200 persons and recorded their statements. The police said samples of evidence collected in the case will be sent for forensic lab test.

Sources said the teams suspected that someone in Lucknow helped the killers get the hotel booked and also flee the city. "In fact, the protests, launched by Hindu Samaj Party leaders and workers after the news of Kamlesh Tiwari murder broke, hindered police investigation for hours and it helped the killers escape. It indicates that the killers' handlers had calculated the unrest following Tiwari's murder and

they used the situation in their favour," the sources said.

Tiwari's helper Saurashtra has been provided tight security in view of the sensitivity of the case and threat perception. The police said different teams had talks with Saurashtra during the last few days.

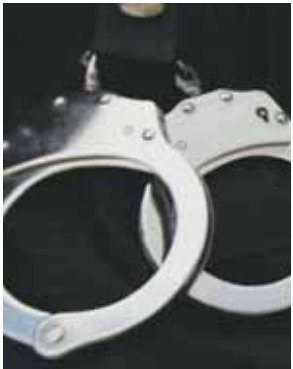
Meanwhile, Kamlesh's wife, who had lodged a case against muslim cleric Mohammed Mufti Naeem Kazmi and Imam Maulana Anwarul Haq (both of Bijnor) for orchestrating the murder conspiracy, said she was shown the photos of the killers and she had identified them. In a complaint, she had stated that the above-named clerics had issued a fatwa against Kamlesh in 2016 and announced a cash reward of Rs 51 lakh and Rs 1.5 crore, respectively, on his head. Police teams are camping at Kamlesh's Lucknow residence-cum-office in Khurshed Bagh (Naka) and also at his house in Sitapur. The police are also keeping a close vigil on those visiting the slain leader's residence in Lucknow.

Gang duping aspiring doctors busted; 5 held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A gang involved in cheating medical aspirants in the name of facilitating admission to state-run medical colleges through government quota was busted by Jhansi police after the arrest of five persons on Monday night. The accused operating from Noida had duped several students in the last few years. Interestingly, staff members of some medical colleges were also involved in the racket, though no one has been arrested so far.

Deputy Inspector General of Jhansi Range SS Baghel, who led the team along with SSP OP Singh, said they would now take all the accused in police custody remand so that other members of the gang and medical college staff involved could be identified and arrested. Baghel disclosed that recently, one Veer Singh of Mathura and V Ishwariya Reddi of Bellari in Karnataka informed him how they were cheated by a gang that



promised admission of their kin to Maharani Jhansi Bai Medical College. Singh and Rshwariya paid Rs 80,000 and Rs 2 lakh, respectively, after getting assurance that their children will get admission to the medical college through the government quota of three per cent. Baghel said they developed the information, conducted raids on Monday and nabbed five members of the gang. The accused were taken to Nawabad police station and were identified as Karan Singh

of Jhansi, Deepak Singh & Bhupendra Prajapati (both of Lalitpur), Hridesh Kumar of Mahoba, and Manas Trivedi of Chhatrapur district in Madhya Pradesh.

During interrogation, the accused disclosed that they had a consultancy office in Aitham Tower in Noida (Sector 62) in the name of 'Mind Mover'. They said that they would go through the data of aspirants and procure their mobile numbers. Later, they contacted them with admission offer. The accused also disclosed that in Jhansi, they had links with staff members who called them after OPD and provided them office space to dupe students.

To win the confidence of the aspiring doctors, the accused would complete formalities and collect money before going incommunicado. This year, they duped 16 students and collected Rs 1.60 crore from them. Baghel said they were now trying to nab the rest of the gang members.



A branch of Syndicate Bank in Kasimandla closed on Tuesday following strike call by two employee unions, protesting merger of public sector banks

Pioneer

Man stalking a girl nabbed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A stalker of a girl attacked a youth who attempted to protect her, in Vikas Nagar on Tuesday. The youth was admitted to a hospital while police arrested the accused after he was nabbed by passersby. Reports said the accused, identified as Kamil aka Shobh of Jankipuram had been stalking the girl for a long time. She works as an accountant at an agency. On Tuesday morning, Kamil stormed the agency's office. On the complaint of the

girl, two of her colleagues — Ashish and Sandeep — gave an earful to Kamil and turned him out of the office. Around 12.30 pm, the girl, along with Ashish, reached a bank for some office-related work.

"We were standing at the gate of the bank when Kamil reached the scene from somewhere. He talked to me in a harsh tone and attacked me with a sharp-edged weapon. Ashish rushed to my rescue and suffered injuries," the girl told the police.

Meanwhile, two bike-

borne unidentified miscreants snatched the gold chain of a girl, identified as Jaya Rai of Shine City (IIM Road) in Madaion on Tuesday afternoon. The victim suffered injuries as she tried to save her gold chain. Reports said she was returning home from Bhitauli and when she neared her house, the miscreants reached close to her scooter. "The pillion-rider snatched the gold chain and I suffered bruises around my neck. As I fell down, I suffered injuries," she said.

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CITYBRIEFS



DM Kaushal Raj Sharma with officials concerned at Ramabai Ambedkar Rally Sthal on Tuesday

SCRUTINY

A total of 11,0776 people voted in by-election to Cantt Assembly constituency, including 66,899 males and 43,875 females. Two of the 24 transgender voters also exercised their franchise. The figures were released by the district administration on Tuesday. The total number of voters registered in the area was 38,5072. District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma scrutinised the counting centre at Ramabai Ambedkar Rally Sthal in the presence of election observer K Prasanna. The DM was accompanied by chief development officer Manish Bansal and SDM as well as returning officer Abhinav Srivastava. Sharma said the scrutiny was completed without any hassles. He said the elections passed off peacefully and repolling was not required. The district administration also inspected the counting centre. He

said BSF jawans have been deployed for security at the counting centre and CCTV cameras installed in the premises.

SPORTS FEST

‘Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Sports Fest-2019’ was inaugurated at BBD Educational Group Campus in Lucknow by AKTU Vice-Chancellor Vinay Kumar

Pathak, and director of Sports, UP government, RP Singh. Vice-Chancellor of BBD University AK Mittal, registrar Sudharma Singh, DSW (AKTU) OP Singh and others were also present on the occasion. All the events will take place at Dr Akhilesh Das Gupta Stadium and BBD National Badminton Academy.



A freshers' induction programme was organised at SR Institute (Bakshi-Ka-Talab) on Tuesday. First-year students of B.Tech and MBA were accorded a warm welcome. Around 5,000 students, 2000 parents/guardian and faculty and staff members were present on the occasion.

Priyanka slams govt over law and order

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Close on the heels of the Supreme Court’s observation that ‘jungle raj’ was prevailing in Uttar Pradesh, Congress general secretary and incharge of UP East Priyanka Gandhi Vadra slammed Yogi Adityanath for his government’s laxity to ensure safe atmosphere for people.

The latest National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) report of 2017 saying UP has the highest number of crime against women also gave fresh ammunition to the Congress.

“The state tops the list in crime against women and the Chief Minister must do something about it,” Priyanka said while talking to mediapersons in Lucknow on way to Rae Bareilly on Tuesday. Vadra is in Rae Bareilly for three days from Tuesday to participate in a training programme of the newly-appointed office-bearers of the party.

Earlier, in couple of tweets, Vadra said: “UP recorded the highest crime against women. There are 56,000 incidents of crime against women in UP in just one year and there are thousands more which are



File pic

not reported.”

She also posted the official figure of the NCRB in her post. On the birth anniversary of freedom fighter Ashfaqullah Khan, Priyanka also tried to give a message of communal harmony in a tweet on Tuesday morning. She said both Ashfaqullah Khan and Ram Prasad Bismil, in spite of being from different religions, gave the message of brotherhood and unity.

In a tweet, the AICC general secretary wrote, “You must have heard the story of Ashfaqullah Khan and Ram

Prasad Bismil, today it is apt to talk about their story. Both Ashfaq and Bismil belonged to Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh, both belonged to different religions and both of them very well understood the diversity in their cultures. But still both of them sacrificed their lives for the nation and taught a lesson of humanity. I salute both the freedom fighters and the unity of Ashfaq and Bismil.”

Meanwhile, Priyanka was given a warm welcome soon after she reached Lucknow airport on Tuesday afternoon.

Aditi Singh stays away

Lucknow (PNS): With Priyanka Gandhi Vadra reaching her mother’s Parliamentary constituency (Rae Bareilly) on Tuesday afternoon, all eyes are now on local Congress MLA from Sadar Assembly seat, Aditi Singh, who was recently served a notice in connection with her alleged involvement in anti-party activities.

Shooting to limelight due to her frequent meetings with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, for defying the party line on attending the special 36-hour legislature session on October 2 and her stand on the over withdrawal of Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir, Aditi Singh has preferred to be away from Rae Bareilly.

Interestingly, this is the first time that Aditi played truant during the visit of a Gandhi family member to Rae Bareilly. Sources claimed

that Aditi was in Chandigarh and unlikely to return to Rae Bareilly till Priyanka was in the district. Priyanka is scheduled to fly back to Delhi on Thursday. Due to her defiance to toe the party line, Aditi was served notice before Dussehra by the UP Congress brass, but she chose not to reply and even dared the party to take action on the matter. A decision against her is still pending as neither the notice has been withdrawn, nor any action taken so far.

Party sources said Aditi contacted Priyanka to sort out the issue but was clearly told to first tender an apology and then have a dialogue. Sources also confirmed that while Aditi preferred to remain away from Rae Bareilly during Priyanka’s three-day visit, the party did not invite her to the programme since she refused to respond to the notice.

She immediately left for Rae Bareilly by road and attended the ‘pathshala’ which she organised for the newly-constituted Uttar Pradesh

Congress Committee (UPCC) led by Ajay Kumar ‘Lallu’. The three-day training programme will be a closed-door affair with media being kept aside.

CHINMAYANAND CASE

Court dismisses plea to book student under Gangster Act

Shahjahanpur: A local court on Tuesday dismissed a petition from BJP leader Swami Chinmayanand, who is accused of rape by a law student, demanding that the Gangster Act should be slapped on the woman and three others for trying to blackmail him. Chief Judicial Magistrate Omveer Singh dismissed the petition saying it was not in his jurisdiction. He directed that it should be moved before the relevant court, Chinmayanand’s lawyer Pooja Singh told PTI.

Chinmayanand had also sent a letter to the State police

chief demanding that the stringent Uttar Pradesh Gangsters and Anti-social Activities (Prevention) Act should be invoked against the woman and her three friends.

While the former Union Minister has been booked under the Indian Penal Code’s section 376C, a charge short of rape, the woman and three others face a separate extortion case. They were arrested last month on the basis Chinmayanand’s complaint that they tried to extort ₹5 crore, threatening to upload online video clips showing him getting massages from

her. According to the petition, Sachin Sengar, one the accused in the extortion case, had come to meet Chinmayanand at his home on August 9. He allegedly told Chinmayanand that he had all the evidence with him and a false case will be lodged if the former Minister did not pay up. The petition claimed that Sanjay Sengar has been earlier booked in two cases, including one for attempt to murder, at Shahjahanpur’s Tilhar police station. The plea alleged that cases have also been lodged against the student’s father. It levelled allegations against the woman’s mother as well.

Ald HC seeks reply from lawyer of accused student’s bail plea

Allahabad: The Allahabad High Court on Tuesday gave two weeks to the police and BJP leader Chinmayanand’s lawyer to file their objections to a bail plea by the law student who has accused the politician of rape. While the former Union Minister has been booked under the Indian Penal Code’s section 376C, a charge short of rape, the woman and three others face a separate case of trying to blackmail him. A special

investigation (SIT) of the Uttar Pradesh police has been probing the parallel cases. Seeking bail for her, the Shahjahanpur woman’s counsel argued that she is a victim of sexual harassment and all allegations against her are fabricated.

However, counsel for the State Government and Swami Chinmayanand opposed the bail plea, arguing that she is the main accused in the extortion case and there is sufficient evidence to prove it.

U.P. POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LTD. E-Tender Notice No. 13, 14, 15 & 16 - ETRD/2018-19 Sealed e-tenders in two separate parts on prescribed tender forms are hereby invited from the experienced Firms / contractors in this office as well as on U.P. Govt. website "www.etender.up.nic.in" for execution of following works as follows - Very Short term E-Tender No. 13-ETDR/2018-19 work of Centrifuging of 63 MVA T/F M/S Aditya Make 132KV S/S Amawan Under ETD Raebareilly. Earnest Money Rs. 1,000/- Cost of Tender document Rs. 118/- (Non refundable including GST). Sale of Tender Document up to 13:00 on 04.11.2019 submission of tender up to 17:00 on 04.11.2019. Receipt of tender hard copy (if any) up to 13:00 on 05.11.2019. Opening of Tender Bid Part-I at 15:30 on 05.11.2019. Very Short term E-Tender No. 14-ETDR/2018-19 work of Nitrogen, Purging & Vacuum for Removal of Moisture of 40 MVA Transformer (BEHL make) at 132 KV S/S Saloon, under ETD Raebareilly. Earnest Money Rs. 2,000/- Cost of Tender document Rs. 236/- (Non refundable including GST). Sale of Tender Document up to 13:00 on 04.11.2019 submission of tender up to 17:00 on 04.11.2019. Receipt of tender hard copy (if any) up to 13:00 on 05.11.2019. Opening of Tender Bid Part-I at 15:30 on 05.11.2019. Short term E-Tender No. 15-ETDR/2018-19 work of Hot Spot Scanning Through Infrared Thermo Graphy of 220KV Raebareilly (PGCL) - Unohar (NTPC) D/C Line Under ETD Raebareilly. Earnest Money Rs. 2,000/- Cost of Tender document Rs. 236/- (Non refundable including GST). Sale of Tender Document up to 13:00 on 14.11.2019 submission of tender up to 17:00 on 14.11.2019. Receipt of tender hard copy (if any) up to 13:00 on 15.11.2019. Opening of Tender Bid Part-I at 15:30 on 15.11.2019. E-Tender No. 16-ETDR/2018-19 work of Grass Cutting & Removal of Bushes, at 132 KV Sub Station Tipula, Raebareilly. Earnest Money Rs. 1,000/- Cost of Tender document Rs. 118/- (Non refundable including GST). Sale of Tender Document up to 13:00 on 25.11.2019 submission of tender up to 17:00 on 25.11.2019. Receipt of tender hard copy (if any) up to 13:00 on 26.11.2019. Opening of Tender Bid Part-I at 15:30 on 26.11.2019. For receipt of tender document and earnest money said amount is to be deposited through RTGS in the current account (Punjab National Bank, Civil Line Raebareilly, A/C No: 465500580000018, IFSC CODE: PUNB0465500) to the undersigned in official capacity. Part-I of the tender will contain the RTGS receipt of earnest money deposit, photocopies of GST Registration, PAN, Income Tax Clearance Certificate, proper experience for execution of similar works in UPPTCL and part-II will contain rates, terms and conditions and other relevant details. Opening date of Part 2 shall be intimated on e-website. In case of holiday / undersigned is out of station on notified opening day, the tender will be opened on the next working day. Undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof. (A. K. Yadav) EXECUTIVE ENGINEER Electricity Transmission Division Raebareilly. No. 846, Date 21.10.2019. "SAVE ELECTRICITY FOR NATION"

Notice Inviting e-Tender
No.SSA/Esstt/GunotsavTechnical Matter/979/2017/9773 Date: 22/10/2019
Mission Director. Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites tender through e-Tendering process from reputed agency having in execution of pre and post examination related work i.e. scanning of OMR using ICR/OCR/OMR technology and creation of database with necessary validation, Evaluation of Answer script etc. for Pre and Post Examination related activities.
To participate in this tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of class-II (minimum) and have to register in the portal https://assamtenders.gov.in.by themselves.
The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website https://assamtenders.gov.in.with proof of payment of non refundable tender fee of Rs. 5000/- (Five thousands) for each tender as demand draft/ Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.
Sd/- Mission Director, SSA, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Notice Inviting e-Tender
No.SSA/Esstt/GunotsavTechnical Matter/979/2017/9774 Date: 22/10/2019
Mission Director. Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites tender through e-Tendering process from reputed agency for Printing, Packaging and Supply of Question Paper, Gunotsav 2019.
To participate in this tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of class-II (minimum) and have to register in the portal https://assamtenders.gov.in.by themselves.
The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website https://assamtenders.gov.in. with proof of payment of non refundable tender fee of Rs. 5000/- (Five thousands) for each tender as demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.
Sd/- Mission Director, SSA, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (PROJECT) W-I DELHI JAL BOARD, GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI, ROOM NO. 511, VARUNALAYA PHASE-I KAROL BAGH, NEW DELHI-110005 E-mail Id:- eet1.djb@gmail.com							
NIT NO. 05 (2019-20)							
S. No.	Name of Work	Amount Put to tender	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Tender Fees (Rs.) Non (Refundable)	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Last date/time of submission of tender through e-procurement solution	Tender ID
1.	Re-boring of 05 nos. tube wells at (i) 7&8 Block, Malviya Nagar (ii) B-100, Malviya Nagar (iii) Prithvi Park, Khirki Village (iv) MCD Hospital, Malviya Nagar, (v) Toot Sarai Village under Malviya Nagar Constituency	29,56,956/-	59,200/-	500/-	22.10.2019	04.11.2019 upto 03:00 pm	2019_DJB_182695_1
Note:- Any further amendment/corrigendum made in this NIT will be uploaded and can only be seen on website http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in ISSUED BY P.R.O (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V. 470/2019-20							
							Sd/- EE(Proj) W-I

DELHI JAL BOARD: DELHI SARKAR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SOUTH)-I OPPOSITE J-BLOCK MARKET, SAKET : NEW DELHI-110017. NIT NO. 50(S-I) (2019-20)				
S. No	Name of work	Estimated cost	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Last date/time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1	Replacement of sewer lines from H.No. C- 705 to T-9/1 ward no. 3 (near Kalka Das), H.No. 281B to C-281/20 (Sunita Yadav), Near 211 C, 177 F-8, Prince Public School, Gausahala Gate N-2 to 266 P/20 ward no. 2 in Mehrauli Township in Mehrauli Constituency AC-45 under EE(South)-I	28,80,387/-	2019_DJB_182592_1 21.10.2019	11.11.2019 upto 3:00 PM
2	Replacement of old/damaged/ silted up sewer lines near Pargal Chowk Vainiki Basti Near Vainiki Mandir, old BDO office & H.No. 243/6 in Mehrauli in Mehrauli Constituency AC-45 under EE(South)-I	30,36,633/-	2019_DJB_182592_2 21.10.2019	11.11.2019 upto 3:00 PM
NIT along with all the terms & conditions is available on Web https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in . ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V. 467/2019-20				
Sd/- EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SOUTH)-I				

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

IN NET-FREE..

Lack of Techint also hampers exploitation of the human intelligence (Humint) gathering networks in absence of inputs on the insidious groups, sources in the security agencies said. Earlier, Al Qaeda Kashmir chief Zakir Musa, since liquidated by the security agencies, used to develop apps for specific purposes with a self destruction feature to evade the radar of the agencies. Musa was an engineering dropout and used professional education background to develop the apps and evaded the security agencies for years together before being killed earlier this year. The Bridgefy also known as BridgeFree was developed by a San Francisco-based company for bridging the gaps in telecom connectivity in areas which do not have traditional telecommunication network or Wi-Fi. Sources here said, the app is being used in the Valley, including Capital Srinagar and adjoining areas besides those in South Kashmir by the terror groups to spread the messages from the ISI among themselves and pass on the operational commands to the terror operatives. The development has posed a challenge to the agencies which have to continuously counter and outsmart the ever-evolving tactics of the terror groups.

JCO MARTYRED...

The entire area has been cordoned off to track down the foot prints of the infiltrators, if any.

Meanwhile, Defence PRO in Jammu, Lt- Col Devender Anand only confirmed the news of martyrdom of a JCO. “One Junior Commissioned Officer martyred in Nowshera, details awaited,” he said in a brief statement.

In Srinagar, a joint team of security forces eliminated three terrorists in Awantipora area of South Kashmir’s Pulwama district late Tuesday evening at the end of three hour-long operation.

Official sources said, “the killed terrorists were believed to be behind the killing of two nomads in the same area

in the first week of August 2019.”

Official sources said, out of three, two terrorists were Pakistani nationals while one of the killed terrorist was a local youth. In Poonch, situation along the LoC remained tense as Pakistan army initiated ‘unprovoked’ ceasefire violation in Balakote area of Mendhar. A 60-year-old woman injured in the firing was rushed to GMC, Jammu after receiving first aid treatment in Rajouri. On the other hand, Pakistani Rangers continue to target forward villages of Hiranagar sector in Kathua district along the International border across Jammu frontier.

SINGH IS...

“When we get back to Ottawa, every single day we are in parliament, New Democrats are going to be working to make sure Canadians’ lives are better,” he was quoted as saying by globalnews.ca. Singh said his party’s elected officials will now head to Ottawa to tackle a number of issues, including taking “real and urgent action” on climate change, making life more affordable for Canadians and making sure the “super wealthy pay their fair share”. Singh, who was himself a prime ministerial contender, said he wants the NDP to play a “constructive” role in the new Parliament, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation reported. Addressing supporters at his party headquarters in Burnaby, 40-year-old Singh said, “It is such an amazing honour to be home here in British Columbia with all of you.”

The first non-white leader of a federal political party in Canada congratulated Trudeau, 47, on his win and said he spoke to him earlier in the day, the report said.

Singh, a leftist former criminal defence lawyer, said he wants the NDP to play a “constructive and positive role” in the new Parliament. “The winner of this election is not a leader or a party — the winners should be Canadians. They want a government that works for them. Not the

rich and the powerful,” Singh tweeted.

In the Liberal Government elected in 2015, Indian-Canadians had notched up a record number of 19 seats. Of those 19, as many as 18 were of Punjabi origin. Trudeau’s outgoing Cabinet has four Sikhs — defence minister Harjit Sajjan; infrastructure minister Amarjeet Sohi; innovation, science and economic development minister Navdeep Bains and tourism minister Bardish Chagger. The Green Party has already indicated to remain in the Opposition with its leader Elizabeth May saying that her party would work hard to hold the government to account by “non-stop arm-twisting”. Bloc Quebecois leader Yves-Francois Blanchet has also apparently signalled at his unwillingness to join the government. “The Bloc Quebecois does not want to form a government or participate in a Government,” he said and added that he does not think that the people of Canada voted for a minority government because they want to go back to the polls in 18 months.

SC GRANTS BAIL...

The top court made it clear that Chidambaram will have to make himself available for interrogation as and when required by the probe agency.

“It is made clear that the findings in this judgment be construed as expression of opinion only for the limited purpose of considering the regular bail in CBI case and shall not have any bearing in any other proceedings,” the bench said in its 27-page verdict. The apex court also dismissed the CBI plea challenging the findings of the high court which had said that Chidambaram was not a “flight risk” and there was no possibility of him tampering with the evidence.

The Bench said since the High Court has expressed its views on the merits of the matter in its September 30 verdict, they will not have any bearing either in the trial or in any other proceedings.

The top court noted in its judgment that the CBI has filed a charge sheet against Chidambaram and others in the case and other co-accused have already been granted bail. “The appellant is not a ‘flight risk’ and in view of the conditions imposed, there is no possibility of his abscondence from the trial,” the Bench said. The Bench did not accept the contentions of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who had appeared for the CBI and had raked up the issue of persons accused in economic offences fleeing the country. “At this stage itself, it is necessary for us to indicate that we are unable to accept the contention of the Solicitor General that ‘flight risk’ of economic offenders should be looked at as a national phenomenon and be dealt with in that manner merely because certain other offenders have flown out of the country,” it said. “The same cannot, in our view, be put in a straight-jacket formula so as to deny bail to the one who is before the court, due to the conduct of other offenders, if the person under consideration is otherwise entitled to bail on the merits of his own case,” it said. The Bench further said, “Hence, in our view, such consideration including as to ‘flight risk’ is to be made on individual basis being uninfluenced by the unconnected cases, more so, when the personal liberty is involved.” Regarding the CBI’s claim that Chidambaram had influenced witnesses in the case, the Bench said, “There are no details as to the form of approach of those two witnesses either SMS, e-mail, letter or telephonic calls and the persons who have approached the material witnesses.”

Chidambaram, who is currently in ED’s custody will be produced in the trial court on October 24 and the agency is expected to demand seven more days of custody. As per the rules, Chidambaram can apply bail only after the trial court sends him on judicial custody. The accused can either apply for regular bail to the trial court or directly to the High Court.

India has never been offensive: Rajnath on Pak Min remark

PNSPTI ■ NEW DELHI**NSLAMABAD**

India on Tuesday did not fall into Pakistan's trap despite its provocation by firing at civilian inhabitations in Poonch and Rajouri even as Islamabad was facilitating a guided tour of envoys and mediapersons to some areas of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) across the Line of Control (LoC). Ironically, it was Islamabad itself which had requested New Delhi to hold fire in view of the envoys' visit.

The Indian Army showed extreme restraint by not retaliating forcefully and playing into the hands of Pakistan that wanted to portray India as the aggressor.

At least, two civilians were injured in mortar shelling by the Pakistan Army in Balakote area of Rajouri on Monday morning. The local authorities also rushed children attending

schools in the border area to safety.

In this backdrop of tension between the two countries, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, while responding to questions on Pakistan Railways Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed threat to use nuclear weapons after terror camps were destroyed in POK areas opposite Tangdhar on Sunday, said India has never been offensive. "We have never invaded anyone nor has India annexed an inch of territory from anyone." However, he added that Indian armed forces are fully capable of giving a befitting reply to any evil designs against the country.

Giving details of the sequence of events regarding latest ceasefire violations by Pakistan, officials said here, Pakistan through established channels on Monday requested India to refrain from firing as diplomatic community and

journalists were to be conducted to a guided tour.

The visit was planned to show the international community about India's claims of destroying some terror launch pads in punitive strikes on Sunday in Tangdhar in North Kashmir.

Army chief General Bipin Rawat said on Sunday six to ten Pakistan Army personnel were killed and three terror camps destroyed in a retaliatory action by the Indian Army opposite the Tangdhar and Keran sectors in Jammu & Kashmir. He also said another terror camp was severely damaged in the action by the Indian forces and the retaliation had caused substantial harm to the terror infrastructure across the LoC.

Nearly 22 diplomats besides scores of journalists and social media professionals were to be taken to the area, officials



‘INDIAN ARMED FORCES ARE FULLY CAPABLE OF GIVING A BEFITTING REPLY TO ANY EVIL DESIGNS AGAINST THE COUNTRY’

side. However, Pakistan went back on its word on ceasefire violations and targeted civilian hamlets leaving several school children stranded.

Officials said the action from across the border was obviously to incite India to retaliate and show New Delhi in poor light.

Meanwhile, Pakistan on Tuesday said Indian officials did not join a handful of foreign diplomats visiting the sectors along the LOC, where the Indian Army destroyed

three terror camps.

Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman Mohammad Faisal said diplomats from various foreign mission in Islamabad were visiting Jura and Shahkot sectors opposite Tangdhar where the terror camps were flattened by the Indian artillery fire.

It was in retaliation to killing of two Indian soldiers and a civilian on Sunday when the Pakistan Army tried to push in militants by giving them covering fire. "The Indian

side has not joined us in the visit to the LoC neither have they provided coordinates of the alleged 'launch pads'," Faisal tweeted.

He said "claims by Indian Army chief remain just that: 'claims.'" Faisal is also accompanying the diplomatic corps to the LoC. The numbers and nationalities of the foreign diplomats visiting the LoC was not shared.

Pakistan military on Sunday said India is welcome to take any foreign diplomat or media to the site of alleged terror camps to "prove" its claim on the ground. Director General (DG) army's media wing Major General Asif Ghafoor said, "What good Indian High Commission is which can't stand with its Army Chief? Indian High Commission staff didn't have the moral courage to accompany fellow diplomats in Pakistan to the LOC," he said.

7th pay commission benefits for J&K, Ladakh Govt employees from Oct 31

New Delhi: In the run up to the creation of Union Territories on October 31, the Centre on Tuesday implemented the 7th Pay Commission to the Government employees of Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has approved the proposal of payment of all 7th CPC allowances to the Government employees of Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh, which shall come into existence from October 31, an official statement said.

The move will benefit 4.5 Lakh Government employees who are working in the existing State of Jammu & Kashmir and will become the employ-

ees of UT of Jammu & Kashmir and UT of Ladakh from October 31, it said.

The annual financial implication of 7th CPC allowances like children education allowance, hostel allowance, transport allowance, LTC, fixed medical allowance, etc. In respect of 4.5 lakh Government employees of existing State of Jammu & Kashmir will be around ₹4,800 crore.

Of the total ₹4,800 crore, a modest ₹607 crore will be for children education allowance, ₹1,823 crore for hostel allowance, ₹1,200 crore for transport allowance, ₹1,000 crore for leave travel concession (LTC), ₹108 crore for fixed medical Allowance and ₹62 crore for other allowances. **PNS**

CONG NATIONWIDE STIR AGAINST MODI GOVT

Protest not cancelled but postponed: Party spokesperson

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the exit polls predicting yet another poll debacle, tongues are wagging within the Congress circles as to why the scheduled countrywide 10-day mass protest this month against the Modi Government on economic issues did not take off.

The party had officially announced a month ago to undertake a massive protest between October 15 and 25 at all levels which was to have the participation of party chief Sonia Gandhi, her predecessors Rahul Gandhi, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and top party leaders.

AICC insiders pointed to the possibility of the protest being 'sabotaged' by a section of leaders midway during the poll campaign for Assembly elections in Haryana and Maharashtra. Sources also said that Sonia and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi were kept off the campaign in both the States presuming the party's poor performance in both the States where the ruling BJP is slated to retain power.

When asked about what happened to the 10-day protest, a spokesman of

the grand old party requesting not to be named said it has not been cancelled but postponed and will be taken up after the festive season is over in northern India. "Priyankaji is already working towards leading from the front in Uttar Pradesh and the new schedules would be announced very soon," said the spokesman.

However sources in the party said that a section of party leaders discouraged the high command to go ahead with the planned protest conveying that the time was not appropriate as the nationwide protest could divert the gains of total from Assembly campaigns in Haryana and Maharashtra.

Congress had announced to hold the massive agitations across the country from October 15 to October 25 against the Government's policies that have allegedly led to an "economic slowdown". The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by Sonia Gandhi at the AICC headquarters on September 12. The meeting was also attended by Manmohan Singh, AICC general secretaries and in-charges of various states and Congress Legislative Party leaders, among others.

Naidu for detailed Legislative Impact Assessment for informed law making

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday advocated detailed Legislative Impact Assessment (LIA) bringing out social, economic, environmental and institutional impacts of legislative proposals for informed law making in the country. Naidu, in his capacity as Chairman of Rajya Sabha said that it would be useful to indicate such impact assessment in the legislative proposals for wider dissemination among all the stakeholders.

Naidu elaborated on the need for such impact assessment while referring to legislative process in the country during his address to 151 officials who have recently joined the Rajya Sabha Secretariat. It is for the first time that Rajya Sabha Chairman has interacted with new recruits on joining the Secretariat. Desh Deepak Verma, Rajya Sabha Secretary General, was present on the occasion.

Naidu said that inter-ministerial consultations are held before the Cabinet considers and approves legislative proposals but the scope for undertaking and indicating the impact of such proposals is limited in the present context. "Informed legislation will help in realising the stated objects of various laws



and this requires a detailed impact assessment of legislation at the stages of both pre-legislation and post-legislation. An account of pre-legislative impact assessment could be

included either in the Bill or as an Annexure to the Bill," said the RS chairman.

Referring to Legislative Impact Assessment being undertaken by some OECD countries to good effect, Naidu said; "As the largest and vibrant democracy of the world, it is time that we do take a serious look at such impact assessment for ensuring more informed legislation. I am, hence, making this proposal for wider discussion and consideration by all the stakeholders."

During his interaction, Naidu suggested that the new recruits should take pride in the job as a source of motivation, pursue extensive study of the socio-political processes of the country and the issues being addressed by Parliament from time to time, acquire deep knowledge of the Constitution, understand Rules of Business of the House, be innovative and creative to make work more rewarding, move out of silos and to be aligned with the larger vision and objectives of the organisation and treat workplace as home.

Health Min: Govt will soon achieve goal of Universal Immunization

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The Government will soon achieve its goal of Universal Immunization of children, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said on Tuesday as he noted that at present, up to 90 per cent

of children in India are being given free immunization. India's Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) is the largest in the world.

The Minister was briefing the media here in the run-up to the Government's celebration of the Pulse Polio Immunization Programme's Silver Jubilee, which will be held on the 31st of this month.

The Minister said that, in the early 90s, India saw over two lakh cases of polio annually, but, after the polio eradication programme was launched in 1994, India attained polio-free status over the course of the next two decade due to concentrated efforts and collaboration of the Government, international partners, civil society, health workers and millions of volunteers. The Minister further added that the best practices and

the systems established by the Pulse Polio programme have benefitted other health programs, viz. the community mobilization, logistics management, reaching the last mile or setting up a surveillance system.

The learnings from Pulse Polio programme have helped implementation of other immunization programme i.e. the Mission Indradhanush (MI) and the Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI).

The Universal Immunization (UIP) basket of vaccines has expanded to cover 12 Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPDs) from the earlier 7. Since 2014, five new vaccines have been introduced in UIP, which includes Rotavirus vaccine, Japanese encephalitis vaccine for adults, Inactivated Poliovirus Vaccine (IPV), Measles Rubella vaccine (MR) and, Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) in a phased manner.

As of today, "Mission Indradhanush and related drives have successfully reached out to and vaccinated 3.39 crore children and 87.2 Lakh pregnant women in India."

SC to hear pending cases on linking Aadhaar with social media

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday transferred to itself all cases related to the linkage of social media profiles with Aadhaar pending in different high courts and also asked the Centre to submit its report in January to check social media misuse.

A bench of justices Deepak Gupta and Aniruddha Bose, while allowing the transfer petition of Facebook, asked the registry to place all connected matters before the chief justice of India for listing before an appropriate bench in last week of January 2020.

The top court also asked the Centre to submit its report in January on the notification of rules by which social media misuse can be checked and liability could be fastened on intermediaries to decrypt messages.

The bench's order came after Attorney General K K Venugopal, appearing for Tamil Nadu, dropped his opposition to Facebook's plea seeking transfer of all cases pending in different high courts to the apex court.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, clarified that its is not a ploy to breach the privacy of individuals but it is an attempt to protect national security and sovereignty.

The attorney general then intervened and said a terrorist cannot claim his right to privacy. Mehta also rubbished the claim



of some petitioners, who alleged that the draft rule under consideration of the Government, which would enable authorities to fasten liability on intermediaries to trace the originator of a particular message or a content, is Government's ploy to "trample individual's privacy".

On Monday, the Centre had told the court that internet has emerged as a potent tool to cause "unimaginable disruption" to democratic polity, and sought three more months for finalising and notifying the rules that would regulate the functioning of social media intermediaries in the country.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) had told the top court that though technology had led to economic growth and societal development, there was also an exponential rise in hate speech, fake news and anti-national activities.

The court had taken the affidavit on record after counsel representing the Centre said the government had sought three months' time for finalisation of the Information Technology Intermediaries Guidelines (Amendment) Rules, 2018.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Government has increased the monetary limits for accepting gifts for all its employees, relaxing the ceiling by more than three-fold, officials said on Tuesday.

All officials under Groups 'A' and 'B' categories shall not accept any gift without the sanction of the Government if the value exceeds ₹5,000, they said, citing recently amended rules. The limit to accept gifts for these groups of employees was ₹1,500 earlier.

Similarly, Group 'C' employees will be able to accept gifts up to ₹2,000 instead of ₹500 without taking Government approval.

Officials said the ceiling limits were revised to bring them on par with those for the three all India services — Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police Service and Indian Forest Service.

Government employees under Group 'A' are senior officials. Government employees under Group 'B' could either be gazetted or non-gazetted officials. Most clerical posts and multi-tasking staff fall under Group 'C'.

Officials said the ceiling

limits were revised to bring them on par with those for the three all India services — Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police Service and Indian Forest Service.

Gifts include free transport, boarding, lodging or other pecuniary advantage when provided by any person other than a near relative or personal friend having no official dealings with the Government servant. A casual meal, lift or other social hospitality is not considered a gift, according to existing rules.

The government has also removed the limit of Rs 1,000 for government employees to receive and retain gifts from foreign dignitaries



Karnataka Congress MP KC Ramamurthy joins Bharatiya Janata Party in the presence of party working president JP Nadda, at BJP headquarters in New Delhi on Tuesday **PTI**

Need to increase agri share in GDP to 50%: Agri Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Tuesday said there is a need to increase the share of farm sector in the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to 50 per cent from the current 14 per cent and stressed on balanced use of fertilisers to protect soil health as well as boost crop yields. Tomar also urged farmers not to burn crop residues as it affects solid health and leads to air pollution. He asked them to take advantage of various Government programmes to deal with stubble burning.

Addressing a conference for awareness of fertiliser application among farmers, Tomar said the share of agriculture in



the country's GDP is currently 14 per cent, but this is not enough. "Can we increase this to 50 per cent of our GDP?" he added.

Tomar said the productivity and production of all kharif (summer-sown) and rabi (winter-sown) can be enhanced substantially through proper use of fertilisers in right quantity and as per the soil conditions. The balanced use of fertilisers would also boost farm-

ers' income, he added.

"We have also been focusing on soil health and already distributed 8 crore soil health cards to farmers," he said.

The Minister told farmers that excessive use of fertilisers would destroy agriculture fields. He also spoke about the need for more usage of micro-nutrients to improve soil health.

Tomar highlighted that the Centre has fixed the minimum support price (MSP) of crops at least 1.5 times of production cost and is also providing ₹6,000 per year to around 14 crore farmers under the PM-Kisan schem. He said about 8 crore farmers have already got benefit under the ₹87,000 crore PM-Kisan scheme.

ASCI orders removal of 299 misleading ads

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The promos of web series 'Chernobyl' and Sanjay Leela Bhansali's movie 'Malaal' on print, electronic and social media were found misleading and violating the advertisement norms. Similarly, an advertisement featuring actress Deepika Padukone and Ranvir Singh promoting a product was found misleading.

The advertisement claims "100 Days Diabetes Healer" by Rathira Ayurveda and Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital and Medical Research Institute advertisement claiming to overcome Parkinson was not substantiated with proof. Taking note of these false and misleading advts, the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), a regulatory body, has issued directions for

removal of content of 299 advts from print, television, Twitter and YouTube.

According to the ASCI findings, the promo of 'Chernobyl' showing a bloodied hand and a patient with the bloodied face related to nuclear energy during the live streaming of cricket was found violating the advertisement norms. Similarly, promo of the "Malaal" movie features the rider (male) and the pillion rider (female) on a two wheeler without helmets violating the traffic rules, shows dangerous practices, and manifests a disregard for safety.

The regulatory body also found the YouTube Channel video introduces the advertisement communication as "Wondering why you're so tired all the time? Watch how to take the #RiseUpChallenge by Horlicks Protein +".

"The video refers to complaints of "chronic tiredness" by participants of the Rise Up challenge, which is not necessarily linked to muscle strength alone. Such tiredness could be due to other health conditions such as loss of muscle mass, de-conditioning, nutritional deficiencies, oxygen delivery and anaemia. "Rise Up challenge" is to check ability to move which is linked to many factors mentioned above as well as neurological normalcy, balancing apparatus in the brain etc. Muscle strength is one of the outcome factors of the Rise Up challenge; connecting this as a direct "screening test" for "chronic tiredness" by the advertiser was considered to be incorrect," the ASCI said in its ruling.

In TV and YouTube advertisement of Lloyd AC, the advertise-

ment featuring actress Deepika Padukone and actor Ranvir Singh claims "18 degree Celsius in 45 seconds" was found misleading.

The television advertisement's claim, "Jab Challenge Ban Jaaye Tagda, toh Mamuli Nahi Tagda Energy Drink, Rasna Insta Ener-G", "Ye de real tagadi Energy, kyunki dusro ke mukable sirf Rasna Insta mei hai Real Fruit Powder, 21 Vitamin, Minerals our Glucose ki tagadi shakti" were not substantiated. The pack visual indicated that the advertised product has 90 gm of sugar per 100 gm and has only 0.5 gm Glucose, an ingredient known to provide "instant energy".

The advertisement creates an impression that Rasna Insta EnerG gives more instant energy than glucose powder or Instant drink as the

Boy Cadet rejects these products but gets instantly energised and keeps running for more than 19 rounds after consumption of the advertised product. The claim of instant energy was not substantiated with composition / FSSAI licence / pack artwork or samples, nor evidence of the ingredients present for the real fruit powder claim; also no comparison to show superiority over other generic glucose products was provided.

Bansal Classes Pvt Ltd printer advertisement's claim, "The Leader" was not substantiated with verifiable comparative data of the advertiser's classes and other similar classes, to prove that they are superior than all the rest in providing coaching for the courses claimed, or through an independent third-party validation.

Low pressure areas form over Bay of Bengal: IMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Due to formation of low pressure areas over South West and Bay of Bengal and strengthening of northeast monsoon further, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) predicts fairly widespread rainfall over the next four to five days in many parts of South India. The IMD also withdrawn the 'red alert' issued on Monday for seven of 14 districts of Kerala.

According to the IMD, the low pressure area over southwest and adjoining west central Bay of Bengal would intensify in the next 24 hours and move north-northwestwards. This is even as a persisting low-pressure area over the East-Central Arabian Sea awaits further

traction to intensify a round to become 'well-marked', before further strengthening as a monsoon depression by Wednesday.

The IMD has persisted with an outlook for the system to North-North-East over East-Central Arabian Sea (towards the Konkarn-Mumbai coast) till Thursday, and then re-curve West-North-West (towards Oman-Yemen) with gradual intensification. Unlike the four-month southwest monsoon which accounts for over 75% of India's annual rainfall, showers during the northeast monsoon season is limited to southern peninsula. It provides rainfall to Tamil Nadu, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Rayalseema, Kerala and south-interior Karnataka during October to December.

IN ASSAM— No Govt jobs for those with more than 2 kids from 2021

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

The Assam Cabinet on Monday decided that no Government jobs will be given to persons having more than two children after January 1, 2021.

The important decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting held late Monday evening that also adopted a New Land Policy, which will give three bighas of agricultural land to landless indigenous people and half a bigha for constructing a house.

A communique from the Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal's public relations cell



stated that those having more than two children will not be considered for Government jobs with effect from January 1, 2021 as per the small family norm.

In September 2017, the Assam Assembly had passed the 'Population and Women

Empowerment Policy of Assam' that specified that job candidates with two children only would be eligible for government employment and the existing government staff were to strictly follow the two children family norm.

"New Land Policy was adopted. Three bighas of land will be given to landless indigenous people. Landless people will be offered half a bigha to construct their houses. These cannot be sold for 15 years," the CMO statement said.

The Cabinet meeting also decided to increase the bus fares in the State by 25 per cent, it added.

Religious fanatics running schools to brainwash youth: Mamata Banerjee

Siliguri: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday said religious fanatics have set up schools in the northern part of the State to "brainwash" younger generations.

Without naming anyone, she said this was a part of an attempt to spark communal violence in the region.

Speaking at an administrative review meeting of Cooch Behar, Alipurduar and Jalpaiguri districts in Uttarkanya (branch secretariat) here, Banerjee said, "A radical religious outfit has set up several schools in these three districts of North Bengal to be able to take control of our State."

"The money (to run such

institutions) is coming from outside. The teachers in these schools get a monthly salary of ₹ 20,000 to brainwash the students."

Those threatening to implement Citizenship (Amendment) Bill and National Register of Citizens (NRC) are conspiring to fuel trouble in the State, she stated.

"These are the people who are striking off names (from citizenship list). They are pitting one section against another by threatening to bring NRC and Citizenship bill. This is a part of an attempt to spark communal violence," the Chief Minister maintained. **PTI**

Fall in polling in TN casts shadow over contenders

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The five per cent fall in the number of voters who cast their votes in the Nanguneri by-election has cast a shadow on the confidence of both the leading contenders, Ruby Manoharan (Congress) and V Narayanan (AIADMK).

According to Tamil Nadu Election Commission, Nanguneri recorded 66.35 per cent polling on Monday while the constituency had seen 71.35 per cent polling in the 2016 assembly election.

Adding to the woes of the Congress (which is supported by the Congress) and the AIADMK, thousands and thousands of Devendra Kula Vellalars stayed away from the polling station to

drive home the significance of their demand to delisting them from the Scheduled Caste and elevation as OBC. *The Pioneer* had reported about the unique and rare demand raised by the leader of Puthiya Tamilagam Party, Dr K Krishnasamy that the State and Centre Governments for integrating seven sub-sects as Devendra Kula Vellalars and removing them from the ambit of the provisions of the Scheduled Caste.

"It was an aberration of history and that has to be corrected. We were not Scheduled Caste people but a class of land owning farming community which specialized in wet-land farming," Dr Krishnasami has told this newspaper. Voters belonging to the Devendra Kula Vellar in Nanguneri con-

stituency boycotted Monday's by-poll and hoisted black flags atop their residences and all public places in the villages. The decision of the DKV community to stay away from the polling would affect the prospects of the AIADMK because the Puthiya Tamilagam is a constituent of the NDA in Tamil Nadu.

Dr Krishnasamy refused to say anything about the poll prospects of the AIADMK in the backdrop of the DKV's decision to boycott the poll. Southern Tamil Nadu has a considerable population of the Devendra Kula Vellalars and they are capable of tilting the balance in many constituencies in the region, said Krishna Pillai, an activist of the AIADMK from Kanyakumari.

Seize Prateek Hajela's passport till NRC audit is completed: APW

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

The original petitioner in the Supreme Court seeking updation of the NRC in Assam on Tuesday urged the government to "seize" the passport of the NRC State Coordinator, Prateek Hajela, till auditing of the entire process was completed. The apex court on Friday had directed the Centre and the Assam government to transfer the Assam National Register of Citizens (NRC) Coordinator to Madhya Pradesh for the maximum period.

Describing Hajela's "dramatic exit" from the state as a matter of grave concern, president of the Assam Public Works President (APW), Aabhiheet Sharma, said in a statement that the government should ensure that he cannot leave the country till auditing of the NRC process was completed. The government has a major responsibility to find out how a government official who has been solely responsible for spending Rs 1,600 crore of



government money can leave Assam without submitting any detailed report of expenses, Sharma said.

The NRC was a process on which the people of Assam had pinned their hopes but the release of the final list was "full of flaws and it has broken the hearts of many", Sharma said. The final NRC was released on August 31 with 19,06,657 of the total 3,30,27,661 applicants excluded. "We were eagerly waiting for the views of the Supreme Court on the final NRC but were really surprised on October 18, when it gave an order to transfer Hajela to Madhya Pradesh and that he

be released within seven days," he said. The APW president alleged that the NRC State Coordinator had submitted some documents to the court stating that there was risk to his life. "We really don't understand the courts order regarding his immediate transfer. We still wonder why no order was issued for entrusting his security with any organisation or department...", he said. The APW will submit another petition before the Supreme Court on November 17 urging investigations into the various aspects of the NRC process by investigating agencies, such as CBI and NIA, Sharma added.

In 2009, the APW had filed a petition in the Supreme Court praying that names of 41 lakh foreigners be deleted from the electoral rolls of Assam and the NRC updated.

The apex court in 2013 took up the APW petition and directed both the Central and state governments to begin the process for updating the NRC and the actual work began two years later.

BSF keeping close eye on Pak's actions across border

Jaisalmer: The BSF is keeping a close eye on Pakistan's actions across the border and is capable of dealing with any situation, a top official of the force said on Tuesday.

Border Security Force (BSF), Inspector General, Rajasthan Frontier, Amit Lodha, who is on a two-day visit to Jaisalmer, also said steps are being taken to further strengthen the border guarding force. The BSF is alert and ready to deal with all situations on the India-Pakistan border in Rajasthan, he told reporters.

On spotting of drones near the border, the inspector general made it clear that the BSF has information about all actions. The force always tries to maintain better coordination with people living near the border, Lodha said.

The BSF has launched a scheme 'ghar aangan' to maintain a better rapport with villagers and positive results are being seen, he said. **PTI**

Two BSP leaders garlanded with shoes, paraded outside party office in Rajasthan

Jaipur: Two BSP leaders were garlanded with shoes, their faces blackened and paraded outside the party office on Tuesday by its workers who alleged corruption in ticket allocation in the 2018 Rajasthan Assembly polls.

The BSP workers also made Ramji Gautam, the national coordinator, sit on a donkey and paraded him and former state unit chief Sitaram outside the party office in Bani Park here. "Our workers are upset with the leaders. The workers were active on the ground for five years but parachute candidates from the BJP and Congress were given ticket in lieu of money. BSP workers and leaders are being ignored and exploited," a BSP worker present there said.

He said they held three demonstrations in the state but the leaders did not convey their plight to BSP chief Mayawati. "Therefore, we had to take this step," he said. **PTI**

Darjeeling BJP MP's car attacked in Kalimpong

Darjeeling: The BJP MP of Darjeeling Raju Bista was on Tuesday shown black flag and his car was attacked in West Bengal's Kalimpong district by alleged activists of TMC and Binay Tamang faction of the GJM.

The GJM faction of Tamang and the TMC have denied the charges as baseless and politically motivated. A police contingent arrived at the spot and dispersed the mob.

The incident took place at a time when West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is on a tour of North Bengal. She is scheduled to arrive in Kalimpong after her administrative meeting in Siliguri.

According to sources, the incident took place on Tuesday afternoon when Bista along with his personal security officer (PSO) and two other officials was on his way to Kalimpong. "When I arrived at Sinji area of Kalimpong to inaugurate a primary school, hundreds of supporters of Binay Tamang surrounded my car and raised slogans against



against me and the BJP Government. They waved black flags and banged on my car. Then all of a sudden they started pelting stones on it. When I tried to pacify them they threw stones at my PSO," Bista told PTI over phone.

A huge police contingent rushed to the spot and controlled the situation. It started investigation into it.

Reacting to the allegations, Suraj, a senior GJM leader of the Tamang faction, said none of its activists were involved in the incident.

"May be locals were angry with Bista as he has done nothing for the hills in the past six months after getting elected. But none of our cadres were involved in the incident," Suraj said. **PTI**

HC asks Centre, EC to reply on plea challenging reduction in Sikkim CM's disqualification period

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday asked the Centre and the EC to respond to a plea challenging the poll panel's decision to reduce the 6-year disqualification period of Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang, convicted and sentenced in a graft case, to just 13 months. A bench of Chief Justice DN Patel and Justice C Hari Shankar also issued notice to the state government and Tamang seeking their replies on the plea challenging a provision of the Representation of People Act which gives power to the Election Commission (EC) to remove or reduce the disqualification period.

The court has posted the matter for December 24. Tamang, whose Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party won the state Assembly elections in April, took over as chief minister on May 27. However, he could not contest the elections due to his disqualification.

He is required to contest

Assembly elections within six



months of becoming the Chief Minister to continue to hold the office. He was convicted and sentenced to one year imprisonment for offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act on December 26, 2016. He completed the one year sentence on August 10, 2018. The petition filed by Dek Bahadur Katwal, General Secretary of Sikkim Democratic Front, said Section 11 of the RP Act, 1951 is unconstitutional as it provides

uncanalised / uncontrolled / arbitrary power to the EC to remove or reduce the disqualification period.

He also challenged the EC's September 29 order, passed a day before the last date of filing nomination, by which Tamang's six years period of disqualification was reduced by 4 years and 11 months. Katwal said the EC's order is wholly erroneous, based on perverse reasoning and is bad in law.

The petition filed by Sudershan Goel, Siddharth Sharma and Shruti Arora said that Section 11 of the RP Act is against the object and purpose of the Act, as it was enacted to disqualify convicted persons, for six years, from contesting elections in India.


"The object of the said Act is to ensure criminal elements are kept away from the democratic process in India, and for the larger interest of the public," it said. The plea said the power enumerated under the section is quasi-judicial and

must be exercised in the rarest of rarest case, as "it takes away from the deterrent value of the statute, when the need is to ensure that elections are free from candidates with criminal antecedents. In the present case, the EC's order has the immediate effect of condoning the 6 years' disqualification under section 8 to merely 1 year and 1 month". "While this may seem to be an innocuous condonation; the fact that condonation was granted just before the fresh State elections were to be held, demonstrates arbitrariness. The only inference from the period condoned, that is, 4 years 11 months, seems to be for the specific purposes of allowing the candidate to contest the State elections," it said.

The petition claimed that the reasons given in the EC's order are perverse and frivolous and the intention was to "facilitate/ensure that the respondent no. 4 (Tamang) remains as Chief Minister of Sikkim".

उत्तरा पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड, ई-निविदा विधि विस्तार
सूचना इस कार्यालय की ई-निविदा संख्या **73 – विपाएम/उत्तरा/2019-20** जो कि पूर्व निविदा दिनांक में किन्ही अपरिहार्य कारणों से परिवर्तन होने के कारण अब दिनांक 25.10.2019 को 16.00 बजे तक अपलोड की जायेगी एवं दिनांक 25.10.2019 को 14.30 बजे खोली जायेगी। ई-टेंडरिंग निविदा की अन्य नियम व शर्तें पूर्ववत् रहेगी। **अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत परियोजना मण्डल-अग्रम, उत्तरा पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड का सं 111 से 114, मूल परियोजना नगर, विद्युति खण्ड-11 गोमती नगर, लखनऊ।** पत्रांक 2019, दिनांक 22.10.19 "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाये"

उत्तरा पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड, ई-निविदा विधि विस्तार
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Office of the Cantonment Board
64, Subhash Chandra Bose Marg, Cantt Kanpur -208004
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Dated : 19 Oct, 2019
Short Term
Online tender through two bid system are invited from MES, BSNL, PWD & CPWD approved experienced contractors and registered eligible contractor of Cantt. Board Kanpur through the Government e-procurement portal <http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> by the Cantonment Board Kanpur. The construction of works detailed in the table given below .

Sl. No.	NIT NO.	Name of work and location	Estimated cost of tender (Rs.)
1	CBK/Engg/K-1660	Repair/Maintenance/Provision of 25 feet deep Sewerline and Manhole Near H.No. 84, Meerpur Cantt at Ward No. 6 Cantt Kanpur	10,98,000/-

The CEO/Board reserves the right to increase/decrease the estimated cost of works and to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning reasons thereof.

Tender document can be downloaded from www.eprocure.gov.in from **24.10.2019** onwards. Online tenders can be uploaded till **04.11.2019 upto 1500** Hours. For any clarification contact JE (Mob: +919554712106) and the Engineering Section of Cantonment Board Kanpur on any working day during office hours. The bidder are advised to examine carefully all instructions, conditions of contract, contract data, forms, terms, technical specifications, bill of quantity etc. in the bid document. Tenders will be accepted via online mode only.

(Arvind Kumar Dwivedi)
Chief Executive Officer,
Kanpur Cantt.

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

Students in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in the Valley, are in a dilemma as authorities have decided to go ahead with annual examinations for various classes according to schedule but almost half of the syllabus is yet to be completed due to the closure of schools post August 5.

The school administrations have also charged fees from the students for these non-working months, parents allege. Now, the authorities have announced the schedule for the annual examinations without any relaxation in syllabus, they say.

Parents as well as students are wary that if the examinations are conducted on schedule without any reduction in the syllabus, the students may not secure good marks, but if the annual examinations are not conducted, a precious year would be lost. Students say they

are distressed by the prevailing circumstances and they have studied only around half of the prescribed syllabus.

"We have been inside our homes since August 5. There has been no classes and studying in the prevailing atmosphere has been very difficult. How can we prepare for the examinations," asks Nyla, a student of class 12 at a private school here. She says private tuition has also been affected in the valley due to the restrictions and shutdown.

Students from government-run schools also have the same tale to tell. While the government announced gradual re-opening of schools across the valley and the teachers attended to their duties, the students stayed away.

"We could not go to our schools. Our parents cannot afford private tuition. We have not covered our entire syllabus, so how can we be prepared for the annual examinations," says Musaab, a government school student studying in class 10. The students want examinations to be deferred or at least some reduction in the syllabus so that question papers be set accordingly.



"The government should defer the examinations or should at least reduce the syllabus and then set the question papers according to the reduced syllabus. That will reduce our burden a bit," says Nyla. On August 5, the government revoked Article 370 of

the Constitution to withdraw the special status given to Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated the state into two Union Territories — Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Parents are also worried about the safety of their wards. "They have not completed the syllabus, there have been no classes for the second semester. The atmosphere is not good for private tuition and learning. How will they appear the examinations? How will they fare?"

"In today's world of cut-throat competition, merely passing is not an option, the students have to secure very good marks. All this is adding to the pressure their minds already have," says Javed Ahmad, father of a class 12 student. Most of the private schools ask the students to collect assignments, in flash drives, from the schools in the absence of any classes.

Several schools — including government-run — conducted home examinations of the students in the lower classes due to the prevailing situation. Ahmad claims the government was using the students as a "cannon fodder" to show a semblance of normalcy in Kashmir.

"By conducting the examinations, the government wants to show that everything is hunky-dory in Kashmir, which it is not. They are using the students as a cannon-fodder to enforce normalcy here. How can our kids go to the examination centres in the prevalent circumstances? Who will ensure their safety?"

The government should first ensure the situation to get normal and then conduct the exams," he says. "The students are caught between devil and the deep sea. They do not want to lose the year, but they are also concerned about faring well in the examinations," Ahmad says.

Cong for jammers in strong rooms

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Apprehending “tampering” of the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) ahead of the counting of votes on October 24, the Opposition Congress in Maharashtra on Tuesday demanded that “network jammers” be installed in and around strong rooms where the EVMs are stored and that “certain” VVPAT machines be made available for physical verification of votes polled through EVMs.

A day after the State Assembly polls, Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) president Balasaheb Thorat— in a representation made to the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Maharashtra, said that “a large section of our citizens apprehend that these EVMs can be tampered with” and sought installation of “network jammers” in and around strong rooms storing EVMs in



all 288 Assembly constituencies in the State.

“The citizens of our country at large fear that the said EVMs can be tampered via various wireless networks like mobile towers, Wi-Fi networks etc. Hence we feel that the installation of ‘network jammers’ is highly necessary in and around strong rooms where these EVMs are stored till counting. These jammers should be installed during the counting process as well,” Thorat said, urging the CEO to install network jammers in all 288 Assembly constituencies in the State immediately.

Thorat also requested the election authorities “to make and declare the result sheet for each round of counting and for that particular round. “Only after result sheet for that particular round is prepared, duly signed by the returning officer and provided to all the parties, then the EVMs of next round should be opened for counting. Prior to this, any request for recount should be considered round-wise,” he said.

The MPCC chief said that as per the guidelines of the Election Commission, “certain” VVPATs be made available for physical verification. “We hereby request you to grant our candidates liberty to select the EVMs to be tested against the VVPAT slips out of the total EVMs available,” he said.

In another request to the CEO, Thorat said-“in any doubtful EVM case, the same

machine be allowed for counting four times in a row at that moment”.

The MPCC chief went on to reiterate the Opposition parties’ demand for testing 50 per cent of EVMs against VVPAT for physical verification. The MPCC’s demand for installation of “network jammers and for “physical verification of votes polled in EVMs through “certain” VVPAT machines should seen in the context of an electoral rout of the Opposition Congress-NCP alliance predicted by the exit polls which have suggested that the two parties would win collectively anywhere from the 41 to 90 seats in Monday’s state Assembly polls.

The Congress and NCP, it may be recalled, had won 42 and 41 seats (out of the total 288 Assembly seats in the state) respectively in the 2014 State Assembly polls.

Maha villagers claim every vote cast went in BJP’s favour

Pune: Voters in a Maharashtra village have claimed that an EVM malfunction during Lok Sabha bypoll on Monday resulted in votes cast for any candidate going into BJP’s account, a claim denied by election officials.

Kirti Nalawade, the returning officer for the Koregaon Assembly segment in Western Maharashtra, where this village is located, said the EVM was replaced but it (replacement) had “nothing to do” with the claims.

Villagers said votes cast in favour of the NCP nominee Srinivas Patil were going into the “account” of BJP candidate Udayanraje Bhosale, a claim district poll officials rejected.

“When Deepak Raghunath Pawar, a villager, went to cast

his vote, the same thing happened,” said Sayaji Nikam, former deputy Sarpanch of the village.

Nikam’s claims were echoed by villagers Rohini Pawar, Ananda Pawar, Pralhad Jadhav and Dilip Wagh.

NCP legislator Shahshikant Shinde said he was witness to such a thing happening when he visited the polling booth at the Navlewadi village of Koregaon tehsil in Satara district.

Shinde said the Election Commission should take a serious note of this incident and initiate steps to check its recurrence. He said when he reached the polling station and raised the issue with the election officials from the booth, they hurriedly changed the EVM machine. **PTI**

Mirchi aide held in money-laundering case sent to ED custody til Oct 24

Mumbai: A Mumbai court on Tuesday sent a close aide of gangster Iqbal Mirchi, who was an associate of global terrorist Dawood Ibrahim, to the Enforcement Directorate custody till October 24.

Humayun Merchant was arrested under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) here on Monday night, according to the central probe agency.

He was produced before PMLA judge P Rajvaidya, who remand him to ED custody till October 24. Merchant is being probed by ED in connection with illegal real-estate deals of Mirchi, who died in London in 2013, and his family. The agency arrested two other people in this case earlier this month. **PTI**

Bengal Guv slams Didi Govt again

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ SAJNAKHALI

A day after venting his grievances against the Trinamool Congress and its senior Ministers for humiliating his chair, a furious Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhanekar on Tuesday once again slammed the State administration for dereliction of duty.

The Governor who had a prescheduled programme to meet elected representatives and senior officials of South 24 Parganas district on Tuesday and directed the District Collector accordingly, complained that none of the elected representatives and officials were present at the venue so that he was compelled to abandon his programme.

“When I enquired that why the elected representatives and other senior officials were not present I was told that there was no prior permission from the State Government in this regard. This is not acceptable. Am I subservient to the State Government?” the Governor said, adding “the cultured people of Bengal will find it difficult to digest.”

A visibly angry Dhanekar wondered whether ‘attending a meeting called by a Governor is beneath the dignity of the District Magistrates and senior Police Officers.’

He asked, “before whom they (DMs South and North 24 Parganas) are trying to prove their credibility,” without naming Chief Minister Mamta Banerjee.

The Governor’s repeated attempts to conduct adminis-



trative meetings in North Bengal and South Bengal have allegedly been spiked by the State Government, Raj Bhavan sources say.

Reacting to Dhanekar’s comments TMC leader and State Minister R.N Ghosh said, “Being a constitutional head he cannot enjoy administrative power. It is for the Chief Minister to convene such administrative meetings.”

While TMC MPs like Pratima Mandal and MLAs like Sukumar Mahato said they had not been invited to the meeting by the Governor’s House wondering whether he at all had the power to do so, senior minister Partha Chatterjee left it on the Chief Minister to counter the Governor’s argument.

Reacting strongly to Tuesday’s development State BJP President Dilip Ghosh said, “there is no administration, no democracy, no regard for the constitution in Bengal.”

Railways to implement ₹18000-cr project to run trains at 160 kmph

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The railways will implement a ₹18,000-crore project to operate trains at a speed of 160 kmph on the busy Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Kolkata routes by upgrading infrastructure, Railway Board Chairman VK Yadav said on Tuesday. Once the project begins, it will take at least four years to complete, he said after inaugurating the International Rail Conference-2019 and the 13th International Railway Equipment Exhibition. The events have been organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in association with the Railways at Aerocity here. The railways’ target is to operate high speed trains in two categories — at 160 kmph on the Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Kolkata routes, and up to 320 kmph under the ongoing bullet train project between Mumbai-Ahmedabad.

Currently, the average maximum speed of trains on various routes is 99 kmph and the recently introduced Delhi-Varanasi

Vande Bharat Express touches an average speed of 104 kmph on the Delhi-Kanpur section. The upgrade of infrastructure to operate trains at 160 kmph includes fencing, upgrade of track and signalling, and elimination of unmanned level-crossings, according to the Railway Ministry. The railways is in a “transformation mode” and “is in the process of modernisation”, Yadav said, adding that as part of this, the 68000-km broad-gauge track network will be electrified in the next three years. He said at present, 28000 km is electrified and for next year a target of 7000 km has been set. The railways will also implement a ‘multi-tracking’ project in the 34000 km ‘highly busy and utilised’ rail network in a phased manner. Additional tracks will be laid in these routes as nearly 96 per cent of the country’s trains ply there, the railway board chairman said.

On bio-toilets, Yadav said 95 per cent of rail coaches have environment-friendly washrooms and the rest will have it in the next two to three months. Board Member (Rolling Stock) Rajesh

Agarwal said 100 units of Vande Bharat Express (semi high speed inter-city electric multiple unit) will be manufactured in the next five years. Similarly, the railways will produce more aluminium coaches. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is planning to review the railway projects, he said.

The board’s Additional Member (Mechanical) AK Agarwal said the railways is planning to upgrade on a massive scale passenger services and amenities, production of rolling stocks and capacity building. An MoU was signed in the event between Ghana’s Railway Development Ministry and RITES for implementing the rail projects in that country. Ghana railway development minister Joe Ghartey was present. The Rail India Technical and Economic Service) or RITES is an engineering consultancy company of the Railways. CII Director-General Chandrajit Banerjee highlighted the importance of the exhibition when India is in the fast track of development.

Kerala MP’s wife equates fate with rape, draws netizens ire

Kochi: The title of a Facebook post put up by Congress MP Hibi Eden’s wife, drawing an analogy between fate and rape, has created an uproar on the social media. Hibi Eden represents Ernakulam constituency.

“Fate is like rape, if you can’t resist it, then try to enjoy it,” wrote Anna Lina Eden on top of two video clips posted on the site to depict the plight of her daughter and husband Eden during the floods following rains in Kochi on Monday.

While one video showed her daughter being evacuated from their waterlogged residence on Monday, another clips showed her husband enjoying a sizzler somewhere.

Social media users came down heavily on Anna for her anti-women comments, with some even attacking her for allegedly using vulgar language. Sensing the ire of the people, she removed the post from her Facebook account.

Ayodhya case: SC allows Nirvani Akahara to file written note on relief

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Tuesday allowed ‘Nirvani Akahara’, one of the Hindu parties in the decades-old case of Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute in Ayodhya, to file a written note seeking the “right to manage worship of the deity” as ‘shebait’ (devotee) at the site.

A counsel for ‘Nirvani Akahara’ mentioned the matter before a bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and said his client “miscalculated” the 3-day time granted by the court for filing the written note on moulding of relief — narrowing down the issues raised during the hearing — and was now seeking the nod for filing it with the apex court’s registry.

“You file it now,” the bench, which also comprised Justices SA Bobde and SA Nazeer, told senior advocate Jaideep Gupta who was representing ‘Nirvani Akahara’. Both ‘Nirmohi Akahara’ and its rival ‘Nirvani Akahara’ are seeking right to manage and offer ‘puja’ at the birthplace of deity ‘Ram Lalla Virajman’ at the site.

While ‘Nirmohi Akahara’ had filed a lawsuit in 1959 seeking the right as ‘shebait’, ‘Nirvani Akahara’ has been made a party (defendant) in two separate lawsuits filed by Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Wakf Board and deity ‘Ram Lalla’, through next friend Deoki Nandan Agrwal, in 1961 and 1989 respectively.

“It is humbly submitted that none of the parties (amongst) Hindus in the aforementioned suits have made claims... for shebaitship right and are instead claiming either as the owner or as a next friend (of deity) ... and thereby seeking to build a temple at the disputed structure.” Hence the ‘pujari’ and/or shebaitship rights of the present respondent (Nirvani Akahara) remained unchallenged...,” the written note said. The Akahara has sought a direction that it be handed over the “right to manage the worship of the deity of the Ram Janmabhoomi/disputed structure as the ‘pujari’

and/or ‘shebait’ of the deity”.

During the hearing, it had said that Mahant Abhiram Das, now deceased, of Nirvani Akahara was the priest at the site in 1949 and he was also made an accused in the FIR lodged for alleged placing of idols below the central dome of the disputed site on the intervening night of December 22-23, 1949. Now his ‘chela’ Dharam Das is the priest, it had added.

Earlier, the Muslim parties, including the Sunni Wakf Board, had filed the written note on moulding of relief in Supreme Court and had said the verdict in the Ayodhya land dispute case will impact “future generations” and have “consequences” for the country’s polity.

“The decision by this court, whichever way it goes, will impact future generations. It will also have consequences for the polity of this country. This court’s decision may impact the minds of millions who are citizens of this country and who believe in constitutional values embraced by all when India was declared a republic on January 26, 1950,” said the note prepared by senior lawyer Rajeev Dhavan, appearing for the Muslim parties.

The Constitution bench had reserved the verdict on October 16 after concluding the 40-day-long hearing in the politically sensitive land dispute case and had asked the litigating parties to submit their written note within three days on “moulding of reliefs” so that the court can narrow down the issues needed to be adjudicated upon in the vexatious issue.

On Saturday, several Hindu parties had filed their written submissions in the Supreme Court with the counsel for the deity ‘Ram Lalla’ asserting that Hindus have been worshipping at the disputed area “since time immemorial” and the birthplace of the Lord Ram is “non-negotiable”. Besides the deity, other Hindu parties — Nirmohi Akhara, All India Hindu Mahasabha and devotee Visharad — had filed their written notes on Saturday in this case.

Deepika Padukone, PV Sindhu flag-bearers of PM’s ‘Bharat Ki Laxmi’ initiative

Mumbai: Actor Deepika Padukone and shuttler PV Sindhu on Tuesday were named the ambassadors for ‘Bharat Ki Laxmi’, an initiative by Prime Minister Narendra Modi that aims at bringing commendable work done by women across the nation to light ahead of the Diwali festival.

The Prime Minister shared a video on the new campaign underscoring the cause of women empowerment. ‘India’s Nari Shakti epitomises talent and tenacity, determination and dedication. Our ethos has always taught us to strive for women empowerment.

“Through this video, @Pvsindhu and @deepikapadukone excellently convey the message of celebrating #BharatKiLaxmi,” the PM wrote on Twitter.

Deepika and Sindhu registered their support for the campaign on the microblogging site.

“This Diwali, let us throw light on & celebrate the contribution & accomplishments of the women of our country! #BharatKiLaxmi,” Deepika wrote as she shared the video.

Sindhu said societies grow when women are empowered and their accomplishments are given a place of pride.

No. F 22-1/2019-ES.4
Government of India
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Department of Higher Education
External Scholarship Division

2020 COMMONWEALTH MASTER'S SCHOLARSHIP IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Online applications are invited from Indian Nationals for the ‘2020 Commonwealth Master’s Scholarship in the United Kingdom’ for one -year Master’s Degree programs. Scholarship would be offered under the following development themes:

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NOTE: Master’s degree programs from foreign universities which are less than two years in duration are not equivalent to Master’s degree in India.

For further details about the scholarship please visit <https://mhrd.gov.in/scholarships>

IMPORTANT LINKS:

1. Commonwealth Scholarship Commission’s Online Application System: https://fs29.formsite.com/m3nC9y/iy6rgpqiaq/form_login.html. Apply on or before 30 October 2019 (16:00 GMT)
2. Ministry of Human Resource Development SAKSHAT portal: <http://proposal.sakshat.ac.in/scholarship/>. Apply on or before 15 November 2019.

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पावरग्रिड

NOTICE

1. Approval under regulation -86 of CERC (Conduct of Business) Regulations ‘1999 and CERC (Terms and Conditions of Tariff) Regulations, 2014 and CERC (Terms and Conditions of Tariff) Regulations ‘2019 for Truing up of Transmission tariff for 2014-19 tariff block and Determination of Transmission tariff for 2019-24 tariff block for **Petition 1 for Asset I**: Spare Converter Transformer at Rihand (DOCO 01.12.2011) for Rihand - Dadri HVDC Bipole Terminal in Northern Region and **Petition 2 for Asset I**: Special Protection Scheme (SPS) for Northern Regional Grid Stage-II in Northern Region (DOCO 01.04.2014).

2. The beneficiaries of the above mentioned Transmission system are: (1) Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Prasaran Nigam Ltd. (2) Ajmer Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd. (3) Jaipur Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd. (4) Jodhpur Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd. (5) Punjab State Electricity Board. (6) Haryana Power Purchase Centre. (7) Power Development Deptt, Govt. of Jammu & Kashmir. (8) Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd.(9) Delhi Transco Ltd.(10) BSES Yamuna Power Ltd. (11) BSES Rajdhani Power Ltd. (12) North Delhi Power Ltd. (13) Chandigarh Administration (14) Uttarakhand Power Corporation Ltd. (15) North Central Railway (16) New Delhi Municipal council (17) Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board.

3. **Tariff details:**

a.) 2014-19 Block

Project		Revised AFC on True-up				
		2014-15	2015 - 16	2016 -17	2017 – 18	2018 - 19
Petition-1	Asset-I	418.65	406.71	394.01	381.37	369.14
Petition-2	Asset-I	34.36	33.06	32.80	32.05	30.78

b.) 2019-24 Block

Project		Tariff for 2019-24 block				
		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Petition-1	Asset-I	353.72	341.20	328.66	316.12	303.53
Petition-2	Asset-I	33.10	32.09	31.10	30.12	29.10

4. A copy of the application made for determination of tariff is posted on the website of the applicant at www.powergridindia.com.

5. The suggestions and objections, if any, on the proposals for determination of tariff contained in the application be filed by any person, including the beneficiary before the Secretary, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, 3 & 4th floor, Chandrakok Building, Janpath, New Delhi - 110 001 (or other address where the office of the Commission is situated), with a copy to the applicant at the address of its corporate office within 30 days of publication of this notice.

Place: Gurugram
Date: 17.10.2019
Sr. General Manager (Commercial)

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NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, ALLAHABAD

Tender Notice:11PR/Empanelment/2019/2020-22 Date: 21.10.2019

Tender Notice

Chief Public Relations Officer, North Central Railway, Prayagraj for and on behalf of President of India invites sealed open tenders from the INS accredited and reputed Advertising Agencies as follows:–

Name of Work/Details	Earnest Money	Cost of tender form
Empanelment of fully INS Accredited Advertising Agencies for Chief Public Relations Officer's Office North Central Railway, Prayagraj.	₹ 1,00,000/-	₹ 5,000/-+ 18% GST = 5,900/-

Period of work: 02 Year, Date & Time of Closing of tender: **15.00 Hrs. on 29.11.2019**. Date & Time of Opening of tender: On/after **15.30 Hrs. on 29.11.2019**. • Address of the office from where the Tender Form can be purchased, dropped and opened: **Chief Public Relation Officer's Office Old G.M. N.C.R. Building Nawab Yusuf Road, near Valmiki Chauraha, Civil Lines, Prayagraj** • Date and time for purchasing of Tender Form: Tender Form shall be available for sale from **04.11.2019 to 29.11.2019** on any working day between **10.00 to 16.00 hrs.** and up to **12.00 hrs. on 29.11.2019** • Website particulars and notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen: Tender Notice and Tender Form (Document) can be downloaded from Railway’s website www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in. Tender notice is also available at notice board of Chief Public Relations Officer's Office North Central Railway, Prayagraj. Tender document can be downloaded between specified date and time at sr. no. 3 above. **Note:** 1. Cost of tender form and Earnest money shall be deposited with Principal Financial Advisor North Central Railway either through Bank draft drawn on nationalized banks or in cash and original money receipt attached with application. 2. In case the tender opening date is declared a holiday, the tender can be submitted and opened the next day at the same time as fixed earlier. 3. Complete Eligibility Criteria and other details are available in the tender document. 1547/19 (R)

North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @CPRONCR

Is there voter fatigue?

Amid predictions of a cakewalk for the BJP in Haryana and Maharashtra, low turnout signals disenchantment



A crucial aspect got swamped by exit poll results that predicted a thumping and roadrolling win for the ruling BJP in the Assembly elections in Haryana and Maharashtra. While hyperactive anchors across TV channels wondered about the margin of victories and whether the BJP would best its own record in the Assemblies so far, Haryana recorded the lowest turnout in 50 years and Maharashtra in 39. According to the Election Commission's figures, 63.55 per cent turnout was recorded in Haryana, while only 56.65 per cent came out to vote in Maharashtra. The former has seen its lowest voter turnout in Assembly elections since 1968 whereas the latter's figures are lowest since the 1980 election. Not only that, both percentages are significantly lower than the turnouts in the last round of State polls in 2014 and the Lok Sabha elections in May. This means that almost half the voters did not exercise their choice despite greater awareness and an increase in polling booths, either out of a sense of resignation or a deep distrust. This is surprising considering that behaviourally, the voter seems most invested in local self-governance issues and, therefore, is expected to turn out for the Assembly elections that are fought on local affairs rather than national ones. Clearly, there is fatigue at work. Now this can be interpreted in many ways. Could it be that there is an immediacy of contexts, the Lok Sabha results having bolstered the image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with such an overarching appeal that any other State, where his party is in power, is assumed to be operating as a satellite? The voter probably believes that the continuity of the same regime at the Centre and States would automatically ensure a Central-level urgency to resolving local issues. Perhaps, this unitary rather than federal character of governance has bred complacency. Even though both Chief Ministers, Devendra Fadnavis in Maharashtra and Manohar Lal Khattar in Haryana, have managed to consolidate their positions and blend in, the former a non-Maratha and the latter an outsider, they, too, encountered a voter slide. Nagpur south-west, from where Fadnavis is contesting, recorded 49.25 per cent of votes, down from 56.44 per cent in 2014, while Khattar's constituency Karnal recorded 49.3 per cent of voter turnout, down from 67.84 per cent.

Also, there is now legitimacy to a majoritarian discourse given the BJP's big win in the Lok Sabha and a larger acceptance of the muscularity of the party in pushing the One India narrative. The collective decimation of the Opposition parties and the total annihilation of the only other nationalist party of consequence, the Congress, have meant that the common man has already accepted the "there can be no alternative" formula in States where the BJP is in command. In the light of this understanding and absence of a real contest, many voters may have just thought that the ballot process would anyway be a futile exercise. Particularly for those with divergent views, there is a sense of helplessness that their vote would be too minuscule to matter or that their dissent was unwanted. Tidal verdicts in succession have meant that very few seats in "friendly" States are considered "unsafe" for the BJP. Besides, at the State level, not even the ruling party is seen as following through with pledges to keep the voter animated as a decision-maker. Or it could be plain disgust at the thought that nobody would anyway give them a hearing. This ennui is dangerous to the extent that it undercuts the value of election in a democracy and actually veers it to a measure of a personality cult and a presidential style debate. This could also mean that the committed Opposition voters have dissipated somewhat and driven to as much irrelevance as the parties they feel echo their concerns. Particularly in Haryana and Maharashtra, the Congress failed even to get its basic act together with faction fights tearing it apart and turf leaders working at cross purposes. In Maharashtra, the party bled like never before with several key leaders deserting the ship. No wonder the monolithic predictability has dampened enthusiasm and though there is a younger demographic that's perhaps gung-ho, the older registered voters are still a sizeable chunk of the pie. This is not new. Even in the UK, from where we have derived our parliamentary democracy, a large proportion of voters have shunned the "political elite." Indeed, the Brexit vote has been viewed by many commentators as a vote of disillusionment. However, this only lulls the political class into an illusionary sense of popularity. The vote matters in ensuring checks and balances.

In the firing line

Pakistan's use of deadly force on civilians is reprehensible. Not that condemnation will stop it



The military in Pakistan has always thought of civilians elsewhere as second-class citizens as was evidenced by the brutal genocides against Bengalis in 1970-71 or Indians. Proxy attacks by Pakistan-sponsored terrorists have cost thousands of Indian civilians their lives over the past three decades — be it during the height of the Punjab crisis or to this day, with Kashmiri terrorism being influenced by the likes of Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) chief Hafiz Saeed. However, Pakistan's Army, the Inter-Services Intelligence

(ISI), and the establishment have always had an answer. They were not directly responsible for the deaths. After all, anonymity is the advantage of proxy forces. However, the unprovoked firing of artillery and mortar shells over the Line of Control (LoC) in the Jammu region over the past few days has hit civilians hard, maiming and killing Indian villagers. This is unacceptable and serves little purpose unless the aim is to give covering fire to terrorists trying to cross the LoC.

Pakistan has been nursing the black eye that India gave it with the Balakot air strikes. Then the failure of its own counter-attacks and the subsequent revocation of Article 370 by the Indian Government, which caught the Pakistani military and its Government headed by Imran Khan off-guard, have dented its "bleeding cuts" strategy vis-a-vis India. The attempts by Pakistan-backed terrorists to sabotage the local economy, particularly targetting apple growers and truckers, have also fallen flat. While the Indian paramilitary forces and intelligence forces have managed to keep a lid on active acts of terrorism in the Valley, the area still remains in a virtual lockdown even after two months of the abrogation of Article 370, although things appear to be easing ahead of winter. Pakistan is getting desperate to hurt India despite its economic situation, which is still far worse than India's, becoming almost a virtual pariah state. Even the Chinese money, supposed to flow in through investments, is drying up. China, which has for long propped up Pakistan as a counterfoil to India, has realised that investing money in Pakistan is worse than burning it. Besides, Pakistan's own hypocrisy in condemning Indian actions on Kashmir while ignoring the Chinese treatment of the Uighur Muslims has become more apparent. The Army has made a few raids into Pakistan but if these unprovoked attacks on Indian villages continue, it seems we cannot get the new Rafale jets soon enough.



ASHOK K MEHTA

Returning to one's roots in soldiering is replete with nostalgia, inspiration and feeling 10 years younger. Revisiting the National Defence Academy (NDA), Khadakwasla, Maharashtra, after more than six decades was re-living one's days when well-rounded heads were being fitted on square shoulders. We were the pioneers, who in 1955, moved from the Joint Services Wing (JSW) in Clement Town, Dehradun, to the emerging military township of Khadakwasla near an iconic lake — the spectacular landscape overlooked by Shivaji's impregnable Sinhagad Fort. In the sixth and final term, Sinhagad became the touchstone for long-range patrolling, stamina and survival. Sticking out of the earth was the majestic central cupola, the nerve centre of the academy, flanked by the cadets' mess and the education block. Neat rows of road radiate from these commanding heights in three directions — towards the Pashan Gate, the Central Vista and the Avenue to the Lake.

In January 1955, trainloads of cadets were relocated in their new home Khadakwasla, the pride of India. It was to become the cradle of military leadership and excellence where "jointness came naturally." All the 1,000 cadets would branch out after three years together for their choice of service: Army, Navy or Air Force. Potential Army cadets were cross-trained. For example, I was sent on Indian Navy frigate Cauvery for a week while a Navy volunteer went to an Army establishment and similarly, the Air Force to a different sister service. After the sixth term, one would go to the Naval, Air Force and Army military academies for the final year of training. Currently, cadets indicate their choice of service after the fourth term.

Last week in Khadakwasla, I witnessed change and what has not changed and is still reminiscent of 1955. First, the change. All the way from Pune's Southern Command Officers Mess, the 25-km stretch to Khadakwasla was then desolate, habited with lush green woods. What took one hour on a bicycle, took two hours, given the concrete jungle that has crept towards NDA and much is in the possession of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) — its kingdom. Farmhouses, luxury resort hotels and restaurants have encroached on the precincts of Khadakwasla. The Pashan Gate is new with a massive security apparatus.

The welcome landmark is the Gole Market — nothing has changed here. This market is etched in my memory because a week before we were to "pass out" and move to the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, our joyful celebration was rudely interrupted by one "Major The Sandhu", an infantry officer who was uniformly dreaded by cadets. It was past midnight. Four riding an ordnance-issued bicycle, strictly meant for one, was sacrilege, especially when Maj Sandhu, who was returning in his car from Pune, nearly collided with the overloaded bicycle. For breaking several military regu-

A ride into military school

The defence academy at Khadakwasla is truly tri-service and a unique training institution, which sows the seeds of camaraderie, military ethos, customs and traditions



lations, Maj Sandhu used multilingual invectives and had four of us charge-sheeted.

Punishment: While all of the 11th course was allowed to pass out on December 1, 1956, we were detained for 14 days. The driver of the bicycle was Divisional Cadet Captain Jaswant Singh, who was complimented by the Commandant, Maj Gen Inayat Habibullah, for "steering a bicycle as expertly as a horse."

The cadets' living room is the same except that a limited wi-fi is now available. Like Jammu & Kashmir was put in a lockdown, cadets are forbidden the use of cellphones. The technology of the bicycle is vintage though the satchels the cadets carry has improved.

From 12 squadrons, the academy now has 18 squadrons and a cadet strength of 2,000. "Item" has become "India" squadron, my "Fox" squadron to "Foxtrot" and "Dog" to "Delta." The Ante Room has the familiar aquarium but now a billiards table, too.

Barbara Bonny, the wife of our Squadron Commander, Maj LKM Bonny, used to teach us the Foxtrot and on the weekends, commandeered busloads of Pune lasses for live practice. Gen Habibullah and his wife Hamida put the cadets through sessions of Indian cultural training — music, drama, *mushaira* and once even Bollywood.

There was no change in the cadets' mess. Rations and quality of food match any reputable restaurant. Outside are pictures of early times. Former President

“TODAY, LIKE YESTERDAY, THERE IS TOTAL LACK OF RAPPORT AND CONVERSATION BETWEEN TOP MILITARY LEADERS AND THE POLITICAL ELITE. THE ABSENCE OF MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP HAS LET THE BUREAUCRACY USURP CRITICAL ADVISORY SPACE”



Rajendra Prasad, dining with the cadets, flanked by Gen Habibullah and Gen Moti Sagar, both drinking port... the classic shows Premier Chou en Lai in a black Mao jacket in the cadets' mess during our passing out parade.

As the chief guest, he presented me with the inter-company Squash trophy, which is captured in the film on 1962 war, *Hum Dono*. This was the era of Panchsheel and *Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai* (India and China are brothers) full of banter and bonhomie even as the Chinese had started building the road through Aksai Chin, which former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru divulged to Parliament only in 1959.

There are fabulous pictures, which must be the envy of memorabilia collectors — Pandit Nehru and Gen Habibullah, both on horseback, surveying the academy from a vantage point as it was being built. It is clear from other pictures of Nehru that the Khadakwasla project was his baby. Another picture is of Lt Gen JN Chaudhury and Nehru engaged in serious conversation. Army Chief Gen KS Thimayya and Nehru in a tete-tete. Thimayya and Nehru were good friends, enjoyed immense rapport despite professional differences.

Today, like yesterday, there is total lack of rapport and conversation between top military leaders and the political elite. The last Army Chief, who could chat up politicians, was Gen Bipin Joshi. The absence of

meaningful dialogue between the political and military leadership has let the bureaucracy usurp critical advisory space. Today, the Prime Minister cannot find the time to have a useful conversation with his Service Chiefs.

The Habibullah Museum, meagre in space, contains rich memories and souvenirs, including a stunning ornamental *khukuri*, presented by C in C Royal Nepal Army, Gen Surendra Bahadur Sahib (must be Shah) in January 1966. The once-splendid Bombay Stadium has alas gone to seed. So have the Squash courts near it. The cadets play individual sports like squash, tennis and golf. The Golf Course doubles as the military training area and is named after the legendary Russian language teacher Jaouralov.

Notwithstanding our fear of Maj Sandhu — he would famously counsel "do not trust wife, rain and enemy" — he taught us the best field craft to be a cat burglar, poacher and marksman that saved our lives and those of the men under our command in all the skirmishes and wars. NDA is truly tri-service and a unique training institution, which sows the seeds of camaraderie, military ethos, customs and traditions. That is how DCC Jaswant Singh became the Defence Minister of India.

(The writer is a retired Major General of the Indian Army and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the revamped Integrated Defence Staff)

SOUNDBITE

I will love to see India-built applications used in the US. I would love to see India-built data system used around the world. That will be the biggest win.

Former Google CEO
—Eric Schmidt



My next one is about climate change, it's my obsession now. There's no time to discuss anymore, it's time to act.

Filmmaker
—Fernando Meirelles



We believe that direct dialogue between India and Pakistan, as outlined in the 1972 Shimla Agreement, holds the most potential for reducing tensions.

US diplomat
—Alice Wells



They say there is Ramrajya in the State. Yeh Ram ko dhoka hai. It seems they (BJP) have learnt from Ravan. This is why they are working as Kalyugi Ravan.

Samajwadi Party chief
—Akhilesh Yadav



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

More power to women

Sir — The story of the life and struggles of Pranjal Patil, the country's first visually challenged woman IAS officer, reminds us that nothing is impossible if one has the determination to persevere against all odds. Patil has truly struggled far more than others to achieve her goal of becoming an IAS officer. Losing vision at the age of six did not deter the young girl from Ulhasnagar, Maharashtra, from pursuing her dreams. In spite of several hurdles, Patil has become the first visually-challenged woman in the country to hold such a high post in the bureaucracy. The old English proverb, "where there is a will, there is a way", holds completely true in this instance.

M Pradyu Kannur

Guarding our lives

Sir — This refers to the report, "Efforts being made to demonise tech: PM" (October 21). The impact of technology on the future of human society is difficult to predict. With the advent of

any widely accepted new technology, people's lifestyle changes in multiple ways. If in the future we need to stop the use of technology, we will need to campaign harder. For example, when plastic was discovered to be light weight, durable, cheap and easy to mould, people appreciated it as a symbol of progress in life. But today, the world knows how

demonic it is. The tragedy of our society is that we either blindly reject any form of modernism or we accept it without providing space to reject it if necessary. When someone says, "Check it before use", we criticise that person either as "Leftist" or someone heralding foreign ideology.

PP Sen New Delhi

Poll results shouldn't be surprising

As expected, a bunch of exit polls has projected an emphatic victory for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led alliance in Maharashtra and Haryana, which went to the polls recently. They suggest that the Congress, the principal Opposition in both States, has not begun to recover from its decimation in the 2019 Lok Sabha election in May this year. Given the increasing power of State Governments in the day-to-day lives of people, the outcome of elections in Maharashtra and Haryana will have clear governance implications for their development and growth.

Though both States are currently ruled by the BJP, the notable fact is that before 2014, neither Maharashtra nor Haryana was a stronghold of the party. To their credit, both the Chief Ministers, Devendra Fadnavis and Manohar Lal Khattar, under the supervision of the Modi-Shah duo, have made the BJP the dominant player in their respective States. The rise of these two Chief Ministers and the free hand their party allowed them in running their Governments helped the BJP expand its vote base. But the BJP's dominance has also been due



to the collapse of the Opposition, with its major partner, the Congress, being in tatters. No wonder, most polls have given nearly three-fourths majority to the ruling BJP-Shiv Sena combine in Maharashtra and a similar margin to the BJP in Haryana. By this count, incumbents Fadnavis and Khattar are on the course for second terms as Chief Ministers in their respective States.

Padmini Raghavendra Secunderabad

Alarming figures

Sir — According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, India saw a total of 100 deaths in police custody in 2017, which is up by eight, compared to 2016. Police are known to apply third-degree methods to elicit confession from "crimi-

nals" to buttress their case in the courts. There are many cases where undertrials have succumbed to physical and mental torture from cops. Unable to bear the torture, there are also cases of people resorting to the extreme step of committing suicide. Sadly, even natural deaths in police custody are treated as custodial death.

Deaths of these kind would have, perhaps, occurred even if such a person was not in custody. In the case of undertrials, the courts are also to be blamed since many cases drag on for years before they are even listed for hearing. It is appalling that out of 56 cases registered, only three of 48 people were chargesheeted and convicted for human rights violation. The fall in custodial deaths is not possible unless the police involved in the crime of physical and mental torture are convicted of the offence. Expedient disposal of cases in courts can substantially contribute to drastic reduction in custodial deaths.

KV Seetharamaiah Hassan

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

An alternative to direct investing

Through mutual funds, small investors can put money in the stock markets and benefit from any upswing in share prices



HIMA BINDU KOTA

The growth of mutual funds (MF) as a worthy alternative to direct equity investment over the years has been humongous. According to the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI), the Assets Under Management (AUM) of the Indian MF industry has grown from ₹6.28 trillion in September 2009 to ₹24.51 trillion in September 2019, a four-fold increase in a decade. Depending on how the money is being invested, there are different categories of MFs based on asset class, structure and investment objective. On the basis of asset class, MFs are of the following type:

Equity funds: Here at least 70 per cent of the money is invested in stocks of listed firms. Equity funds can be further classified based on sectors like infrastructure funds, IT funds; size of the company like large cap, mid-cap; purpose, like equity-linked savings schemes that give benefit of tax savings; tracking a index through index funds; or fund of funds (FoF) which invests in other MFs.

Debt Funds: Here, majority investments are in debt instruments like Government bonds, firm debentures and other fixed income assets.

Hybrid/Balanced Funds: These invest in both the asset classes of equity and debt instruments with the proportion of equity and debt varying in different funds. A balanced fund could be 60 per cent invested in equities with remaining 40 per cent in debt or vice-versa.

Money Market Funds: These invest in money markets that are short-term in nature and are highly liquid and are mostly preferred by companies to park their idle cash and by large institutions and the Government to meet their short-term fund requirements.

MFs can also be categorised based on structure as open-ended or closed-ended. Although the industry is growing, investors are also increasingly concerned about fund selection and are demanding detailed information and investment advice. Due to the large number of funds, evaluating and selecting MFs can be challenging.

So what are the metrics that are used to analyse and compare the performance of different MFs? For debt schemes, credit rating is important as it is a known fact that debt funds are prone to interest rate risk, credit risk and liquidity exposure. While interest rate perils and liquidity exposure affect the returns and redemption of debt investments, the credit risk tends to affect the principal value of the investment. Hence, various credit rating agencies, like CRISIL, CARE, ICRA, measure and evaluate the credibility and creditworthiness of the borrower and these ratings are derived on the basis of the credentials of the entity, which may be the balance sheet, profit and loss statement, or any other financial information. Equity MF investors can also use several ratios to analyse the performance of their investments. It is a misconception that higher returns mean better performance, since returns cannot be judged in isolation and have to be simultaneously measured with the risk taken to generate the returns. This is where Sharpe Ratio is helpful, as it assesses the returns generated by a portfolio against per unit of risk undertaken. A higher Sharpe Ratio represents a higher return generated per unit of risk. Investors should also note that any ratio would only make sense if it is compared to the benchmark index.

Treynor Ratio, also known as reward-to-volatility ratio, like Sharpe Ratio, helps analyse returns in relation to the market risk of the fund except that it uses beta or market risk as the volatility measurement and gives the return over the risk-free per unit of market risk, whereas Sharpe Ratio uses standard deviation.

By comparing the beta of the investment to the volatility in the entire stock market, people can assess the risk associated with the investment. Stocks with a beta greater than one tend to increase and decrease in value faster and more quickly than stocks with a beta of less than one. Higher the Treynor Ratio, the better the performance under analysis. For instance, if the fund's average return is 10 per cent and the risk free rate is seven per cent, the difference becomes three per cent. If the historic beta of the fund is 1.5, then the Treynor Ratio is 2 (3 divided by 1.5). This means that in the past, the fund has given two units of return for one unit of its market risk.

Small investors, who are trying to make the most of their investments are often plagued by questions whether MFs are safe? Are they safer than direct equity investments?

MFs are an easier way for small investors to put money in the stock markets with low initial investment as they can get the benefit of any upswing in the prices of the shares because of the expertise of fund managers. However, small investors should be aware that since MFs in turn invest in shares, the returns are subject to the fluctuations of the stock market and are not fully insulated from it. The extent of risk, and also the returns come down with the inclusion of debt securities in the portfolio of MFs and investors should understand their risk tolerance before investing. MF investing can be a good alternative for small investors provided they tread with caution.

(The writer is Assistant Professor, Amity University)

SHE'S (GABBARD) THE FAVOURITE OF THE RUSSIANS. THEY HAVE A BUNCH OF SITES AND BOTS AND OTHER WAYS OF SUPPORTING HER.
—DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADER
HILLARY CLINTON



ANYBODY THAT IS OPPOSED TO HER (HILLARY) IS A RUSSIAN AGENT. THAT'S A SCAM THAT WAS PRETTY MUCH PUT DOWN.
—US PRESIDENT
DONALD TRUMP

Finding the path to happiness

Most actionable solutions to the findings of a recent survey on the status of women and their health, literacy and employment, will come through the digital revolution



BINDU DALMIA

Last week I had the pleasure of releasing *The Status of Women in India* report in Nagpur, which is a comprehensive survey conducted by the Sangh-linked organisation Drishti Stree. I share my reflections in two parts on this very thought-provoking survey: The problems red-flagged in the report and how most of the solutions can be addressed through the big digital revolution in the offing in the country.

While the sample size of 74,000 is large, the fact remains that had more people from metropolitan cities and States with high literacy rates like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala been included and more inputs been taken from professionals like bankers, lawyers, corporate executives and so on, the report might have arrived at better averages. Because while the real *Bharat* resides in its villages, it also comprises the aspirational class in the cities. In some areas the report is an eye-opener, while in some it just confirmed pre-conceived notions.

The following findings did not surprise anyone: Recently, India slipped 10 places in the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Competitiveness Index. This was attributed to a poor employable skill base, lack of worker protection rights and critically-low participation of women in the workforce. All three factors were accurately captured in this survey conducted last year, confirming the authenticity of the Drishti methodology.

Workers from tribal areas are given low wages and subjected to trafficking and inhuman exploitation in the unorganised sector of domestic staff. Therefore, employment agencies must be accredited and regulated and the Government must ensure that statutory provisions for medical coverage, dignity of labour and minimum wages are enacted.

The survey revealed that there is an increased participation by women in voting, which shows that there is more understanding of local and national issues, enough for them to assert their electoral preference.

According to the survey, there is also a need to ensure that women, especially in the rural areas, are equipped to handle every adverse situation in life. Any social scientist would confirm that over-dependency is a complacent state of being, hence women must also learn how to cope with every contingency.

Because, with life expectancy increasing — and wives are known to outlive their husbands — in order not to be economically vulnerable, women need to be included in the decision-making process of deployment of family savings and understand the basics of matters like time-deed, financial securities and savings instruments. The report confirmed the healthy trend that “today one-third of the women participate in decision-making in the family”, which was earlier a male domain.

The survey captured high dropout rates up to high school and that women were falling off the employment curve due to family responsibilities between the ages of 18 to 30 years, which is also the peak earning period for most people. The future success of globalised economies will lie in the increased participation of women. Regrettably, on the Gender Inequality Index, India ranks as low as 132 out of 136 countries. Gender parity is a basic human right and its

“ACCORDING TO THE SURVEY, THERE IS A NEED TO ENSURE THAT WOMEN, ESPECIALLY IN THE RURAL AREAS, ARE EQUIPPED TO HANDLE EVERY ADVERSE SITUATION IN LIFE. ANY SOCIAL SCIENTIST WOULD CONFIRM THAT OVER-DEPENDENCY IS A COMPLACENT STATE OF BEING; HENCE WOMEN MUST ALSO LEARN HOW TO COPE WITH EVERY CONTINGENCY”



achievement has multiplier socio-economic implications. Empowering women makes for thriving economies, elevates their self-worth and protects them from domestic violence. Further, according to the survey, Jan Dhan Yojana figures revealed that 79 per cent women have individual bank accounts, which is a step towards financial inclusion. However, just opening a bank account without earning adequate income is not enough. The Drishti study confirmed the NABARD's (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) pan-India findings — which had a larger sample size — that median income was between ₹5,000 and ₹20,000.

Most actionable solutions to Drishti's findings on literacy, health and employment will come through the big digital revolution that is in the offing.

Low per capita income and low per capita savings can only increase through increased economic opportunities. The solution is rapid industrialisation of rural India by bringing employment to the villages. This can happen through increased digitisation and advancement of online commerce. Because rural women are hesitant to travel far in search of jobs and for skilling or educational purposes, we need to lower the cost of smartphones and increase internet penetration.

It is heartening that literacy rates improved to 79.63 per cent up to graduation levels. But acceleration is needed to improve the figure of 46 per cent in achieving primary literacy. To further improve India's low ratings in the Human Capital Index, NITI Aayog has proposed to increase education outlays from the current three per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to six per cent by 2022.

Our education system has remained static for too long and we are

ill-equipped for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The solution, according to the latest McKinsey report, lies in lifelong learning and upgradation of skills, so as to be continuously prepared for challenging technological disruptions and a paradigm shift from theoretical to experiential learning in specialised domains like agriculture, Information Technology, tourism and so on.

Online education through e-classrooms and skill training through distant learning will bridge the gaps in teaching quality of Government schools where there is a shortage of brick and mortar schools in villages, and bridge the low student-teacher ratio. There are mega e-learning platforms like Byju's and so on that have sprung up in the country, but awareness of these institutions is low. Increased digitisation will provide “stay-at-home employment” through e-commerce jobs for women in rural areas and Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities. Digital commerce bought millions out of poverty in China, as it linked the remotest craftsmen and farmers to the global marketplace. In India, we have the successful model of Khadi Gramodyog, that linked clusters and communities to national marketing networks, so as to get a market-linked price for their commodity.

As India progresses from being a high-cash economy towards a digital economy, even dispensing credit to those that lack credit histories and collaterals will become easier, as algorithms in future will determine creditworthiness of borrowers.

As regards healthcare, because India has a low patient-doctor ratio, and poor patient-hospital bed capacity, we need to progress to online doctor consultations. This will help take medical expertise to remote areas and fulfil the need for preventive care and diagnosis.

With this in mind, the NITI Aayog has proposed increased outlays for health from a paltry 1.5 per cent to three per cent of the GDP. Also, medical insurance premiums must be lowered for women, as only 20 per cent of them are covered by it at present.

However, the findings of the survey that surprised were that the Gross Happiness Index (GHI) scores were as high as 80 per cent, regardless of trying circumstances and stresses of daily life.

What was hard to endorse was that the survey found that “income has no influence on levels of happiness.” I am sure that most would agree that money is not everything, but is surely a necessity for self-sufficiency.

To the contrary, the World Health Organisation's (WHO's) 2017 report on depression, shows India in the top 10 slot. It also states that depression has risen by 50 per cent in the last eight years.

Look at Punjab and Delhi, where substance abuse is on the rise and drugs are available freely in betel shops, the increase in farmer and student suicides and rise in divorce rates.

How can we be high on the GHI? There exists a powerful correlation between a country's economic development and social progress, and GHI is a composite picture of multiple feel-good factors linked to increased literacy levels and employment opportunities; increased per capita incomes and savings; advanced amenities for better living conditions; decrease in incidence of lawlessness and crime; social security; high quality and accessible healthcare; physical exercise and nurturing spiritual practices.

(The writer is an author, columnist and Chairperson of the National Committee on Financial Inclusion at NITI Aayog.)

Ayodhya holding its breath as verdict looms

The Supreme Court's ruling would have legal, political and religious ramifications. Though the apex court's order might put a lid on the legal aspect, its impact on politics and communal harmony will be equally significant



KALYANI SHANKAR

Ayodhya is getting ready to face the impact of the Supreme Court (SC) ruling on the Ram janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit, next month. The verdict is expected to put a lid on the dispute between the two communities on the right of ownership of the site.

A violent mob of *Karsevaks* and prominent politicians had pulled down the mosque adjacent to the Ram temple in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992, which has tested the communal fabric of the country since then. The Hindus — represented by seven parties — have argued in the apex court that there was a temple dedicated to the birthplace of Lord Ram before the Babri Masjid was erected during

medieval times. The verdict is likely to be delivered before November 17, by which time the present Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi will be retiring.

The BJP leaders are upbeat and hoping for a favourable ruling. The party is happy that their “*Mandir wahin banayenge* (we will construct the temple on that spot)” slogan could at last become a reality, after a wait of nearly three decades.

Local BJP leaders claim that over 65 per cent of the stone craving work for the proposed temple has been completed and a lot of *Karsevaks* have volunteered to work for its construction. According to BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj, if the verdict goes in favour of the Hindus, Prime Minister Narendra Modi could lay the foundation stone on December 6.

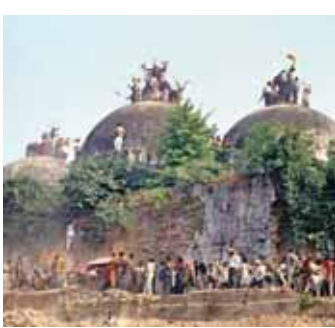
Uttar Pradesh (UP) Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has also said that he is hopeful of a favourable ruling. He has already prepared the State administration to face a post-verdict scenario. The Faizabad District has been renamed as Ayodhya, which is

being developed as a tourist attraction with wider roads, spruced up ghats and refurbished heritage temples.

The Ayodhya verdict would have legal, political and religious ramifications. Though the apex court's order might put a lid on the legal aspect, its impact on politics and communal harmony will be equally significant.

It is likely that the two sides might accept the SC's judgment. Muslim religious scholars and leaders have also said that parties on both sides of the dispute should accept the verdict, whatever it may be.

It will be a big gain for the BJP, as the party's political and electoral fortunes in the past three decades owe their rise to it, as the BJP began its campaign for the Ram temple in the '90s. The razing of the Babri Masjid



Gujarat to Ayodhya in 1990. However, the yatra did not culminate in Ayodhya as planned, as Advani was arrested.

The Babri Masjid demolition not only changed the political narrative of the country but it also helped the BJP establish itself in national politics.

Post the Babri Masjid demolition, the BJP acquired a national identity and stature. The party, which was known as a Bania-Brahmin party and had a strong presence only in the Hindi belt, has expanded as a pan-national party now, replacing the

grand old party, the Congress.

The Ayodhya agenda has been a recurring theme, to which the Sangh Parivar and its affiliates, most importantly the BJP, have returned to again and again. The party has been consistently talking about building the Ram temple and had included it in its poll manifesto since 1996.

However, after the demolition, Advani had said that “the agitation is not just for constructing a temple, but to propagate Hindutva's foundational idea — cultural nationalism.”

Other political parties, including the Congress, Samajwadi Party (SP), the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) have been treading on the issue very cautiously.

Seeing the phenomenal rise of the BJP, the Congress has also been trying to play soft-Hindutva politics in recent times, with party leaders like Rahul Gandhi visiting temples before elections. The SP, BSP, RJD and other parties relevant in the '90s have lost their sheen now.

The BJP's future agenda depends

on how it plays its Hindutva card. At present, the party would primarily like to consolidate its base all over the country. It has to expand in the North-East and the South and it is also planning to expand in West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Moreover, the economic agenda needs priority as it is slipping beyond its control. Creation of jobs and boosting the economy needs immediate attention. It is easier said than done when the global economy is also facing a slowdown.

The saffron party's next agenda is likely to be Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK). In fact, BJP chief Amit Shah and the Minister for External Affairs S Jaishankar have gone public on reclaiming the PoK after the revocation of Article 370. But there is enough time for this until the next elections. Of course, one week is said to be long time in politics and five years are a very, very long time and there could be other issues, which may come up.

(The writer is a senior journalist)



FOREIGN EYE



SOMETHING TO PONDER ABOUT

The size of the Extinction Rebellion (XR) protests over the past year add weight to the idea that people in this decade were in revolt before they had any clear idea what form a revolution might take. Politically it looked like a whole generation was up for grabs. In the beginning of the decade this anger veered leftwards with movements like Occupy, but at the end it has moved greenwards, under XR. The question is how much of the country will go with it.

(The Guardian editorial)



Enrolling in a hands-on skill training course can be of great help to those looking out for better opportunities, says DR NARENDRA SHYAMSUKHA

Let us start with harsh realities — the rate of employability in India has noted a sharp decline in the past few years. Gone are the days when India was considered rich in talent- apt skilling is something that the youth are lacking. Naturally, it shows- reports say that 95 per cent Indian technical/non-technical graduates are unemployable, giving rise to what people coin as an industry-institute gap. At present, nearly 80 per cent of new entrants to the country's workforce get little or no opportunity for skills education. Merely 2.5 per cent of our workforce is exposed to formal vocational training.

Challenges of skill gap
The evolution of talent acquisition is something that the leading institution and educational bodies should take note. The focus has shifted to experiential knowledge as major organisations are dawning to the importance of acquiring the brightest talent. A strong hike in market profitability is linked to having the right kind talent to understand the pulse of the market and channelise that insight into elevating organisational value in the right direction.

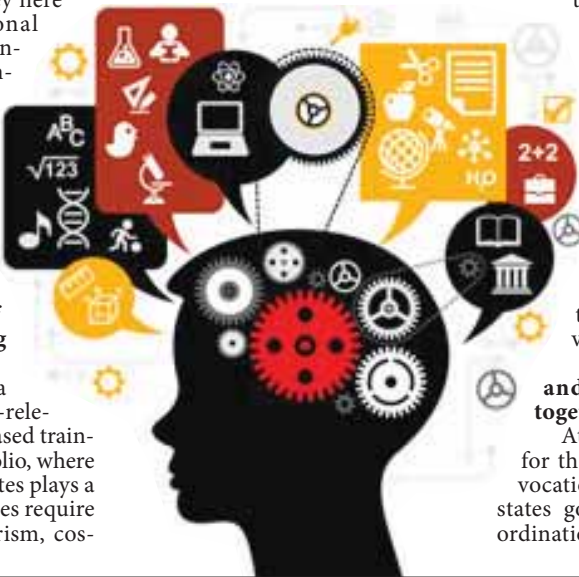
Despite this, the rise of the skill gap is alarming — desired skills are

greatly lacking amongst today's youth. To cope up to the uncertainties of the market, one needs to have the ability to think on his feet. A prepared individual can cope up with its variances and still emerge with zeal to learn and contribute greatly to the growth of the market. Unfortunately, the sluggish educational system, paired with the directionless intent of students, makes it difficult for this gap to be bridged. The key here is to integrate vocational skilling, into the educational framework, emboldening the learning experience of students. For a densely populated like India, skilling is the golden wand that can elevate the living standards and transform the nation into the leading skilling hub.

Importance of Vocational Training Institutes

Yet, there needs to be a direction as only industry-relevant education and skill-based training can augment the portfolio, where vocational training institutes plays a big role. A host of industries require such training- retail, tourism, cos-

DESIRED SKILLS ARE LACKING AMONGST TODAY'S YOUTH. TO COPE WITH THIS, ONE NEEDS TO HAVE THE ABILITY TO THINK ON ONE'S FEET



metology, or traditional crafts, cottage industry and many more. Enrolling in a vocational training institute or hands-on skill training course can be of great help to candidates looking out for employment opportunities. These training institutes aids students in mastering the soft skills, from expanding their business vocabulary and increasing their speaking skills, to writing customised e-mails for clients, and preparing interesting PowerPoint presentations and others, to increase the individual market value of the students. Students can also leverage the network of employers and colleges these instates have, to maintain coordination with industry. Finally, the accreditations and certifications gained through the tenure can add value to job seekers.

How can the government and private entities work together to enhance this?

At present, the requirement for the proper administration of vocational education by various states government and better coordination between different state

departments and agencies, is rising as industries clamour about to find relevant talent. While there is a place for promises, what the Indian educational scenario needs is an actionable approach. Of late, courses in computer programming and electronics have started as part of Governments' skill development programs and yet, they lack the fire. These verticals need to be systematised and accelerated, via the help of private entities. While several government agencies and private institutes have engaged in a tryst to impart skill education in India, here is little coordination between them, making the path precarious. Yet, hope is there as certain companies are partnering with various State and Central Government departments in offering skill-building programmes for the country's potential workforce in diverse sectors including agriculture, IT-ITES, retail, telecom, banking, accounting, finance and others. With such institutions, the draught of employability can be replenished as India powers ahead to edge over other nations, in terms of skilled manpower.

The writer is Founder & Chairman, ICA Edu Skills

QUOTE OF THE DAY

No other investment yields as great a return as the investment in education. An educated workforce is the foundation of every community and the future of every economy
— Brad Henry

PINNACLE MBA

JK Lakshmipat University invites applications for admissions to its Pinnacle MBA programme for the year 2019-2020.

A one of a kind reimaged programme designed by experts from higher education, management studies, business and industry with an aim to offer the right blend of academics, experience and experimentation to the students.

This course consists of three converging tracks of the programme that form the pillar of programme — Management Studies, Liberal Arts & Studies and Personal Growth.

Duration: Two years
Eligibility: Minimum 50 per cent marks (45 per cent for SC/ST candidates) or equivalent CGPA in a three-year bachelor's degree or equivalent in any discipline from a recognised university. Students appearing in the final examination of bachelor's degree can also apply. The candidates must have appeared in CAT/MAT/ATMA/XAT/CMAT or any other naonal level entrance test. In case the candidate has not appeared for any of the menoned tests, they will have to appear in the JKLU Management Entrance Test (MET) to qualify for the programme.

MSC PROGRAMME

The University of Strathclyde, Glasgow invites applications for admissions to its MSc International Relations, Law & Security programmes.

The course familiarises students with contemporary issues relating to the course topics, examining them through legal and political viewpoints. It reflects contemporary policies by taking a broad view of 'security', rather than simply focusing on traditional areas of concern.



Duration: One year
Eligibility: First or upper second-class Honours degree, or international equivalent, in social sciences/law subjects or substantial professional experience.

How to apply: Log on to [hass-pg-enquiries@strath.ac.uk](https://www.hass-pg-enquiries@strath.ac.uk).

MSC HAZARDS & RESILIENCE

The University of Sheffield, UK invites applications for admissions to its new MSc Hazards & Resilience course.

The MSc Hazards & Resilience course focuses on addressing the causes and effects of climate change with engineering solutions; creating engineers the world needs right now.

This course educates engineers to become skilled in providing technical and sustainable solutions to these risk-based challenges, and protect infrastructure and society from a broad range of hazards.

Eligibility: Candidates should have a three year bachelor degree with a minimum of 60 per cent or first class (BEng, MEng, BSc) in Civil and Structural Engineering or other appropriate engineering or science subject from a reputable university. Overall IELTS score of 6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 in each component, or equivalent.

Fees: £ 23,750 for international students.

How to apply: Log on to <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/courses/2020/hazards-and-resilience-msc-pg-certificate-pg-diploma>.

Companies must broaden training framework

A research on emerging trends, by DR VENKATA RATNADEEP SURI and DR NIMMY RANGASWAMY, in the automation of manual work practices in IT talks about its effects on employment and how to address the issue

Since the 1990s, Indian software firms have developed expertise in outsourced back office tasks, and mid-level IT services like data entry, managing call centers, and software quality testing for foreign companies at very low prices by taking advantage of the cheaply available and technically trained local workforce. However, the rapidly improving automation technologies are allowing AI-based software to carry out routine IT support work, and repetitive back office tasks that were previously performed by human actors — the very tasks that global companies originally outsourced to India to take advantage of cheaper labour.

This emerging trend of automating manual work practices in the IT industry has generated a debate about the effects that this trend would have on employment patterns and the overall growth of the IT industry. Automation has been seen as a grave threat to the rule-based and easily automated jobs. According to a World Bank Report, about 69 per cent of jobs in India today are under threat as a result of automation. In fact, the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) predicted a 20-to-25 per cent reduction in jobs

in the Indian IT industry over the next three years, confirming a general global trend. Technological solutions applied to streamline command-based tasks are giving a tough time to machine operators, clerks, and entry-level IT workers. This is also compounded by a significant increase in the demand for lower-skill jobs, as those with middle level-skills are likely to try move to lower-skill jobs resulting in demand for the latter outstripping its supply.

Recently, a group of researchers set out to investigate how AI-based technologies can affect one such important segment that is expected to have a significant impact of automation- the IT Software Quality Testing (QT) segment. Using ethnographic methods researchers explored the day-to-day work activities of Code Testers across several companies in Hyderabad (India), in their effort to understand the impact of automation on code testing. The study revealed several interesting facts. First, though automation does simplify the testing process, how effectively a software can detect and unearth deeply seated bugs to a large extent depended on the design of test cases-an inherent human cognitive activity.

Quality testers in the course of



everyday routines of testing a product, go beyond their call of duty and care about their client's company image, market share, brand value, and customers. It seems that testers slowly and surely begin to focus on goals that their client business wants to achieve through their testing work. These might range from improving sales, focusing on conversion, funnel, lesser cost per customer acquisition, increase profitability, making customers happy by just allowing them to do what they intend to, with the software.

However, the value brought about the code testers is often undermined, and in the process, the

value that a client can accrue through manual testing is often neglected or goes untapped. The collective testers' voice calls for promoting a hybrid (human-automated) testing environment where the efficiency of automation can be creatively combined with human intelligence input to add more value to testing.

The research has also revealed that testers regularly carry out several work tasks in their daily routines that draw upon their business process expertise, critical thinking, tactics, knowledge and experiences. This also dispels the notion that QT is merely a routine or repetitive task-based activity.

To address employability issues in the testing sector, companies must also broaden their training framework and inculcate skills centered around context analysis, customer-facing interaction, tacit knowledge, critical thinking and means to combine these skills in testing contexts. This allows the testers to add more value to the customers and foregrounds the value that combining AI-based automation with human testing brings to the table.

The writers are Assistant Professor at IIT-Delhi and Associate Professor at IIT-Hyderabad

TIP TOP How to overcome exam fear

Students get stressed and nervous at the time of exams. This leads to anxiety. ALKA KAPUR shares tips that may help

Examinations give an opportunity to every child to reach his/her full educational potential with flying colours. However, students tend to become restless and nervous at the time of exams. The bug bear of an examination interrupts the smooth course of a student's life. Students generally find exams so difficult that the phobia makes them fall ill as they simply find themselves unable to cope up with the exam fear and this fear factor before the exams cause them to underperform on their D-day. But there is nothing to worry about. To ensure that courage doesn't ooze out from the finger ends and the experience doesn't become perplexing and exasperating, the only thing you require is the amalgamation of 3 Ds viz a viz determination, dedication and discipline in one's life.

Fear can be overcome by combining self-confidence with disciplined study and faith in one's abilities. So, students are advised not to lose heart and gain control of the situation with a calm mind.

Here are some of the tips to overcome fear and anxiety:

- Prepare a revision timetable and set out what topics, subjects you want to cover each day.
- Start planning well before the exam begins.
- Make your timetable in such



a manner that you keep sometime for relaxation.

■ Make sure you are able to shell out sometime for exercise, walking, cycling, swimming, dancing, anything to get rid of stress in your body.

■ Go out with friends, listen to music, do whatever you enjoy to relax yourself but keep time frame in mind.

■ Have a balanced diet. Make sure you always eat breakfast to keep yourself energised the entire day. You can only concentrate when you are physically and mentally fit.

■ Practice regular meditation as it helps improve concentration.

■ Test your preparation from time to time by attempting sample papers and mock tests. Nothing gives you a better reality check than those tests. Performing well in these tests

will help you overcome exam fear.

■ Don't hesitate to reach out for help. Reach out to your teachers, mentor or peers to make headway.

■ Think positively as your expectations can affect your performance.

■ Remind yourself that exams will not determine your success or failure in life.

■ Sleep well at night before the exam.

■ Never compare yourself with other students.

■ Make notes while studying as these notes will be useful during revision.

So, cultivate fearlessness and face exams boldly and success will embrace you.

The writer is Principal, Modern Public School Shalimar Bagh, New Delhi

Sharda varsity in Uzbekistan

The Sharda University is all set to take forward its legacy of providing world class quality education to all by opening a new campus in Uzbekistan.

Sharda University will be the first independent private university in Uzbekistan, especially across the Andijan, Fergana, Samarkand region that be a gateway for students from Eurasia to experience future-focused education in various disciplines including Engineering and Management.

With a highly qualified and competent full time faculty members (20), around 15-20 visiting faculty and 250 students, the University currently offers specialised courses in BTech and BTech (Hons) in Engineering, covering streams like Computer Science, Electrical engineering, Information Technology, and

Electronic and Communications, with a special focus on new-age Digital Technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. In the management discipline, the University currently offers specialised courses in human resource management, entrepreneurship, marketing and international business.

Commenting on the occasion HE Shukhrat Abdurakhmanov, Chief Governor of Andijan Region, Republic of Uzbekistan said: "It gives us immense pleasure to enter into this new stage of partnership with Sharda University. We wish Sharda group all success and hope for great co-operation and contribution in the overall development of Uzbekistan. We will extend all our support to the group time and again for a glorious path ahead."

4th edition of SRM Hackathon

Future mobility, defence, sustainability, technology in brand experience, IT security and tourism were the themes of the fourth edition of the SRM Hackathon. This national-level event was organised by IT Association, School of Computing and SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Katankulathur and was held at SRMIST campus recently.

The winner was team Dragon_Booster from Sri Venkateshwara College of Engineering, Sriperumbudur. The Social Stars award was won



Winning team Dragon Booster receives award

by team Gen-Y of SRMIST, Kattankulathur. Their application was to solve travel plan complexity and can help people cre-

ate any trip according to their preferences.

People's Favourite award was won by SRMIST's Beeclust_mrs1 group consisting of Inderan Kannan, Atul John Abraham, and Sukriti. Their work was a prototype that uses algae and draws in CO2 and other harmful gases like Sulphur Di Oxide and fullerenes (excess air) into the system.

SRM Hackathon 4.0 was a 36-hour long event and had about 1000 entries. Only 40 ideas were selected to participate in the finals.

Vishwa rang festival

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The first edition of the Tagore International Literature & Arts Festival, also known as *Vishwa Rang*, will be held in Bhopal from November 7 to November 10, 2019.

The event is being organised by the Tagore International Centre for Arts and Culture, housed under Bhopal-based Rabindranath Tagore University (RNTU), and the AISECT Group of Universities. *Vishwa Rang* 2019 will be the first world-class lit-

erary and arts festival to be organised by an educational institution of India. It will celebrate the essence of Arts and Literature in Hindi and other Indian languages and witness the coming together of over 500 artists and authors from over 30 nationalities.

It will be a platform for ideological dialogue and cultural interplay spread over 60 sessions, which will feature discussions, celebration and discourse on many subjects including literature, culture, education, cinema, journalism and environment.

Infosys probing alleged ‘unethical practices’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

IT services giant Infosys Ltd on Tuesday said it is investigating claims by anonymous whistleblowers accusing CEO Salil Parekh of “unethical practices” to shore up profits through irregular accounting, sending its shares to their worst intra-day fall in over six years.

Chairman and co-founder Nandan Nilekani pledged a full probe, saying the complaint had been placed before the audit committee on October 10 and before the non-executive members of the board the next day.

A September 20 letter, signed by “Ethical Employees”, had alleged that Parikh as well as Chief Financial Officer Nilanjan Roy engaged in forced revenue recognition from large contracts not adhering to accounting standards.

Its American Depositary Receipts were trading nearly 2 per cent down on the New York Stock Exchange on Tuesday.

US-based Rosen Law Firm

has said it is preparing a class action lawsuit to recover losses suffered by Infosys investors. In a statement, Rosen Law Firm said it is “investigating potential securities claims on behalf of shareholders of Infosys Ltd resulting from allegations that Infosys may have issued materially misleading business information to the investing public.”

“Rosen Law Firm is preparing a class action lawsuit to recover losses suffered by Infosys investors,” the statement added.

The letter — dated September 20 — addressed to the board claimed that recent big deal wins carried negligible margins and that Roy directed certain people to make wrong assumptions to show margins.

The latest allegations came just two years after Infosys endured an internal turmoil that saw its then head Vishal Sikka resigning from the company.

In a statement to stock exchanges, Nilekani said the

audit committee has begun consultation with independent internal auditors EY and has retained law firm Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co to conduct an independent investigation.

He said one board member had received two anonymous complaints on September 30, 2019 - one dated September 20, 2019, titled “Disturbing unethical practices” and an undated note with the title “Whistleblower Complaint”.

He said both had been placed before the audit committee on October 10, 2019, and before the non-executive members of the board the following day.

“Post the board meeting of October 11, 2019, the audit committee began consultation with the independent internal auditors (Ernst & Young) on terms of reference for their prima facie investigation. The audit committee has now retained the law firm of Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co (October 21, 2019) to conduct

an independent investigation,” Nilekani noted in his statement.

The board, in consultation with the audit committee, will take such steps as may be appropriate based on the outcome of the investigation, he added. The whistleblower complaint by a group that calls itself “ethical employees” had alleged CEO Salil Parekh and CFO Nilanjan Roy were indulging in “unethical practices” to boost short-term revenue and profits.

“We have high respect for all of you and bring to your notice the unethical practices of CEO in recent quarters. The same measures are taken up in the current quarter also to boost short term revenue and profits,” the letter addressed to the board of directors dated September 20, read.

The whistleblowers said they have emails and voice recordings on these matters.

Infosys on Monday had said the whistleblower complaint has been placed before the audit committee as per the

company’s practice, and that it will be dealt with in accordance with the company’s whistleblower policy.

Nilekani, in his statement on Tuesday, said the company was made aware of another letter (dated October 3) that was purportedly written to the Office of Whistleblower protection programme, Washington DC. This letter referred to the September 20, 2019, complaint, and to emails and voice recordings in support of the allegations.

“These complaints are being dealt with in an objective manner. The undated whistleblower complaint largely deals with allegations relating to the CEO’s international travel to the US and Mumbai,” Nilekani pointed out. “Although we have not been provided any of the emails or voice recordings, we will ensure that the generalised allegations are investigated to the fullest extent. Additionally, to ensure independence in these investigations, the CEO and CFO have

been recused from this matter,” Nilekani added.

He also noted that Infosys’ statutory auditors, Deloitte, India, have been “completely updated” on this matter post the October 11 Board meeting.

In 2017, Infosys had witnessed a protracted stand-off between its high profile founders and the previous management over allegations of governance lapses and issues relating to severance package doled out to former executives, including ex-CFO Rajiv Bansal.

Following the tussle, the then CEO Vishal Sikka quit followed by some board members. Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani was then brought in as Chairman to steer the company. Parekh joined the company in January last year as the CEO.

Infosys has also settled with Sebi the case of alleged disclosure lapses regarding a payment made to Bansal earlier this year. It paid Rs 34.34 lakh to the market regulator to settle the case.

Pvt telecom operators pay govt over ₹4,500 cr in spectrum dues

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Private telecom operators Reliance Jio, Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel have paid the Telecom Department over Rs 4,500 crore in spectrum dues in the last three to four days, according to sources. Sources said that the payments came in before the due date. The sparing telcos — some of which are reeling under acute financial stress and are seeking immediate relief measures — have made the payment towards deferred spectrum liability (or instalment payment for radiowaves bought in past auctions) which fell due on October 21.

While Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Jio has paid Rs 1,133 crore to the Department of Telecom, Vodafone Idea has made Rs 2,421 crore payment towards spectrum dues. Sunil Mittal’s Bharti Airtel has paid Rs 977 crore. Taken together, these three players have paid over Rs 4,531 crore towards spectrum dues late last week.

Emails sent to Reliance Jio and Airtel went unanswered, while a Vodafone Idea spokesperson said that the company does not comment on matters that are business as usual. The government, in March last year, enhanced the number of annual instalments

for spectrum payment from 10 to 16 years to provide a breather to the debt-laden telecom sector. But with the industry reeling under financial stress, Vodafone Group Chairman Gerard Kleisterlee and CEO Nick Read recently met Telecom Secretary Anshu Prakash, as the company sought a two-year moratorium on deferred spectrum payments, and other relief measures from the government.

The British telecom giant has asserted that it is focused on the successful integration of business between Vodafone and Idea. The telecom sector has been battered by falling tariffs, eroding profitability and mounting debt in the face of stiff competition triggered by disruptive offerings of Reliance Jio. The industry has been seeking urgent relief such as cut in levies like licence fee and spectrum charges, and release of GST input tax credit locked up with the government.

In a sector stung by policy and regulatory issues, battle-lines have been drawn more recently over the contentious matter of call connect charges, where the regulator is reviewing whether or not the zero termination charge regime should be pushed back from the originally-stated timeline of January 1, 2020.

Two employee unions’ strike partially hits banking services

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Banking operations in some parts of the country were affected on Tuesday as two employee unions are on strike, protesting merger of

public sector banks. Some of the services like cash deposit and withdrawal at the counter as well as cheque clearances have been impacted due to the nation-wide strike.

However, branches of

public sectors banks in urban areas are operational as officers at these branches are not participating in the strike. Most of the banks, including SBI, had informed their customers about strike call given

by All India Bank Employees Association (AIBEA) and Bank Employees Federation of India (BEFI) to protest bank mergers and fall in deposit rates.

Merger of banks is total-

ly unwarranted in India as there is a need for more banking services and opening of more branches to serve the people, AIBEA General Secretary CH Venkatachalam said. “The merger has so far

resulted in closure of branches and hence it is a wrong policy. Recovery of the huge bad loans is the top priority for banks, and merger will change the priority. Hence, it is a bad idea,” he added.

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	11657.15	11714.35	11573.65	11588.35	-73.50
DREDDY	2722.25	2820.70	2710.85	2819.90	95.05
ICICIBANK	440.50	458.70	437.55	451.75	13.95
BPCIL	532.00	538.60	522.35	532.70	12.40
TITAN	1300.45	1336.80	1294.50	1331.00	30.40
CIPLA	441.25	457.75	440.20	453.65	9.50
COALINDIA	206.00	209.95	203.30	209.95	4.00
WIPRO	249.00	254.45	247.10	253.55	4.65
NESTLEIND	14888.00	15110.95	14836.00	15100.00	264.55
HINDUNILVR	2120.00	2149.00	2112.00	2131.70	24.85
BAJAJ-AUTO	3090.05	3154.40	3089.65	3122.35	35.30
GRASIM	745.95	772.00	742.45	755.00	8.50
POWERGRID	201.00	207.55	201.00	204.70	2.15
HDFC	2115.00	2140.50	2096.00	2116.00	21.55
SUNPHARMA	402.00	408.00	400.95	405.60	3.95
YESBANK	53.00	56.60	50.25	51.90	0.50
HEROMOTOCO	2660.00	2713.45	2641.20	2670.05	23.90
HDFCBANK	1257.00	1257.00	1232.60	1239.90	10.90
ITC	245.00	251.10	244.95	248.50	2.00
IOC	147.10	148.10	145.55	146.75	1.15
KOTAKBANK	1626.85	1643.00	1592.00	1626.80	11.55
M&M	593.40	601.20	587.45	596.85	3.55
AXISBANK	712.10	723.00	703.30	713.25	3.70
ONGC	143.50	146.15	142.20	144.10	0.60
NTPC	270.10	275.00	268.50	270.35	0.70
BRITANNIA	3220.10	3291.90	3220.10	3260.00	7.65
ZEEL	252.00	255.00	247.10	250.65	0.45
RELLANCE	1425.00	1436.85	1403.35	1417.40	1.05
GAIL	129.55	130.95	128.90	129.50	-0.05
INDUSINDBK	1340.00	1357.85	1320.00	1341.00	-1.65
ADANIPORTS	421.50	428.85	417.10	420.60	-1.10
UPL	599.00	603.90	592.95	597.00	-2.05
NTPC	121.65	121.65	119.95	120.65	-0.40
TCS	2080.00	2111.50	2040.05	2050.00	-7.35
LT	1438.50	1467.80	1439.15	1441.60	-6.20
MARUTI	7743.00	7932.00	7732.00	7762.25	-40.05
VEDL	150.60	151.95	147.20	149.10	-1.15
ULTRACEMCO	4295.00	4409.90	4217.00	4250.80	-44.50
HINDALCO	186.45	190.95	185.05	185.20	-3.20
INFRATEL	266.00	266.00	256.25	258.40	-2.20
EICHERMOT	20276.00	20513.25	19855.00	19963.45	-312.45
JSWSTEEL	223.00	225.90	219.20	219.50	-3.85
TATASTEEL	352.70	363.80	353.00	353.25	-6.35
ASIANPAINT	1877.20	1825.00	1775.00	1780.00	-36.75
TECHM	727.40	732.00	714.30	719.00	-15.20
BAFINANCE	4165.00	4219.85	4040.10	4050.00	-87.65
HCLTECH	1090.20	1095.90	1051.50	1064.90	-30.60
BHARTIARTL	381.80	396.50	367.20	372.65	-10.85
BAJAJFINSV	8300.00	8393.00	7975.25	8005.00	-260.95
TATAMOTORS	133.35	135.60	129.80	131.35	-5.50
INFY	691.10	691.10	638.35	640.00	-127.85

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	28088.00	28379.95	28049.40	28163.95	149.80
PEL	1582.00	1723.00	1582.00	1687.35	139.50
SBIILE	929.20	997.50	929.20	989.90	63.95
PAGEIND	21580.00	22699.00	21533.75	22699.00	1200.55
DLF	17.00	18.30	16.95	17.20	8.35
SHEREECM	19400.00	20312.45	19258.25	19550.00	870.25
HDFCAMC	2890.00	3074.70	2884.50	3010.00	127.35
ICICIGCI	1237.00	1306.35	1237.00	1296.75	52.70
PFC	98.20	103.15	97.80	101.70	3.60
BOSCHLTD	14199.90	14700.00	14162.00	14600.00	460.50
PETRONET	268.95	277.50	267.85	275.15	7.85
SRTANSFIN	1085.55	1127.80	1080.10	1119.05	22.80
SIEMENS	1650.00	1693.50	1645.95	1680.35	31.65
CADILAHC	240.65	248.50	238.80	245.00	4.35
OFSS	3095.00	3114.40	3070.00	3109.00	38.75
L&TH	84.10	90.80	83.60	86.40	1.00
PGHIL	11800.00	12200.00	11761.00	11950.00	125.65
PNB	60.25	62.25	59.90	60.85	0.60
HINDPETRO	316.95	320.45	312.30	316.90	3.05
DABUR	466.00	480.00	465.70	471.00	4.50
MARICO	392.95	400.90	392.15	395.35	3.50
VISLAB	1732.40	1773.55	1726.25	1752.05	14.05
LUPIN	738.90	748.35	733.95	744.80	5.70
ICICIPRULI	478.35	488.45	473.40	480.10	3.35
HDCLIFE	609.95	624.25	605.50	612.50	4.05
AUROPHARMA	477.00	485.40	471.20	479.00	2.55
NMDC	110.00	110.70	107.60	109.40	0.55
BANKBARODA	89.50	92.60	89.05	90.15	0.35
BANDHANBNK	554.00	580.45	553.80	555.00	0.30
PIDILITIND	1360.50	1382.00	1344.05	1352.00	0.50
COLPAL	1546.00	1554.90	1524.00	1538.50	-2.30
DMART	1929.95	1943.25	1901.00	1913.00	-11.85
CONCOR	629.90	632.75	603.75	607.00	-4.50
UBL	1336.00	1336.00	1299.30	1319.30	-10.70
ACC	257.50	257.50	256.05	256.05	-3.40
HAVELLS	690.00	692.95	670.50	678.00	-11.60
GODREJCP	710.05	714.50	695.00	702.45	-14.45
BAJAJHLNG	3742.40	3800.00	3656.00	3665.10	-77.40
ASHOKLEY	77.05	77.15	75.15	76.85	-1.65
HINDZINC	216.50	219.70	209.20	210.00	-6.40
NHPC	24.10	24.10	23.05	23.10	-0.80
INDIGO	1719.00	1719.00	1666.50	1668.80	-61.10
MCOWELL-N	634.90	644.30	606.60	611.75	-23.45
MOTHERSUMI	105.80	105.85	103.00	103.50	-4.05
IDEA	6.40	6.55	6.00	6.15	-0.25
BERGEJAC	503.00	504.80	477.00	479.50	-19.55
AMBAIPACEM	205.00	205.40	192.50	195.90	-11.75
IBULHSGFIN	239.00	252.00	205.35	218.00	-13.20
NIACL	143.70	149.00	135.25	135.50	-8.25
GICRE	279.50	291.00	258.00	259.85	-19.75

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP
INFY	691.00	691.00	638.30	643.30
YESBANK	53.00	56.50	50.25	51.80
IBULHSGFIN	238.20	252.00	206.00	218.20
HDFC	2102.00	2140.85	2096.50	2115.95
RELIANCE	1427.05	1437.65	1404.00	1414.25
BAJFINANCE	4157.00	4219.50	4001.00	4013.95
ITC	245.90	251.00	245.05	248.85
BPCIL	530.00	538.50	522.60	534.00
ICICIBANK	439.00	458.75	437.90	451.15
HDFCBANK	1257.00	1257.00	1232.80	1238.65
PEL	1588.70	1723.50	1584.75	1680.50
KOTAKBANK	1620.00	1643.35	1592.40	1628.90
MARUTI	7300.00	7391.45	7232.90	7254.20
TATAMOTORS	133.40	135.60	129.85	131.90
JUBLFOODS	1356.00	1451.80	1345.05	1429.90
SBIN	270.00	274.95	268.60	270.40
RBLBANK	296.00	298.10	282.05	286.95
HCLTECH	1095.05	1095.05	1051.75	1062.45
BAJAJFINSV	8267.00	8389.90	7966.75	8004.65
BHEL	55.50	55.50	51.35	51.80
TATASTEEL	356.95	363.65	353.50	354.25
RNAM	289.30	319.20	289.30	309.00
TITAN	1300.00	1336.00	1299.20	1329.50
COCHINSHIP	332.25	340.05	331.70	336.90
TCS	2081.00	2109.95	2040.45	2051.65
LTTS	1625.00	1625.00	1460.00	1472.60
ZEEL	251.95	254.90	247.50	252.35
DLF	169.00	182.90	169.00	178.20
NCC	53.65	55.55	53.00	53.70
AXISBANK	714.70	722.65	704.25	712.70
HDFCAMC	2900.00	3072.50	2886.30	3021.45
GRAPHITE	297.80	327.30	294.95	311.20
JINDALSTEL	108.00	108.05	102.90	103.45
LT	1448.05	1466.95	1438.65	1441.90
JSWSTEEL	224.40	225.85	219.20	219.60
ASHOKLEY	77.60	77.60	75.15	76.05
APOLLOTYRE	184.50	188.25	183.45	184.75
ULTRACEMCO	4340.00	4405.45	4222.00	4250.30
HEG	972.90	1017.50	972.90	1076.00
BANKBARODA	90.00	92.50	89.15	90.15
L&TH	84.20	90.80	83.95	86.65
BHARTIARTL	383.25	396.40	367.40	374.20
BATAINDIA	1789.00	1883.25	1744.85	1767.20
AUBANK	689.65	690.50	662.95	688.40
INDUSINDSN	1349.60	1357.30	1319.75	1340.65
MCX	1076.00	1127.60	1047.00	1119.40
AMBUJACEM	200.00	206.00	192.65	195.80
VEDL	151.00	152.00	147.30	149.00
HINDPETRO	317.00	320.40	312.45	316.75
HINDALCO	187.40	190.95	185.20	185.80
ECHERMOT	20226.00	20490.00	19860.00	19958.05
ONGC	143.50	145.95	142.25	144.15
HDFCLIFE	609.95	624.00	605.20	611.55
IDEA	6.39	6.54	6.03	6.13
SAIL	36.00	37.30	35.45	35.60
NESTLEIND	14921.00	15113.00	14840.00	15039.10
ADANIEMT	175.00	180.25	173.65	178.55
SBILIFE	925.90	997.35	925.60	989.30
ICICI	1239.00	1306.00	1239.00	1296.00
NBC	37.10	37.50	35.45	35.75
SUNPHARMA	402.00	408.00	400.00	405.00
APOLLOHOSP	1501.50	1539.35	1501.30	1518.55
NVMT	109.25	110.70	107.85	109.00
AMCINDIA	443.00	449.60	441.40	450.60
ASIANPAINT	1817.05	1821.60	1775.60	1779.80
LICHSGFIN	385.00	391.35	372.00	373.10
SHREECEM	19511.00	20377.40	19278.00	19501.40
INDIGO	1730.00	1730.00	1666.85	1671.40
SCI	49.40	55.40	49.40	53.15
MOTHERSUMI	105.80	105.80	103.05	103.65
M&MFIN	320.00	347.20	312.65	341.30
HINDUNILVR	2108.00	2148.45	2108.00	2127.60
ACC	1555.00	1556.70	1524.90	1534.95
TATAELXSI	699.00	705.60	675.05	702.05
TATAPOWER	59.85	60.70	58.90	59.25
PNB	60.25	62.25	59.85	60.80
PETRONET	265.65	277.40	265.65	275.20
M&M	595.00	600.85	585.10	597.50
COLPAL	1544.00	1554.00	1523.85	1534.60
FEDERALBNK	85.00	85.00	83.30	83.80
NITITECH	1428.80	1469.00	1415.40	1452.30
VENKYS	1723.60	1828.85	1573.00	1811.35
HEROMOTOCO	2668.50	2711.80	2646.00	2673.40
UJIVAN	315.00	316.50	306.00	310.60
EDIEWELISS	90.00	97.10	89.60	96.35
ESCORTS	640.00	660.35	640.00	644.65
COALINDIA	207.00	209.80	203.35	208.20
MANAPPURAM	155.00	159.95	154.80	158.00
PNBHOUSING	483.75	500.00	452.80	470.05
BEML	955.00	987.55	950.00	966.00
VOLTAS	649.95	713.00	691.00	693.15
PIIND	1292.15	1336.90	1292.15	1325.20
LALPATHLAB	1424.00	1549.50	1424.00	1480.90
STRTECH	148.00	160.70	148.00	155.75
CREDITCARE	633.00	654.45	628.00	631.40
WIPRO	248.00	254.40	247.30	253.70
PIDILITIND	1356.00	1381.70	1345.05	1349.95
ICISPRULI	477.00	488.35	474.00	479.95
GRANULES	103.00	119.70	102.50	114.25
CANBK	188.85	195.20	187.85	189.65
IOC	98.50	103.15	97.85	101.10
PPF	146.80	148.05	145.60	146.45
TVS MOTOR	455.00	460.40	448.95	451.65
CONCOR	632.00	632.00	604.60	607.75
AUROPHARMA	475.85	485.20	471.70	477.15
PAGEIND	21621.00	22587.65	21521.00	22471.50
JUSTDIAL	634.70	640.00	621.50	625.40
SPIECHEIT	120.25	120.35	116.60	117.10

BSE Sensex

OCT 29

38,963.84

▼-334.54

TOP GAINERS

TOP LOSERS

KICK BANK 1.08 Infosys 1.38

Sam Pharma 1.10 Tata Motors -3.51

Bajaj Finance 1.04 Bharat Sanjivani 1.24

HUL 1.02 HCL Tech -2.87

HDFC 0.98 Bajaj Finj -2.56

GRAPHICS

NSE Nifty

OCT 29

11,588.35

▼-73.50

TOP GAINERS

TOP LOSERS

Nuc Bank 3.5 Infosys 15.08

Dr Reddys 3.00 HCL Tech -3.17

BPCIL 2.80 Bajaj Finance 2.52

KICK Bank 2.30 Bajaj Finance 2.43

Titan 2.41 Bajaj Finj -2.12

Trudeau's Liberals win Canada vote

AFP ■ OTTAWA

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party held onto power in a nail-biter of a Canadian general election on Monday, but as a weakened minority government.

Television projections as of 2 am Tuesday (0600 GMT) declared the Liberals winners or leading in 156 of the nation's 338 electoral districts, versus 122 for his main rival Andrew Scheer and the Conservatives, after polling stations across six time zones closed.

As early as Tuesday, Trudeau will have to form an alliance with one or more smaller parties in order to govern a fractured nation.

The first test of his future government will follow in the coming weeks with a speech to parliament outlining his legislative priorities and a confidence vote.

"From coast to coast to coast, tonight Canadians rejected division and negativity," Trudeau said. "And they rejected cuts and austerity and voted in favour of a progressive agenda and strong action on climate change."

He reassured Quebec that his Liberal government, despite an electoral setback in the French-speaking province, "will be there for you."

He also spoke directly to a growing sense of Western Canada's alienation within the federation, telling those in Saskatchewan and Alberta provinces: "I've heard your frustration."

The 47-year-old former school teacher dominated Canadian politics over the four years of his first term, but faced a grilling during the 40-day election campaign, which he described as one of the "dirtiest and nastiest" in Canadian history.

Trudeau and Scheer exchanged barbs as attack ads and misinformation multiplied.

Trudeau evoked the bogeymen of past and current Tory parties fostering "politics of fear and division" while Scheer called the prime minister a "compulsive liar," a phony and a fraud.

Going into the election Trudeau's golden boy image had already been damaged by ethics lapses in the handling of the bribery prosecution of engineering giant SNC-Lavalin.



Liberal leader Justin Trudeau celebrates with his wife, Sophie Gregoire Trudeau, after winning a minority government at the election night headquarters Tuesday in Montreal. AP

His popularity took a further hit with the emergence during the campaign of old photographs of him in blackface makeup.

At one rally, the prime minister was forced to wear a bulletproof vest due to a security threat.

"Trudeau has really lost his halo. It's pretty tarnished,"

commented Lois Welsh, 77, in Regina, disappointed over the Liberal win.

Outside polling stations, Canadians told AFP they had wished for a more positive campaign focused on issues.

"I deplored the cheap shots during the campaign. I think we're better than that," said Andree Legault in Montreal.

In his concession speech, Scheer said, "Canadians have passed judgement on (Trudeau's) Liberal government," noting that the Liberals shed more than 20 seats as well as "support in every region of the country."

"Canada is a country that is further divided," he said, warning that its oil sector, the fourth largest in the world but struggling with low prices and a lack of pipeline capacity, is "under attack."

"We have put him on notice, his leadership is damaged and his government will end soon and when that time comes, the Conservatives will be ready and we will win!"

Some 27.4 million Canadians were eligible to vote in the election, and the turnout was reported to have been large, at almost 65 per cent.

A record 97 women were elected to parliament, including Canada's first indigenous attorney general, Jody Wilson-Raybould, who ran as an independent candidate after Trudeau kicked her out of his caucus.

The night also saw Conservative deputy leader Lisa Raitt turf and Liberal

Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale lose the seat he held for 26 years.

Scheer, only two years after winning the leadership of his party, struggled to win over Canadians with his bland mini-van-driving dad persona and a throwback to the thrifty policies of past Tory administrations.

Social democrats and resuscitated Quebec separatists also chipped away at Liberal support.

The Bloc Quebecois came back from a ruinous 2015 election result, tapping into lingering Quebec nationalism to take 32 seats, while the New Democratic Party (NDP) won 24 seats, according to projections.

NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, a leftist former criminal defense lawyer, is the first non-white leader of a federal political party in Canada, and will likely emerge as kingmaker.

Michel Mercier in Montreal said he voted for the Liberals, but only to keep the Tories at bay.

"I would have voted NDP but I didn't want to see the Conservatives in power," he told AFP.

US diplomat drawn into Trump's Ukraine effort set to testify

AP ■ KYIV (UKRAINE)

William Taylor has emerged as an unlikely central player in the events that are at the heart of the impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump.

The retired career civil servant was tapped to run the US Embassy in Ukraine after the administration abruptly ousted the ambassador. He was then drawn into a Trump administration effort to leverage US military aid for Ukraine.

And then he apparently grew alarmed.

"I think it's crazy to withhold security assistance for help with a political campaign," he wrote at one point in excerpts of text messages released by impeachment investigators in Congress.

Now, members of Congress will hear directly from Taylor. The former Army officer is scheduled to testify behind closed doors Tuesday in an inquiry trying to determine if Trump committed impeachable offenses by pressing the president of Ukraine into pursuing information that could help his campaign as Trump withheld military aid to the

Eastern European country.

Taylor had been serving as executive vice president at the US Institute of Peace, a non-partisan think tank founded by Congress, when he was appointed to run the embassy in Kyiv after Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch was removed before the end of her term following a campaign against her led by Trump's personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani.

He was chosen for the post because he was among only a handful of former officials with experience in Ukraine who would be perceived as neutral by local officials and wouldn't raise objections at the White House, according to a colleague.

"It was a very short list, but Bill was at the top of it," said the colleague, who was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. "We were very grateful he agreed to do it." Taylor, who had served as U.S. ambassador to Ukraine from 2006 to 2009, was welcomed back to Kyiv as a steady hand.

"He's the epitome of a seasoned statesman," said John Shmorchun, an American who heads the agricultural compa-

ny AgroGeneration.

He said Taylor's experience has shown in his handling of the Trump administration's efforts to pressure Ukraine. "He seems to know the difference between right and wrong," Shmorchun said.

"We need guys like Bill Taylor working in Ukraine, helping to deal with the politics in Ukraine, having a strong arm."

Before retiring from government service, Taylor was involved in diplomatic efforts surrounding several major international conflicts. He served in Jerusalem as U.S. envoy to the Quartet of Mideast peacemakers.

He oversaw reconstruction in Iraq from 2004 to 2005, and from Kabul coordinated US and international assistance to Afghanistan from 2002 to 2003.

He is a graduate of West Point and served as an Army infantry platoon leader and combat company commander in Vietnam and Germany.

He arrived in Kyiv a month after the sudden departure of Yovanovitch and the inauguration of Ukraine's new president, prepared to steer the embassy through the tran-

sition. He was most likely not prepared for what happened next.

In July, Trump would have his now-famous phone conversation with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in which he pressed him to investigate unsubstantiated claims about Democratic rival Joe Biden and a debunked conspiracy theory involving a computer server at the Democratic National Committee. Trump at the time had quietly put a hold on nearly \$400 million in military aid that Ukraine was counting on in its fight against Russian-backed separatists.

In the follow-up to the call, Taylor exchanged texts with two of Trump's point men on Ukraine as they were trying to get Zelenskyy to commit to the investigations before setting a date for a coveted White House visit.

In a text message to Gordon Sondland on Sept. 1, Taylor bluntly questioned Trump's motives: "Are we now saying that security assistance and WH meeting are conditioned on investigations?" Sondland, US ambassador to the European Union, told him to call him.

Nawaz Sharif hospitalised as health worsens

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Nawaz Sharif has hospitalised after his health condition deteriorated in the anti-graft body's detention centre due to critically low platelet count.

Sharif, 69, has been serving a seven-year prison term since December 24, 2018 when the accountability court convicted him in the Al-Azizia Steel Mills case — one of the three corruption cases filed in the wake of the apex court's July 28, 2017 order in the Panama Papers scandal. The three-time prime minister was hospitalised on Monday night.

"Former premier Nawaz Sharif is detected to have critically low platelet count (16*10^9/L) that could be due to multiple pathologies and requires immediate in-hospital care," Sharif's personal physician Dr Adnan Khan said in a tweet on Monday.

"I have requested the authorities concerned to act in urgency," Khan said.

Khan said he met Sharif at

the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) cell in Lahore and found him visibly unwell.

"He has multiple serious life-threatening health issues of acute nature. The matter is of utmost urgency and he should be hospitalised," he said.

A NAB spokesman said Sharif has been shifted to the Services Hospital where he is being treated by a team of doctors.

PML-N president and Nawaz Sharif's brother Shahbaz Sharif alleged that despite the worsening health of his older brother, he was not shifted to hospital earlier.

He said Prime Minister Imran Khan will be responsible if anything happens to Nawaz Sharif.

Doctors said the former prime minister required aggressive medication and "regular medical follow-ups" to avoid health complications.

The ousted prime minister is in the NAB's custody for his alleged role in Chaudhary Sugar Mills corruption case. Earlier he was lodged at the Kot Lakhpat jail.

Netanyahu again fails to form govt in Israel

PTI ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has failed to form a government following an inconclusive repeat parliamentary election last month, opening the door for his main rival Benny Gantz to get a chance to become the country's next leader.

President Reuven Rivlin said he would give Gantz, the former army chief, the mandate to try to become the prime minister after Netanyahu failed to muster the support of 61 members in a 120 member Knesset (parliament).

Netanyahu, who was first tasked with forming the next government by Rivlin in virtue of support of 55 members compared to Gantz's 54, announced on Monday evening, immediately after the end of Succot holidays, that he cannot cobble a government together and was returning the mandate.

The Prime Minister made the announcement two days before the end of 28 days deadline given to present a coalition.

Netanyahu, 70, broke the news of returning the mandate to Rivlin in a video message published on his official Facebook page.

"Ever since receiving the mandate [to form a government] I have worked relentlessly ... to establish a broad national unity government. This is what the people want," the premier said.

However, my efforts to "bring Gantz to the negotiation table ... and prevent another election" have failed as the Kahol Lavan (Gantz's Blue and White party) leader "refused time after time".

Gantz, 60, responded to the announcement on Twitter saying, "It's Kahol Lavan time."

Kahol Lavan's co-leader, Yair Lapid, a former journalist, responded saying, "Bibi (Netanyahu's nickname) failed once more. It's a serial thing".

"The time for spins is over, now is the time for actions. Kahol Lavan is determined to form a liberal national unity government headed by Benny Gantz, for which the people voted last month," a statement by the party said.

With a fractured mandate expected again in the repeat polls, Rivlin on the day of the polls had made a statement saying that he would explore all possible options to prevent a third poll. Gantz will have 28 days to try to form a coalition.

If the bloc led by him also fails to win the support of at

least 61 members, the president will return the mandate to the parliament and any lawmaker backed by a majority number of members in the Knesset would be the next one to have a go at forming a coalition.

If no lawmaker is able to form a government within 21 days after the President returns the mandate to the parliament, Israel will see a third round of polls within a year. The first round of polls were held on April 9 following which Netanyahu could muster the support of only 60 members, failing to form the government by a razor thin margin.

Gantz's Kahol Lavan won 33 seats, followed by Netanyahu's Likud party with 32 in the September 17 repeat polls.

Netanyahu, with the backing of right-wing parties, Shas with eight seats, United Torah Judaism, with seven seats and Yamina with seven seats had the backing of 55 members to form the government.

In consultations with Rivlin ahead of nominating Netanyahu, the Arab parties alliance, the Joint List, which won 13 Knesset seats, in a rare move backed Gantz. Three of the Arab lawmakers however pulled back their support to the Kahol Lavan leader which could otherwise have given Gantz support of 57 members, compared to Netanyahu's 55. Yisrael Beiteinu, led by former Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman, won eight seats and has so far backed nobody for the premiership is emerging as the kingmaker in the polls.

Netanyahu said that Gantz and his potential coalition partners "are only talking about unity". "In effect, they're doing the exact opposite, encouraging sectarianism" by refusing to accept a government with ultra-Orthodox parties (Shas and United Torah Judaism), he added.

The Prime Minister then argued that Gantz has worked in full coordination with Joint List lawmakers, "who glorify terrorism [and] deny Israel's existence," to form "a minority left-wing government".

If such a government comes into being, "I will head to opposition and work with my friends to take it down", Netanyahu stressed.

Gantz now intends to hold consultations with all party leaders, including Netanyahu, in an attempt to form a broad unity government.



Emperor Naruhito delivers his speech during the enthronement ceremony where the emperor officially proclaims his ascension to the Chrysanthemum Throne at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo on Tuesday AP

Japan's emperor completes enthronement

AFP ■ TOKYO

Japan's Emperor Naruhito completed his ascension to the Chrysanthemum throne on Tuesday in a ceremony steeped in the traditions and grandeur of a monarchy that claims 2,000 years of history.

The rituals cemented a transition that began with his father's abdication earlier this year, and drew royalty and political leaders from around the world.

A public parade for the event was postponed after a deadly typhoon, but the government went ahead with the granting of pardons for more than half a million people convicted of minor offences including traffic violations.

The main event took place in the Imperial Palace's Pine Room, where royal attendants drew back purple curtains hanging from two heavily adorned structures housing the imperial thrones, revealing the emperor and empress standing inside.

"I hereby declare my enthronement at home and abroad," Naruhito said, dressed in a voluminous draped robe topped with a copper overcoat.

Empress Masako, a Harvard-educated former diplomat, stood silently before her throne in a similar, smaller structure, wearing a multi-layered kimono and a highly stylised hairpiece.

Naruhito pledged to "pray for the happiness of Japanese

people and world peace" and "fulfil my duty as the symbol of Japan and of the unity of the people of Japan."

Standing before him, flanked by royal family members also wearing heavily decorated traditional robes, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe promised the people of Japan would "respect your highness the emperor as the symbol of the state and of the unity of the Japanese people."

He then raised his hands three times, shouting "Banzai!" or "Long live the emperor!"

The solemn ceremony was conducted almost entirely in silence, with royal family members gliding wordlessly into the room and standing throughout.

Only the sounds of a gong

and drum signalled the stages of the ritual, with a low, loud beat indicating to guests representing around 180 countries and institutions that it was time to stand and hear the proclamation. And it was over almost as soon as it had begun, with attendants closing the purple curtains and the royals quietly moving out of the room. Outside, a small crowd of well-wishers gathered despite driving rain that forced the palace to move some of the guests inside.

They watched the ceremony on their phones outside and listened as a gun salute was sounded when it was complete.

"I feel as a Japanese person that this is such a historic moment," said Kyoko Tanaka,

51.

"I want the royal couple to be a good example for Japanese people, like their predecessors were," she added.

Others too said they had felt compelled to come to the palace, despite the parade being postponed until November 10.

"I know we can't see the ceremony, but I wanted to feel the atmosphere in front of the palace," Shoko Koeda said, watching the proceedings on her phone. "This is a historic moment. I feel special."

The Japanese royal family commands relatively broad support, although polls suggest the younger generation is less interested in the monarchy.

A poll released by national broadcaster NHK on the eve

of the ceremony found 70 per cent of voters in the country hold "friendly or favourable" views towards the imperial family. But despite the support, the monarchy that is sometimes described as the world's oldest faces other concerns, particularly succession.

Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako have one child, a 17-year-old daughter named Aiko. But imperial rules allow only a man to ascend the throne, and royal women lose their titles if they marry a commoner.

With Naruhito's ascension, his brother Akishino is now crown prince. And Akishino's son — 13-year-old Hisahito — is currently the only other remaining successor.

US concerned over racial abuse, religious discrimination in Pak

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Describing shrinking space for civil society and media freedom in Pakistan as "troubling," the US has said it remains "deeply concerned" over reports of human rights abuses and discrimination faced by people in the country because of their faith.

It urged the Pakistani government to uphold the rule of law and the freedoms enshrined in the country's Constitution.

Acting Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Alice G Wells in a prepared statement to Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and Nonproliferation of the House Foreign Affairs Committee hoped that the

reforms Pakistan is undertaking under its current IMF plan will lay the foundation for better economic management and growth, leading to an improvement in the democratic system and human rights situation.

"In recent years, we have observed some troubling trends within Pakistan, including shrinking space for civil society and media freedom. Pressure on the media and civil society — including harassment, threats, and financial and regulatory action, has increased over the past year," she said in a prepared statement submitted to the Congressional subcommittee on the eve of the hearing "Human Rights in South Asia: Views from the State Department and

the Region". The US, Wells said, continues to urge the Pakistani government to uphold the rule of law.

This includes the right of groups that criticise the leadership and security establishment, like the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement, to peacefully assemble, she added. "We are concerned with Pakistan's problematic registration policy for international non-governmental organisations, as it impedes the ability of reputable and well-respected organisations to do important work that benefits the people of Pakistan," Wells said on Monday.

The US State Department engages regularly with provincial and federal authorities, as well as

with other affected stakeholders, including civil society organisations, politicians, activists, religious leaders, and journalists, to convey this message and to support those working to improve the lives of the Pakistani people, she said. "We remain deeply concerned about reports of human rights abuses and discrimination faced by Pakistanis because of their faith," Wells said. In many cases, she said, these abuses are perpetrated by non-state actors.

Pakistan has taken steps to counter many of the country's most virulent terrorist organisations posing a direct threat to the state, such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, she said.

Wells said Pakistan's Supreme Court also took an important step in January 2019 by upholding its own October 2018 acquittal of Asia Bibi on blasphemy charges, which subsequently enabled her safe departure from the country.

The court's verdict emphasised the necessity of inter-faith tolerance and not "curtailing the rights" of members of religious minority groups, both of which are critical to improving religious freedom in Pakistan, she said.

Despite strong opposition to the verdict from some headline elements in the country, the Pakistani government largely stood up to defend the court's decision. As Prime Minister Imran Khan stated, the Asia

Bibi verdict was decided "according to Pakistan's constitution," Wells said.

Nevertheless, she said, Pakistan's laws and policies continue to discriminate against members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community.

Its continued enforcement of blasphemy laws, which has resulted in dozens of Pakistanis on death row or serving life sentences in prison, as well as incidents of mob violence following blasphemy allegations, remain deeply troubling, she added.

"The overall situation prompted Secretary Pompeo to designate Pakistan a Country of Particular Concern under the International Religious Freedom Act in 2018," Wells said.

Sharif's son-in-law held in hate speech case

Lahore (PTI): Pakistan's former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's son-in-law Capt (ret'd) Mohammad Safdar has been arrested for allegedly passing comments against the Army chief and the judges of the apex court. The Lahore Police, in a statement, said Safdar was arrested late Monday night near the Ravi Toll Plaza.

Police said he was wanted in a case of hate speech he made against the state institutions on October 13. "An FIR has been registered against Safdar at police station Sadar Road Lahore for making hate speech against the army and the judiciary," they said.

Section 124-A of the Pakistan Penal Code has also been included in the FIR under which a suspect can be handed down a life imprisonment.

Capt (Ret'd) Safdar during his court appearance on October 13 targeted Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa. He alleged that the Imran Khan's government was installed only to secure "extension" and "promotions".

UK’s Johnson prepares push to heave Brexit bill over line

AP ■ LONDON

British lawmakers from across the political spectrum are expected to challenge Prime Minister Boris Johnson's drive to push his European Union divorce bill through the House of Commons in three days, potentially scuttling plans to deliver Brexit by Oct. 31.

The bill faces two votes Tuesday, with lawmakers first being asked to approve it in principle, followed by a vote on the government's schedule for debate and possible amendments.

While many analysts expect the bill to be approved, lawmakers may reject the three-day timetable because of

concerns it doesn't provide enough time for scrutiny.

"Unless you are prepared to contemplate more expansive debate, there is not the slightest possibility of considering the deal that has been obtained within the time available," Ken Clarke, a senior lawmaker recently ousted from Johnson's Conservative Party, told the Guardian newspaper.

The showdown comes just nine days before Britain's scheduled departure date. Johnson's government had sought a "straight up-and-down vote" Monday on the agreement he struck last week with the 27 other EU nations laying out the terms of Britain's exit.

But the speaker of the

House of Commons, John Bercow, refused to allow it because lawmakers voted to delay approving the Brexit deal on Saturday, and parliamentary rules bar the same measure from being considered a second time during a session of Parliament unless something has changed.

Bercow's ruling plunged the tortuous Brexit process back into grimly familiar territory. The government must now try to implement its Plan B — attempt to pass a Brexit-implementing bill through Britain's fractious Parliament before the country's scheduled Oct. 31 departure date.

Opposition lawmakers plan to seek amendments that could substantially alter the bill,

for example by adding a requirement that the Brexit deal be put to voters in a new referendum. The government says such an amendment would wreck its legislation and it will withdraw the bill if the opposition plan succeeds.

European Council President Donald Tusk said EU leaders "will decide in coming days" whether to grant Britain another extension to the deadline for leaving the bloc, but said their decision depends on developments in London.

Tusk said Tuesday that the decision on prolonging Brexit for three months after Oct. 31. "will very much depend on what the British parliament decides or doesn't decide."

Taliban storm Afghan police checkpoint, kill 15

AP ■ KABUL

The Taliban stormed a checkpoint in northern Afghanistan, killing at least 15 policemen in the latest attack by insurgents, an Afghan provincial official said Tuesday.

The multi-pronged attack on the checkpoint in the Ali Abad district of northern Kunduz province began late on Monday night and set off an hours-long gunbattle, according to Ghulam Rabani Rabani, a provincial council member. Along with the 15 policemen killed, two other officers were wounded in the assault, he said. The attack came as Afghan troops have been battling the Taliban for the past few weeks in Kunduz's

Dashti Archi and Imam Sahib districts, Rabani added. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed responsibility for the checkpoint attack. The Taliban have a strong presence in Kunduz and are in control in several of the province's districts.

The provincial capital, the city of Kunduz, briefly fell to the Taliban in 2015, before the insurgents withdrew in the face of a NATO-backed Afghan offensive. The city is a strategic crossroads with easy access to much of northern Afghanistan as well as the country's capital, Kabul, about 200 miles (335 kilometers) away.

The Taliban pushed back into the city center again a year later, briefly raising their flag

before gradually being driven out again. The last time, the insurgents launched another attempt to overrun the city in August but were repelled.

The Taliban now control nearly half of Afghanistan and have been relentless in their near-daily attacks targeting Afghan security forces, attacks that inflict heavy casualties. The fighting has also killed scores of civilians.

President Donald Trump, since his 2016 presidential campaign, has spoken of a need to withdraw US troops from the "endless war" in Afghanistan. He has complained that the US has been serving as policemen in Afghanistan and says that's not the American military's job.

The US has about 14,000 American troops in Afghanistan as part of the American-led coalition. US forces are training and advising Afghan forces and conducting counterterrorism operations against extremists. Trump had ordered a troop withdrawal in conjunction with the peace talks that would have left about 8,600 American forces in the country. Last month, US envoy Zalmay Khalilzad had a preliminary peace deal with the Taliban, but a surge in Taliban violence and the death of an American soldier prompted Trump to cancel a secret Camp David meeting where the peace deal would have been finalized and declare the tentative agreement dead.

Lanka polls: TNA yet to decide on supporting presidential hopefuls

PTI ■ COLOMBO

The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) has said that it is yet to decide on which party to support in the upcoming Sri Lankan presidential polls, as the key contenders eye crucial Tamil votes.

The contest to replace Maithripala Sirisena as Sri Lankan president has intensified with the two main contestants — ruling United National Party (UNP) leader Sajith Premadasa and former defence chief and SLPP candidate Gotabhaya Rajapaksa — intensifying their poll campaigns.

Both the contenders are wooing the minority Tamil voters as they constitute around 10 per cent of the population and their votes are crucial for the final outcome of the election results.

Talking to a group of reporters on Monday, senior TNA leader Mavai Senathirajah

said the party is yet to decide on which presidential hopeful it would extend its support to.

However, he said, the decision would be known before the scheduled date to cast postal ballots.

"There is a large number of state officials from the north and east who are eligible to vote by post. The TNA decision would be conveyed before that," Senathirajah said.

Postal voting are meant for officials on election duty. The voting will be held on November 1, 3 and 4.

He said the TNA and four other Tamil parties would meet UNP leader and Democratic National Front candidate Premadasa this week.

The five parties along with Tamil Students Union have submitted a 13-point demand for presidential candidates.

The demands include merger of the Tamil-dominated north and east provinces.

These demands, political analysts say, are being seen as Tamil headline by the Sinhala majority community. Any party accepting them would naturally make them lose support from the 74 per cent Sinhala majority in the island nation, they said.

The Sri Lanka People's party (SLPP) has already outrightly rejected the demands.

The Rajapaksa camp relies solely on the support from the Sinhala majority. Yet to garner 50 per cent plus one vote for victory they too have to rely on a sizeable minority voter support.

Meanwhile, the Premadasa camp says they are confident of getting a larger support from the minority communities, including the Tamils and the Muslims, in a repeat of the 2015 result when incumbent Sirisena was elected with minority votes, despite his rival Mahinda Rajapaksa winning the larger

Sinhala majority vote.

The 12 per cent Tamil community who voted against Rajapaksa in 2015 says they have seen little dividend for their support. Although some symbolic measures were put in place they remain largely unhappy. The nine per cent Muslim minority claimed harassment since the Easter Sunday bombings carried out by Islamist extremists that killed 258 people.

An anti-Muslim riot in early May has forced a section of the community to be disgruntled with the current government. As many as 35 candidates are in the fray for the presidential polls in which over 15 million people are eligible to vote to elect the next president for a five-year term.

The large number of candidates in the fray have necessitated the longest ballot paper ever in the island's electoral history, election officials said.

PTI ■ LAHORE

UN designated terrorist and Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed is running the affairs of his banned Jamaat-ud Dawah (JuD) group from Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail, where he recently played the role of an arbitrator in a high-profile case between the police and the family of a suspected ATM thief who died in police custody.

Salahuddin Ayubi, who was mentally challenged, died in police custody last month due to alleged torture after his arrest on charges of stealing money from an ATM. His death sparked outrage across the country.

Saeed, who has been in the high security jail since his arrest on July 17 on charges of terror financing, last week met the deceased man's family and convinced them to pardon the policemen involved in Ayubi's

murder for the sake of Allah.

The Lashkar-e-Taiba founder also received assurance by the authorities of construction of a carpeted road and supply of gas to the village of the victim's family in Gujranwala at an accumulative cost of Rs 800 million to settle the dispute.

"Since some members of the family of Ayubi were the followers of Saeed, police arranged their 'special meeting' with him in jail. After listening to both sides, Saeed gave the victim's family three options - receive blood money from the accused policemen or pardon them in the name of Allah or pursue legal case against them. The family chose to pardon the policemen," a government official told PTI on Tuesday.

When the PTI contacted Ayubi's father Afzaal Ghumman, he confirmed that he and other family members pardoned the accused policemen on the 'wish' of the JuD chief.

"When we visited him (Saeed) in the jail last week, he gave us three choices. He said pardoning someone in the name of Allah is far superior act. So we chose to pardon the suspects," Ghumman said.

A Station House Officer, an inspector and some constables named in the case are currently on an interim bail.

The media focus on the case had forced the government to remove top police officers. The Chief Justice of Lahore High Court had ordered formation of a judicial commission to probe the matter.

The source also said that Saeed directed the Punjab government to establish a school, lay a gas network in their (victim's family) village Goral, Gujranwala, some 80-km from Lahore, and rebuild a link road in return for the pardon.

"Interestingly, after Saeed's mediation, Punjab Governor Chaudhry Sarwar visited their village and assured provision of these facilities there at the earliest," he said.

The source further said this is perhaps one of the unique cases in the history of the country where a suspect facing terror financing charges settling the court matters of other suspects. "This shows how powerful this man (Saeed) is," he said.

In 2016, the government had launched a probe against the JuD for running a parallel judicial system in Punjab province.

The group was accused of settling matters among the people at its headquarters in Lahore, running a parallel judicial system.

The investigation, however, hit the snag and no legal action has been taken against any member of the JuD.

Restrictions on Tibetan Buddhists increased in Nepal: US

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Nepal's government has increased restrictions on the Tibetan Buddhist community amidst growing Chinese influence in the country, a top US official said.

Acting Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Alice Wells told the Subcommittee on Asia, Pacific, and Nonproliferation of the House Foreign Affairs Committee that Nepal's constitution and international commitments guarantee the right to practice and profess one's faith, but religious freedom remains a challenge in practice.

A new criminal code enacted in 2018 restricts "forced conversion" and puts

members of religious minority groups a risk, she added.

"The government has also increased restrictions on the Tibetan Buddhist community, including preventing public celebration of the Dalai Lama's birthday. As Chinese influence has grown in Nepal, so has the Government of Nepal's restrictions on the Tibetan community," Wells said.

China, which regards the Dalai Lama as a separatist, has been increasing its influence in the Himalayan nation that is home to about 20,000 Tibetans.

China is also making inroads in the country by pouring aid and infrastructure investment.

In Nepal, Wells said the US is working with the government to advance its transition

to federalism by building the capacity of the national and local governments to become more transparent and accountable. "We emphasize that protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms is conducive to the development of Nepal and its people in engagements with government officials, civil society, and the public," she said.

She described Bhutan as a democratic success story in South Asia.

"Bhutan is a democratic success story in South Asia. Last year, Bhutan conducted its third democratic election since the Fourth King of Bhutan abdicated absolute power and paved the way for parliamentary elections in 2008," she said.

Prez Kovind meets Nepal counterpart in Japan; discusses bilateral issues

Tokyo (PTI): President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday met his Nepalese counterpart Bidya Devi Bhandari here and discussed several issues of mutual interest and bilateral cooperation. Kovind is here to attend the enthronement ceremony of Japan's Emperor Naruhito. The official Twitter account of the Rashtrapati Bhavan said that Kovind, who is the first Indian president to visit Japan in 29 years, held talks with Nepal's President Bhandari. "President Kovind met the President of Nepal, Bidya Devi Bhandari, in Tokyo, Japan. The two leaders discussed several issues of mutual interest and bilateral cooperation between India and Nepal," it said in the tweet.

Prez Kovind invites diaspora in Japan to be part of India's growth story

PTI ■ TOKYO

President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday invited the diaspora in Japan to be part of India's growth story and complement the already strong bilateral strategic partnership.

Addressing the Indian diaspora at a reception hosted by India's Ambassador to Japan Sanjay Kumar Verma, President Kovind said India is on a transformational path.

The President, who attended the enthronement ceremony of Japan's Emperor Naruhito, said that India's cultural relations with Japan are deep and historic.

"We share spiritual and religious connections from Buddhism to Hinduism and more. Our strategic, political,

security and economic collaboration has assumed a new high," he said.

Japan is a lead partner for India in transforming its economy.

"Our economy is growing at a fast rate. We are creating new infrastructure apace. We are making efforts to lead the world on digital economy, on new technologies, on climate change action and on fashioning the contours of the knowledge society," he said.

Inviting the non-resident Indians, Kovind said India offers immense opportunities for the community to participate in its progress and prosperity.

He said India seeks their support and commitment "to create an India of our vision



and dream, an India that promises to light millions of homes with progress and prosperity; an India that cares for one and for all".

Japan's participation in the high-speed rail project from Mumbai to Ahmedabad is a symbol of the two countries deep mutual trust and friendship.

"To deepen our technology collaboration, we have established the India-Japan Digital Partnership," Kovind added.

The president arrived here on Monday after concluding his five-day state visit to the Philippines.

India and Japan shared robust ties with cooperation in areas of defence, science and cooperation and trade.

In 2014, India and Japan upgraded their relationship to 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership' and prime ministers of the two countries hold an annual summit.

South Korea's Moon ups defence spending, urges North to talk

AFF ■ SEOUL

South Korea's President Moon Jae-in said Seoul would increase military spending and urged the North to return to dialogue in a budget speech Tuesday that could infuriate Pyongyang with nuclear talks gridlocked.

Contact between North and South Korea stalled after the collapse of a February summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump in Hanoi.

Since then Pyongyang has exacerbated its neighbour over joint military drills with the US, and the acquisition of American fighter jets.

It is a far cry from the cross-border warmth of last year, when Moon seized on the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics to broker the North-South discussion process and held three summits himself with Kim.

South Korea will increase defence spending by seven percent to more than 50 trillion won (USD 42 billion) next year, Moon told parliament, emphasising that "strong defence" was crucial for "self-determination".

"We will strengthen the core defence system by boosting assets such as next-generation submarines and surveillance satellites."

The announcement came after North Korea this month tested what it said was a submarine-launched ballistic missile that marked a "new phase" in its capabilities — the most provocative in a series of weapons tests it resumed after an 18-month hiatus.

North Korea is under multiple sets of UN sanctions over its nuclear and missile programmes.

Pyongyang and Washington restarted working-level talks in Sweden this month only for them to quickly break down, with the North blaming the US for not giving up its "old attitude" and setting the end of this year as deadline for Washington to change its stance.

It has also said it has nothing more to talk about with Seoul, and condemned joint South Korea-US drills and the deployment of F-35A fighter jets in the South as rehearsals for invasion and violations of Seoul-Pyongyang agreements.

Bolivia braces for strike after vote chaos

AFF ■ LA PAZ

Bolivia braced for a general strike on Tuesday hours after violence broke out in several cities when the main opposition candidate rejected presidential election results that seemed set to hand a controversial victory to long-time incumbent Evo Morales.

Opposition supporters reacted with fury, torching electoral offices in the south-western cities of Sucre and Potosi, while rival supporters clashed in the capital La Paz.

Incidents were reported in cities across the South American country.

Carlos Mesa, who came a close second to Morales in Sunday's polls — forcing a run-off, according to preliminary results — denounced revised results released by election authorities as a "fraud."

"We are not going to recognize those results that are part of a shameful, consummated fraud, that is putting Bolivian society in a situation of unnecessary tension," said Mesa. International monitors

from the Organization of American States voiced "deep concern" at sudden changes to the election count to show Morales closing in on an outright victory in the first round.

Preliminary results released late Sunday showed neither Morales, 59, nor 66-year-old Mesa with a majority and "clearly indicated a second round," the OAS mission said.

The partial results put Morales in the lead with 45 percent of the votes, with Mesa on 38 percent, meaning Morales would have to contest a run-off

for the first time.

But results released late Monday, after a long and unexplained delay, showed Morales edging towards an outright victory with 95 percent of the votes counted.

Mesa, a former president of the country between 2001-2005, accused Morales of colluding with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) to tweak delayed results and avoid a run-off.

The call for a general strike was issued by Fernando Camacho, head of an influen-

tial civil society organization in Bolivia's biggest city, Santa Cruz, where transport and businesses were expected to shut down from noon.

"Tomorrow we start at 12:00 to block this country," Camacho told opposition demonstrators late Monday, before holding talks with leaders from other regions.

Long lines formed at gas stations amid fears of shortages.

Riot-police dispersed a crowd who tried to storm the electoral offices in the Andean city of Oruro, south of La Paz.

Clashes were also reported in Tarija in the south. Cochabamba in the center and Cobija in the north.

The United States' top diplomat for Latin America said the Electoral Tribunal was attempting "to subvert Bolivia's democracy by delaying the vote count and taking actions that undermine the credibility of Bolivia's elections."

"We call on the TSE to immediately act to restore credibility in the vote counting process," the official, Michael Kozak, said on Twitter.

Trash to treasure: Everest garbage given new lease of life

AFF ■ KATHMANDU

A group of tourists sip water at a five-star hotel in Kathmandu, unaware that the green glasses in their hands were once bottles discarded on Mount Everest — left by climbers eager to make their ascent.

In homes across the Nepali capital upcycled items, from pots to lamps, crafted from Everest waste products are slowly making their way as authorities and businesses look for fresh ways to tackle the damage caused by decades of

commercial mountaineering.

Tonnes of trash — including empty cans and gas canisters, bottles, plastic and discarded climbing gear — litter the mountain, which has been dubbed the "highest dumpster in the world."

"Waste doesn't need to be wasted," Nabin Bikash Maharjan of local recycling organisation Blue Waste to Value (BW2V) told AFP.

"We received a mix of materials from Everest — aluminium, glass, plastic, iron — much of which could be recycled," he explained, adding:

"We need to up-cycle and add value to them."

After heavy criticism for the condition of one of its greatest natural resources, Nepal's government and mountaineering groups this year organised a six-week clean-up.

Scaling almost 8,000 metres (26,300 feet) from base camp to the closest camp to the summit, a 14-strong team retrieved more than 10 tonnes of trash that was flown or driven to recycling centres in Kathmandu.

Workers there manually sorted the materials — each

type following a different path to rebirth: Iron was sent to rod manufacturing firms, shredded aluminium cans to utensil makers, and discarded bottles re-fashioned into household items. "Waste is a taboo in our society, considered as dirt," mused Ujen Wangmo Lepcha of Moware Designs, which upcycles rubbish into light fixtures and glasses.

"When they see these kind of products they are like 'wow', these things can be made and it is possible," she explained.

Their products are now used in upmarket hotels,

restaurants, and homes around the capital, and Lepcha says there is growing consumer interest in goods made from salvaged Everest scraps.

Aanchal Malla of Hotel Yak & Yeti, a luxury five-star hotel in Kathmandu, said opting for the upcycled goods was in-line with the hotel's move towards sustainable and environmentally friendly products.

"It is not just better for us and the environment but then it goes way bigger than that... it is encouragement of everyone who is trying to move into that

direction of making the globe into a better place, reducing all the waste," Malla said.

A new waste facility — called Sagarmatha Next after the Nepali name for Everest — is also being completed in Syangboche at an altitude of nearly 3,800 metres (12,400 feet), passed by trekkers and mountaineers on the way to the base camp.

It will process garbage, and collaborate with artists and innovators to make new products in a bid to tap into this burgeoning market for Everest 'products'.



Modric, Neymar miss out on Ballon D'Or shortlist

AFP ■ PARIS

While Megan Rapinoe is the leading candidate for the second ever women's Ballon D'Or, the holder of the men's award, Luka Modric, and the world's most expensive player Neymar missed out as France Football unveiled nominees in four categories on Monday.

Modric, fresh from guiding Croatia to a World Cup final, broke the 11-year Cristiano Ronaldo-Lionel Messi, who are both included, stranglehold on the men's award last year.

Paris Saint-Germain's Neymar, who cost the French club 222 million euros (\$247 million) in 2017, failed to make the 30-man shortlist after a year overshadowed by injury, suspension and controversy for both club and country.

Messi has just collected the FIFA Best award, as did Rapinoe, which split from the Ballon D'Or in 2016.

Rapinoe dominated the Women's World Cup, on and off the field, in the summer.

The 34-year-old Reign FC playmaker was joint top scorer and was voted player of the tournament as she led the United States to victory in France in July.

Last year, Norwegian Ada Hegerberg was the first women's winner.

The Lyon forward did not play in the World Cup but is among the 20 nominees as are stars who were present at the competition, such as Australia striker Sam Kerr, England's Lucy Bronze and France captain Amandine Henry.

Virgil Van Dijk, 28, who has had an impressive six months with Liverpool lifting the Champions League, could become a rare defensive winner of the men's award.

Fabio Cannavaro was the last defender to win in 2006, and only the fourth since the award began in 1956.

Another nominee, Kylian Mbappe, the top goal scorer in Ligue 1 last season, would represent a genuine change of the guard.

The Paris Saint-Germain striker is ineligible to defend his Kopa trophy for the best player under 21 last year as he celebrates his 21st birthday on December 20.

This year also sees the introduction of the Yashin trophy, named after the only goalkeeper to win the Ballon D'Or, Lev Yashin of the Soviet Union, to give that ignored minority a chance to get their hands on a prize of their own.

The award winners will be unveiled on December 2 during a ceremony in Paris after a voting process including journalists from 180 different countries.

SHORTLISTED MEN'S LIST

Sergio Agüero, Trent Alexander-Arnold, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, Alisson Becker, Karim Benzema, Kevin De Bruyne, Frenkie De Jong, Matthijs de Ligt, João Félix, Roberto Firmino, Antoine Griezmann, Eden Hazard, Kalidou Koulibaly, Robert Lewandowski, Hugo Lloris, Riyad Mahrez, Sadio Mané, Marquinhos, Kylian Mbappé, Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, Mohamed Salah, Bernardo Silva, Son Heung-Min, Raheem Sterling, Dusan Tadic, Marc-André ter Stegen, Donny van de Beek, Virgil van Dijk, Georginio Wijnaldum.

That was enough to send Arsenal crashing to just their second defeat of the season, ending an eight-game unbeaten run in all competitions.

The north Londoners sit fifth in the league after a powder-puff perfor-

SUPER 6

Barca seek sixth straight win at spirited Slavia

AFP ■ PRAGUE

Barcelona will be looking to extend their five-game winning streak when they take on Champions League underdogs Slavia Prague in the teams' first-ever encounter in Prague today.

Brushing aside political turmoil around them, Ernesto Valverde's men eased past Eibar 3-0 away on Saturday with goals from Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Antoine Griezmann.

Their fifth straight competitive win — including a 2-1 victory over Inter Milan in their last Champions League game — took them to the top of La Liga a point ahead of Real Madrid.

Last week the two giants agreed to postpone the Clasico, which would have been a showdown for the top league spot, from next Saturday to December because of the protests in Catalonia.

In a much calmer Prague, reigning Czech champions Slavia came back from a goal down to see off minnows Pribram 3-1 on Saturday to secure a six-point lead in the Czech top flight.

With two games played, Barcelona are second in the Champions League Group F with four points following the Milan win and a goalless draw with Dortmund who top the group on a goal difference.

Slavia sit at the bottom with a single point after holding Inter to a 1-1 draw in Milan and a subsequent 2-0 loss to Dortmund at home. Barcelona relished their attacking form after the Eibar clash, giving Slavia a cause for concern.

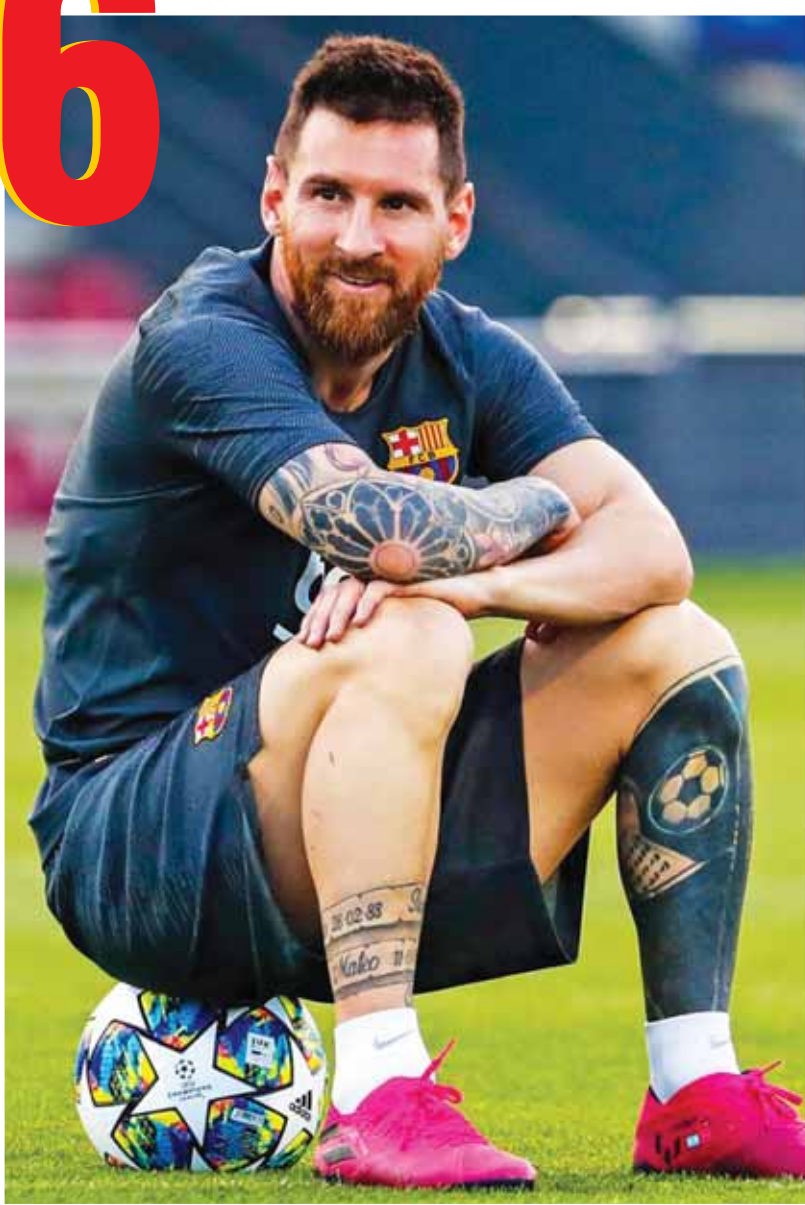
An underdog in today's clash, Slavia are building up confidence, betting on a physical style and tireless pressing promoted by coach Jindrich Tрпиšovský. Last season, they eliminated Sevilla from the Europa League before bowing out at the hands of Chelsea in the quarter-finals.

"We'll go to the pitch knowing we can succeed," said defensive midfielder Tomas Soucek, the Slavia captain.

"We want at least a point, we have proved we can face the giants and I believe we'll give them a hard time at home," added goalkeeper Ondrej Kolar.

The Czechs remember Barça's last match in Prague where they were hosted by Viktoria Pilsen in the Champions League in 2011. Barcelona won 4-0 as Messi scored a hat-trick.

"There are many players who can



Barcelona captain Lionel Messi watches his teammate train during practice session

FCB/Twitter

Slavia vs Barcelona Live from 12:30am IST SONY TEN 1 NETWORK

score, they all have a fantastic finish," said Kolar.

"We know how strong they are, particularly Messi, his left foot is exceptional and I think you can't really get ready for that," Soucek hailed Barça's "three unbelievable forwards" Suarez, Messi and Griezmann.

"It's funny to think that we'll swap the pennants with Messi and play against all these players," he said.

Barcelona, who took a day off Sunday before resuming training on Monday, will miss Sergi Roberto, who hurt his left knee at Eibar. Gerard Pique is likely to return to the team following a ban.

Genk is braced for a possible reaction today from Liverpool, whose winning

Premier League start ended at Old Trafford.

Liverpool opened its title defense with a 2-0 loss at Napoli and struggled before prevailing 4-3 over Salzburg.

Salzburg has tallied nine goals so far but the Austrian club faces a difficult challenge against Napoli, which is one of five teams yet to concede in the competition.

GROUP F

Inter Milan hosts Borussia Dortmund knowing it can't afford to fall further behind as three heavyweights are vying for two spots.

Antonio Conte's team already trails Barcelona and Dortmund by three points.

GROUP G

Leipzig hosts Zenit St Petersburg after seemingly forgetting how to win at home, where its last victory was against Eintracht Frankfurt in the Bundesliga on Aug. 25.

Lyon managed to win 2-0 in Leipzig despite its own crisis at home. Lyon hasn't won in eight games in the French league.

Lyon visits Benfica in the group's other game.

Reus misses Inter trip

Inter vs Dortmund
Live from 12:30am IST
SONY TEN 2 NETWORK

AFP ■ MILAN

Borussia Dortmund flew to Italy without captain Marco Reus and striker Paco Alcacer for today's match at Inter Milan, but previously suspended England winger Jadon Sancho and injured goalkeeper Roman Burki were included.

The Bundesliga club said the 30-year-old playmaker Reus missed Tuesday's flight because he is "still in poor health" after scoring the winner in Saturday's 1-0 victory over Bundesliga leaders Moenchengladbach despite suffering with flu.

Alcacer, who like Reus has scored five league goals so far this season, is also out due to the persistent calf injury which has sidelined him since September 28.

However, Sancho, 19, has been included after being dropped for Saturday's game after returning late from England duty.

Burki is also back after limping out of the second-half of the Gladbach win with a knee injury.

The Germans top Group F ahead of Barcelona on goal difference after holding the Spanish giants to a goalless draw in Dortmund in their opening game and then winning 2-0 at bottom side Slavia Prague.

Inter, third in the table, drew at home to Slavia and lost 2-1 to Barca a fortnight ago at the Camp Nou in their two previous games.

Conte's side bank on Belgian striker Romelu Lukaku, who got off the mark in his first league match against Lecce and has since scored five goals in eight Serie A games since departing Old Trafford under a cloud last summer.



Tammy Abraham (9) celebrates with Mason Mount after scoring

Chelsea/Twitter

Next-gen stars

Rising Chelsea players face acid test against youth kings Ajax

AFP ■ AMSTERDAM

Chelsea's young guns will test their run of form at one of the homes of youth development today as they attempt to stop an Ajax team on course to replicate last season's thrilling run.

The Blues are on a five-match winning streak in all-competitions after beating Newcastle United 1-0 at the weekend but come up against the Group H leaders in Amsterdam Ajax are averaging over three goals a game at home and abroad and are hungry for European success after semi-final heartache last season.

Fikayo Tomori, Ross Barkley, Mason Mount, Callum Hudson-Odoi and Tammy Abraham all started Saturday's win at Stamford Bridge, the first time since 2013 five English players made the London club's starting XI.

They second on three points in Group H after a wobbly opening two games in the Champions League, with a pair of matches coming up against on-fire Ajax that could decide their European destiny.

"These two games against Ajax are really big because they're such a strong team... The movement of the team and the way they play football will be a

Ajax vs Chelsea
Live from 10:25pm IST
SONY TEN 2 NETWORK

big test for us," coach Frank Lampard told the Chelsea website on Monday.

Ajax's remarkable form has led to rumours that coach Erik ten Hag is a potential Bayern Munich target, rumours that the 49-year-old refused to play down on Monday as Nico Kovac comes under fire in Germany.

Despite losing midfield dynamo Frenkie De Jong and defensive rock Matthijs de Ligt, they are top of the Eredivisie and unbeaten after scoring 31 times in their opening 10 games, three points ahead of PSV Eindhoven and Vitesse Arnhem.

In fact Erik ten Hag's side have hardly felt the effects of their departures, and are also top of Group H after beating both Lille and Valencia 3-0 with the same brand of thrilling football that captured Europe's imaginations last season.

However, although they reemerged as a European force thanks to their academy talent, their star turns this campaign are all outside discoveries, with Hakim Ziyech, David Neres and Dusan Tadic all in fine form and new signing Quincy Promes causing havoc from midfield.

LOCAL EVENTS

ARMAAN SHINES IN INDIAN OIL WIN

Armaan Qureshi struck thrice to help Indian Oil beat NCR, Allahabad 6-2 in the pool A match of the 39th All-India KD Singh 'Babu' Memorial Hockey Tournament at Mohd Shahid Stadium on Tuesday. Armaan scored in the 3rd, 35th and 47th minute while Gurjinder Singh scored a brace. Afan Yusuf also found the net in the 5th minute.

CRICKET TRIALS



125 girls took part in the trials organised by Cricket Association Lucknow at CSD Sahara Cricket Academy on Tuesday. As per selectors Ashok Bombi and Priyanka Shally the players would be divided into four teams and 30 players would be selected on the basis of the performances in the trial matches.

SPECIAL GAMES

The 5th special games 'Hausala' got off to a great start with MLC Yashwant Singh inaugurating the event.
RESULTS: Shotput throw (Boy's 12-15) - 1-Dev Tomar, 2-Alrankat Singh, 3-Iqbal Jakaria; **(Girl's 12-15)** 1-Palak, 2-Bhavya; **(Boy's 16-21)** 1-Abhay Singh, 2-Devansh Gupta, 3-Sandeep; **(Girl's 16-21)** 1-Malti, 2-Tanu, 3-Jyoti; **(Boy's 22-29)** 1-Sambhav Singh, 2-Manvendra Prakash, 3-Nishant.

COLVIN TALQUDAR'S ENTER SEMIS



Colvin Talqudar and LPC, Shara Estates won their respective matches to enter the semi-finals of the 11th Kunwar Munindra Singh Memorial Inter-School Cricket Tournament on Tuesday. Colvin Talqudar thrashed Ram Swaroop College by 110 runs while LPC edged past Jagran Public School by three wickets. Earlier, British Indian Association president Anand Singh inaugurated the tournament.

FAISAL EMERGES CHAMPION

Faisal Khan of Aligarh defeated Amir Khan of Rampur 98-32, 63-19, 23-63, 60-08 to win the junior title of Nawab Emad-ud-din Ashraf Memorial Prizemoney Uttar Pradesh State championship at Lucknow Golf Club on Monday. Earlier, Faisal had to put his best foot forward to get the better of Vinayak Singh of Prayagraj in the semi-finals.

Blades burst Arsenal bubble

AFP ■ SHEFFIELD

Unai Emery claimed Arsenal were unlucky to suffer a shock 1-0 defeat at Sheffield United as Lys Mousset condemned the Gunners to their latest away-day flop on Monday.

Emery's side are without an away Premier League win since the opening weekend of the season after failing to rise to the challenge posed by fired up United at Bramall Lane.

French forward Mousset, making his first Premier League start for United, punished poor Arsenal defending in the first half to score his second goal since signing from Bournemouth.

That was enough to send Arsenal crashing to just their second defeat of the season, ending an eight-game unbeaten run in all competitions.

The north Londoners sit fifth in the league after a powder-puff perfor-



Chris Wilder congratulates his boys after end of Premier League match against Arsenal

mance that showed Emery's rebuilding job is still a work in progress.

But Emery insisted Arsenal deserved at least a draw and criticised the failure to give a penalty for a foul on Sokratis.

"We didn't deserve to lose. We can speak about two key moments, one is the goal and the other is a clear penalty with Sokratis. With VAR, the foul should have been reviewed, but we have to accept it," Emery said after Arsenal's winless run in the city of Sheffield extended to 26 years.

"We had more chances than them. If we scored one goal then we could have controlled better."

Under Emery, Arsenal have kept just two clean sheets in 24 away league matches and once again they wilted too easily in a hostile environment.

This was a signature win for the Blades after last season's promotion and they sit proudly in ninth place, just three points behind Arsenal.

Ganguly set to take over as 39th BCCI president

PTI ■ MUMBAI

One of India's most decorated captains Sourav Ganguly will be taking over as the 39th president of the BCCI today at its Annual General Meeting (AGM), ending a tumultuous 33-month reign of the Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA).

Ganguly is the unanimous nomination for the post of BCCI president along with Union Home Minister Amit Shah's son Jay as the secretary, Mahim Verma of Uttarakhand is the new vice-president.

Former BCCI president and current MoS finance Anurag Thakur's younger brother Arun Dhimal's Jayesh George is the joint secretary.

However Ganguly will have a curtailed tenure of around nine months as he would need to demit office by the end of July, next year as per the provisions of new constitutions, which makes 'Cooling Off' period



Sourav Ganguly poses for photographs with N Srinivasan as he arrives to file nomination for the post of BCCI president at the board headquarters

mandatory after six years in office.

Easily one of the most high profile names to assume office, Ganguly will make use of his experience gained as the secretary and later president of Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB), which will come in handy.

He has set a few goals — primary being restructuring of first-class cricket as well as getting the administration back in shape along with getting India's position of reverence back in the corridors of International Cricket Council.

With Conflict of Interest rules being an impediment, Ganguly will also face the challenge of having quality cricketers on board as far as the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) and national selection committee are concerned.

The 10-month is a short period and it also needs to be seen how the former India captain handles the disqualified old guards like N Srinivasan and

It was nothing personal: Edulji on differences with Vinod Rai

MUMBAI: COA member Diana Edulji on Tuesday said there were serious differences with the Vinod Rai-led panel like there would be in a democratic organisation but there was nothing personal in any of their public showdowns.

COA, which ran Indian cricket for 33 months, will demit office today.

"It was a good experience and a long journey, didn't think that the journey would last so long, but I am happy

Niranjan Shah, whose children are now officially part of the BCCI. Ganguly's relation with IPL chairman Brijesh Patel, a Srinivasan loyalist will also be of interest.

Last but certainly not the least, his take on cricketing

with the end result that elections and office-bearers are coming back and BCCI will be run by them now," Edulji, a former India captain, told reporters here after the final COA meeting.

Edulji and former CAG Rai often disagreed publicly on key issues, most notably over the appointment of national coaches, both men and women.

However, Edulji said she had no regrets.

PTI

policies — Mahendra Singh Dhoni's international future, Day/Night Test cricket, permanent Test centres will also be discussed.

For CoA, it was an eventful 33-month tenure that comes to an end.

One Plus One Equals 11

India complete 3-0 clean sweep formalities in two overs & win consecutive 11th series at home under Kohli

PTI ■ RANCHI

A formidable Indian team ticked all the boxes with ease as it completed a 3-0 rout of an out-of-sorts South Africa with an innings and 202 runs victory in the third and final Test at Jharkhand State Cricket Association stadium on Tuesday.

With another 120 points in the ongoing World Test Championship, India now sit pretty on top of the table with 240 points as the formalities were completed within the first two overs of the fourth day.

This was Virat Kohli's 11th series win as captain and the first clean sweep over the Proteas who were no match for the hosts. This was India's 11th successive series triumph on home soil.

The scoreline was not only an indicator of India's absolute dominance but also the decline in standard of South African cricket as the visitors couldn't handle the might of India's batting and the fiery pace attack led by Mohammed Shami (13 wickets in the series).

Debutant left-arm spinner Shahbaz Nadeem (2/18 in 6 overs) wrapped it up in the second over of the day as South Africa were all out for 133 in their second innings, 29 runs short of their dismal first innings score of 162.

This was India's sixth clean sweep at home in a three-Test series and the side didn't put a foot wrong during the three-match series, winning the first Test by 203 runs and the second one by an innings and 137 runs.

If Rohit Sharma's coming of age in his new role as an opener with 529 runs, turned out to be a masterstroke in home conditions, Mayank Agarwal also consolidated his place in the side with a double century and a ton, easing India's long time opening woes.

"I was very happy to make my debut in Australia and make little contributions to the team. It's hard work over a period of many areas," Agarwal said after the match.

However, what stood out during the series was how lethal the Indian pace attack looked despite their premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah's absence due to a stress fracture.

Rarely has there been a series where the impact of pacers has



Members of Indian team pose with the winners trophy after their win on the fourth day of third and last Test match between India and South Africa in Ranchi

"Indian conditions were always known to be spin friendly. Now we have that power, among our pacers, that we can make batsmen dance with the bat."

— MOHAMMAD SHAMI

"The support of the coach and captain helps. I am thankful for the opportunity to the management for that opening slot."

— ROHIT SHARMA

"They were ruthless and they were better than us in every department - spin bowling, fast bowling, batting and even the fielding. They are a difficult team to overcome"

— FAF DU PLESSIS



Indian captain Virat Kohli shakes hand with Faf du Plessis AP

We want to be the best: Kohli

PTI ■ RANCHI

The intent has always been honest and that precisely is the reason for the stupendous results that the Indian cricket team is currently delivering, skipper Virat Kohli said after a thumping 3-0 whitewash.

"As long as we keep working with honest intent, those things will follow. We have wanted to be the best team in Test cricket, and as long as we compete, things will work out well for us," Kohli said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

The best part about the win was taking the conditions out of equation, said Kohli.

"Amazing. You guys have seen how we're playing. Making things happen on pitches that don't seem to offer too much, is something we're very proud of," the skipper said.

"Even when we travelled away from home, we wanted to compete. Getting into the right kind of mindset is something these guys have worked really hard to get into... To be the best side in the world, you have to be multi-dimensional," skipper said.

"Spin was always our strength, batting was never a problem for us. Ishant (Sharma) was the only experienced bowler for us. We said we can play an extra bowler, and as batsmen we said we'll get the job done.

"We've got runs in every Test match, our catching has been good too. (Goal) As I said, even without much experience, we travelled very well. We believe we can win anywhere," the skipper added.

His counterpart Faf du Plessis also agreed that it was high quality pace bowling from India.

"I think it's the skill of the bowlers. They have a skiddy nature and they hit the right spots and the stumps at all times. Those are the things we talked about before we came here, but naturally the length in South Africa has to be a little shorter, and that takes time to adjust," Du Plessis said.

The fight tapered off after the first Test in Visakhapatnam and du Plessis acknowledged that his side wasn't up to it.

"That's the frustrating part of the tour. There were some really good signs, but it went the other way," the Proteas skipper said when dissecting performance on the tour.

"Every Test, we made more mistakes. But we have to give credit to the Indian team. They were ruthless and they were better than us in every department — spin bowling, fast bowling, batting and even the fielding. They are a difficult team to overcome.

"The mindset after 2015 was to prepare ourselves for really spinning tracks, but it's been the opposite. Really sporting tracks — fantastic for fast bowlers and even for batsmen. There's a lot to learn for us," he added.

The visiting skipper said that this is a young team which would learn to fight its way out of trouble in adverse conditions.

"It's important that we have some young guys, and they'll experience this in 3-4 years ago. It was important for us to take something back again.

"We have to learn to compete the next time again. This is the toughest tour on the circuit... (India's) 11 series wins in a row bears testament to that."

INDIA'S BIGGEST WINS IN TESTS

Margin	Opponents	Venue	Season
Innings & 272runs	West Indies	Rajkot	2018-19
Innings & 262 runs	Afghanistan	Bengaluru	2018
Innings & 239 runs	Bangladesh	Dhaka	2006-07
Innings & 239 runs	Sri Lanka	Nagpur	2017-18
Innings & 219 runs	Australia	Kolkata	1997-98
Innings & 202 runs	South Africa	Ranchi	2019-20

MOST WICKETS BY IND PACERS IN A 3-MATCH HOME SERIES

Opponent	Season	Overs	Runs	Wkts
England	1933-34	353.3	926	30
Sri Lanka	2017-18	235.4	758	30
England	2005-06	254.5	763	27
South Africa	2019-20	152.5	455	26
South Africa	1996-97	221.3	625	25

MOST CONSECUTIVE TEST SERIES WINS AT HOME

Team	Series	Period
India	11	February 2013 to October 2019
Australia	10	November 1994 to November 2000
Australia	10	July 2004 to November 2008
West Indies	8	March 1976 to February 1986
England	7	May 2009 to May 2012
South Africa	7	March 1998 to November 2001

been as much as the spinners.

If Ravindra Jadeja (13 wickets) and Ravichandran Ashwin (15 wickets) shared 28 among themselves, Mohammed Shami (13 in 3 Tests), Umesh Yadav (11

in two Tests) and Ishant Sharma (2 in 2 Tests) picked 26 wickets.

"We are always ready to fulfill our responsibility. As a captain, Virat gives you confidence, lets you do what you want. We

try to keep the ball in the right areas and bowl the right length," Shami said at the end of match.

It was one such series, where South African batsmen looked scared and scarred by the ferocity of India's pace attack. The pacers did a lot of damage with the new ball and reversed the old ball.

Two hundreds and four fifties is all that the South African batting line-up managed and South African skipper Faf du Plessis agreed that they were completely outplayed on sporting tracks unlike the ones in 2015 where the ball was turning square.

"They were ruthless and they were better than us in every department — spin bowling, fast bowling, batting and even the fielding. They are a difficult team to overcome," Du Plessis agreed.

Pleased as punch, skipper Kohli couldn't agree more with his opposite number.

"You guys have seen how we're playing. Making things happen on pitches that don't seem to offer too much, is something we're very proud of," Kohli summed it up aptly.



MS Dhoni speaks with Shahbaz Nadeem after the end of third Test

BCCI/Twitter

MS checks in

RANCHI: A notable absentee for the duration of the Test, former India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni finally showed up after India wrapped up the Test series, posing with Ravi Shastri among others.

Ranchi's most popular son was expected to turn up during the third Test, and he did, but only after the formalities had been completed by Virat Kohli and his men here.

"Great to see a true Indian legend in his den after a fantastic series win #Dhoni #TeamIndia #INDvsSA," Shastri tweeted with

a picture of him with a grinning Dhoni.

In fact, when a scribe asked about Dhoni, a beaming skipper Kohli said in jest: "He is here in the change room. Come and say hello to him."

The BCCI also posted a picture of Dhoni, wearing his all-access accreditation card, in the Indian dressing room.

In the picture posted by the Indian board, Dhoni is seen in conversation with debutant left-arm spinner Shahbaz Nadeem, who took four wickets. **PTI**

All credit goes to Rohit

PTI ■ RANCHI

Skipper Virat Kohli feels that no one but Rohit Sharma alone "deserves credit" for overcoming "anxiety and hesitation" while performing commendably in his new role as an opener, giving bowlers enough time to take 20 South African wickets in the 3-0 sweep.

Rohit turned out to be a revelation as opener with scores of 176 and 127 in the first Test and 212 in the third Test. The team management's stand that he could be a game-changer in the longest format stood vindicated.

"Credit solely goes to the player for the way he overcame his anxiety and hesitation and performed in such a manner that he was adjudged Man-of-the-Series in the first series as an opener. It's been outstanding for him," Kohli was effusive in praise for his white-ball deputy.

"There is always an anticipation on how would you perform as an opener in Test cricket, as he has been the world's best opener in ODI cricket for a long time. Despite missing close to two sessions because of rain, his pace in the batting gave us so much of time to bowl them out twice," the skipper said.

The top-order had performed brilliantly in the series, something that the skipper finds deeply satisfying.

"Mayank (Agarwal) also has done very well. Despite being new to opening, he performed consistently. Ajinkya (Rahane) also got a century at home after a long time (three years, 188 v NZ October 2016, Indore).

"He also got a Test century in West Indies after a long time. Things are moving in the right direction in the last two-three months. So I said, it feels very pleasing to see individuals performing collectively well."

Umesh Yadav and Mohammed Shami took 24 of the 60 South African wickets

and their strike-rate is something that makes them stand apart from a lot of Indian fast bowlers over the years, said the skipper.

"If you look at these two guys, their strike-rate is probably the best in Indian conditions in history. So it tells you that these guys hit the stumps and the pads more. It's a great sign of intent the bowlers are running with. The fitness levels have gone up," Kohli said.

'WILL MEET & TALK ABOUT DHONI'

India captain Virat Kohli on Tuesday said he hasn't had any conversation with Sourav Ganguly with regards to MS Dhoni's international future and believes that the BCCI's President-elect will get in touch with him when he needs to.

After being nominated as the BCCI's President-elect, Ganguly had said that he would like to speak to the selectors as well as Dhoni to know what they had in mind.

"I congratulated him (Ganguly). It's great that he has become BCCI President. But he's not spoken to me about that (MS) yet. He will get in touch with me when he has to. I am sure I will go and meet him when he tells me to," the Indian skipper said at the post-match press conference.

"It's a team effort. A captain who leads from the front. You have opening batsmen who got double hundreds. Middle-order batsmen got hundreds. Normally in India, you have two players who hog the limelight. Here we've had six or seven players. This is going well, enjoy," he said.

Despite the individual brilliance that shone through, Shastri said the triumph was, in the end, a team effort.

PTI ■ RANCHI

India captain Virat Kohli feels that time has come for the BCCI to zero in on five permanent Test centres for future home series, similar to the English and Australian model when top teams tour those countries.

In Australia, Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Brisbane and Adelaide are the five designated Test centres whenever the big teams come calling.

Similarly in England, the Lord's, Oval, Trent

Bridge, Old Trafford, Edgbaston, Southampton and Headingley are the seven main Test centres for any marquee series (Ashes/India).

Asked about the lukewarm response in Ranchi, the Indian skipper lapped up the question.

"That's a great question.

5 Test venues

Skipper Virat backs Aussie, English model of having only five permanent Test centres

Bridge, Old Trafford, Edgbaston, Southampton and Headingley are the seven main Test centres for any marquee series (Ashes/India).

Asked about the lukewarm response in Ranchi, the Indian skipper lapped up the question.

"That's a great question.

exciting, I totally agree with the fact that we need five Test centres at max. It can't be sporadic and spread over so many places where people turn up or they don't," the skipper didn't mince words.

"So in my opinion, absolutely, we should have five strong Test centres where the team coming to India knows that this is where we're going to play and nowhere else," he said.

The BCCI follows the rotation policy across formats but it has now more than 15 Test centres.

Shastri likens Indian batting to Ferrari, calls Hitman different class

PTI ■ RANCHI

An exultant India coach Ravi Shastri on Tuesday said Rohit Sharma has shown himself to be of different class in the newly-acquired role of a Test opener, acclimatising exceptionally well to the challenges posed by the position.

"Ajinkya Rahane was always there in the middle order, he only needed to rediscover, which he did himself. Rohit is different class. As an opener he needed to have a different mindset, he acclimatised. It was a difficult pitch to start with but *usne jhela*," Shastri told official broadcaster *Star Sports* at the end of the match.

"He has it in him to be unfazed by difficult conditions. What he has done in this series is tremendous," he added.

Shastri lauded the mindset of the team, which he said, is never perturbed by the conditions it encounters whether at home or abroad.

"Our philosophy has been *bhaad mein gaya pitch* (to hell with the pitch). We need to take 20 wickets and it doesn't matter if it's Mumbai, Auckland, Melbourne, anywhere. Once we have taken those 20 wickets, our batting, once it gets going is like smooth-running Ferrari," he quipped.

"When you have five bowlers who can take 20 wickets, *bas* that's what matters," he added.

Despite the individual brilliance that shone through, Shastri said the triumph was, in the end, a team effort.



Mohammed Shami celebrates by showing broken wicket after dismissing Dane Piedt in Pune

AP

"It's a team effort. A captain who leads from the front. You have opening batsmen who got double hundreds. Middle-order batsmen got hundreds. Normally in India, you have two players who hog the limelight. Here we've had six or seven players. This is going well, enjoy," he said.

'Ind tour caused mental scars'

PTI ■ RANCHI

Humiliated by a ruthless India, the South African team will go back with "mental scars" as skipper Faf du Plessis rued a lack of vision that impeded phasing out of their great players.

"A tour like this reveals that there's a lot of mental scars that can happen and then obviously it's difficult to come out of that hole," Du Plessis said after they conceded their heaviest defeat to India in the third Test.

"It's just a relentless, ruthlessness the way they put big totals on the board every time. The effect it has on you mentally as a batting lineup, it takes a lot of energy and it takes a lot of toll and that's why you could see towards the end our batting was mentally weak. You don't want to be mentally weak."

Blaming Cricket South Africa, the visiting skipper further said the tour exposed the lack of planning as they did not think for future after greats like Hashim Amla and AB de Villiers retired.

"It shows that our structures are not where they need to be. The gap between domestic cricket and International cricket. If you look back three



Faf du Plessis & Zubayr Hamza, left, leave the field at the end of day's play AP

or four years and if someone had the vision of saying, in three or four years' time there will be a lot of inexperienced guys. A lot of 34, 35, 36 year olds could possible retire. So what do you do to make sure you get yourself ready for when that time comes?"

"And possibly we are guilty of not planning or when these guys going at the same time. And now you've got to replace not only one player but four or five of your best players. Perhaps we could've been a little bit smarter in our planning phase, and the phasing out of the great players," he said.

Asked about the way for-

ward, Du Plessis said they have to find the right people to build the side.

"It's a rebuilding phase. You have to start identifying characters that will drive the team forward. You look for personalities within a team that you see in 3-4-5-6 years to come. And then the process starts. It's a tough place to start right at the beginning.

"The process will probably take a little bit longer. So for me, our next journey now is trying to make sure that we get a lot stronger as a cricketing team mentally. So if there's work that needs to be done in that department, then so be it."



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Contact us:
Phone: (+86)871-64166895/64191465
Email: 284747510@qq.com
Address: 337 Xinwen Road, Kunming, Yunnan, PRC

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Yunnan leads the country in biodiversity

The national botanical museum of China will be built in Kunming

The signing ceremony of the National Museum of Botany jointly to be built by Yunnan Provincial Government, Chinese Academy of Sciences and Kunming Municipal Government was held in Kunming on October 8. That marks the clock is ticking down on the construction of the National Museum of Botany in Kunming, capital

of Yunnan province.

China is one of the countries with the most abundant biological species in the world. Yunnan has a wide variety of landforms and natural environments, and is the most biodiverse area in China. It is also the gathering or birthplace of many important plant groups. According to

statistics, there are 19,365 species of higher plants in Yunnan, accounting for 62.9% of the 30,000 species in China. Plant species from tropical and subtropical zone to temperate zone and even cold zone can be found in Yunnan.

Kunming is famous as a spring city and a flower city

in China. There are more than 460 kinds of wild plants in Kunming and its output value of flowers has been leading in China for 20 years, which provides favorable conditions for carrying out scientific research, developing health industry and building green economy.

The National Museum

of Botany of China will combine exhibition of traditional museums with collection and display of living plants and research of traditional culture and big health industry. The project is located in the north of the main city of Kunming, with a preliminary scope of about 10 square kilometers.

Numbers



From snow-covered mountains to rainforests traversed by wild elephants, the diversity of plants brings endless splendor to Yunnan. Here, the relationship between human beings and plants has continued for thousands of years, and coexistence with a variety of plants has long been part of local people's daily life

RHODODENDRON

In the majestic mountains of Yunnan, the mountains are full of rhododendrons in different colors every spring and summer.

Yunnan is known to botanists as the home of rhododendrons. There are more than 800 species of rhododendrons in the world, 600 in China and 400 in Yunnan. From the rhododendron of large white flowers at an altitude of 2,000 meters to those of dense branches above an altitude of 4,000 meters, Yunnan's snow-capped mountains, with their brilliant flowers, are the most beautiful scenery on the plateau from spring to summer and a shining tourist destination.

LOTUS KING

In the pool of MengLun Botanical Garden in Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Lotus King is a star of tropical rain forest in the middle of summer every year and the largest floating lotus in Yunnan province. The mature leaves of Lotus King are in the shape of a round basin with great buoyancy to support a kid of 20 kilograms.

In Xishuangbanna and other places in Yunnan, there are large areas of tropical rain forest, where there are more than 20,000 plant species. Giant trees cover the sky and wild elephants walk through the forest, are the most important treasure houses of biodiversity in China. Yunnan is also home to the world's highest tropical rain forests.

CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE

In Yunnan, plants have been used as medicine for more than one thousand years. Notoginseng, dendrobium officinale and all kinds of flower tea are well known and very precious Chinese medicinal materials. According to statistics, there are 6,559 kinds of Chinese medicinal materials in Yunnan, accounting for 51.2% of the national resources of Chinese medicinal materials. Its planting area of Chinese medicinal materials also ranks first in China.

Today, Yunnan is taking traditional Chinese medicine as characteristic industry development, tries hard to build Yunnan medicine brand, has helped many farmers and successfully got rid of poverty.

EAT FLOWERS

Almost all people come to Yunnan would eat flower cake, a special Yunnan food. The cake is filled with fresh rose petals for a fragrant bite.

Yunnan people have been eating flowers for thousands of years. Furzy flower, plantain flower and pomegranate flower, whether wild or cultivated, open the door and pick a handful of flowers will be a delicious fresh dish.

Nowadays, this kind of dietary method is a popular fashion. In the new era, Yunnan people still enjoy the wisdom of ancestral inheritance and more flowers joined the modern Yunnan recipes.

MUSHROOMS

After rain, in the forests all over Yunnan, a silent symphony is staged and lovely mushrooms are scrambling to break the ground and out. According to statistics, wild mushroom in Yunnan covers more than 850 species, accounting for 43% of the world's total, and 91% of China's. It is the region with most wild mushroom species and the highest yield in the world.

Yunnan people have long noticed such a lively scene in the forest after rain. In summer, people go into forest early in the morning and harvest the gift of nature. The expensive truffle, fragrant matsutake and thick porcini fungus..... All kinds of wild mushrooms become a scenery that belongs to Yunnan vegetable market only.

XI'S REMARKS

Environment is livelihood; green mountains are beauty; and blue skies are happiness. We must protect this planet like our own eyes, and

cherish nature the way we cherish life.

—Remarks made by Chinese President Xi Jinping during his

participation in the deliberation of the Jiangxi delegation on March 6, 2015, at the two sessions of that year.

STORY

Ecology-based life empowers villagers

Duijieqilin, a 58-year-old Tibetan man, who's family live in Pudacuo National Park, Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. The highland barley he grows, the yaks he raises and his family's ranch now is part of the national park landscape, along with the surrounding snowy mountain meadows, forests and lakes.

"Before, we had little income from cutting down trees and grazing cattle." When talking about the past, Duijieqilin could not bear to think back. His family of seven did farming and raise cattle and their annual income was no more than 5,000 yuan. The extensive way of life destroyed the local ecological environment. Wildlife in the forests was in decline. In late 1990s, animals like deer was almost disappeared.

When Pudacuo National Park was established a few years ago, community feeding policy was implemented. That

gave Duijieqilin three identities: villager and forest rangers of Luorong Village, Jiantang Town, Shangri-la and a citizen of the National Park. We receive more than 50,000 yuan a year for ecological, grassland, tourism and other types of feedback. If the ecology is not well protected, the money is gone," said Duijieqilin.

Long Decheng, a villager from Gongshan Dulong and Nu Autonomous County of Nujiang Lisu Autonomous Prefecture is also a beneficiary from forest protection. He is a village forest resources guard team leader, not only to manage village rangers, but also to lead patrolling in the mountains. Long Decheng said that the 80 rangers in the village cover an area of more than 800,000 mu, with a monthly subsidy of 800 yuan per person and 1,400 yuan for each village group leader.

"Accurately absorb registered households to participate

in ecological management and protection to achieve employment and get rid of poverty at their doorsteps in the mountains." Ren Zhizhong, director of Yunnan Forestry and Pasture Bureau, said that patrolling and protecting the forest is not only helpful to increase incomes, but also convenient to take care of the old and young in their family. They have achieved win-win results in ecological protection and poverty alleviation.

The "Ecological forest patroller+" model effectively drives a steady increase in incomes and poverty alleviation of the poor. Up to now, 17,000 rangers have been hired in Diqing Prefecture, covered all eligible people living in poverty. The employment of ecological forest rangers in Nujiang Prefecture has helped 51,400 poor people increase their income steadily.

By Wang Jingzhong and Wang Changshan.

COOPERATION

India becomes trendy destination for Chinese travellers

The number of visits made by Chinese to India registered robust growth during the first three quarters of this year, making India a trendy destination for Chinese tourists, according to a report published by China's online travel agency Ctrip.

Data from Ctrip showed that the number of visits made by Chinese to India surged by over 70 percent during the January-September period, with over 60 percent of the travelers in their thirties or forties.

Compared with other traditional overseas travel destinations, India remained a niche for most Chinese, a Ctrip

product manager said, adding that as Chinese people learn more about India, reservations for package tours have seen an increase of over 40 percent.

Indian tourism products continued to increase, as tour operators rolled out diversified traveling routes and products, allowing travelers to make Buddhist pilgrimages, celebrate the Hindu spring festival and visit shooting locations of Chinese movies.

According to the Embassy of India in Beijing, electronic visa policies for Chinese citizens were relaxed starting from October, including lower visa fees and

extended validity.

The new policies will benefit hundreds of thousands of people, further stimulating Chinese travelers' enthusiasm to visit India, a Ctrip employee estimated.

Under the new policy, Chinese citizens only need to pay \$80 for a multiple-entry electronic visa valid for five years and \$25 for a single-entry visa valid for 30 days.

In the first three quarters of this year, Chinese travelers spent an average of 649 yuan (about \$91.8) on their visas to India, Ctrip data showed.

By Chinadaily

TRADE

Yunnan sees foreign trade up 18 percent in Jan-Sept

The foreign trade volume of southwest China's Yunnan Province rose 18 percent to 166.5 billion yuan (23.46 billion U.S. dollars) during the first three quarters of 2019, local customs authorities said recently.

The province's exports rose 28.1 percent to 72.81 billion yuan, while imports gained 11.1 percent to 93.69 billion yuan, according to the customs office of the capital city of Kunming.

Trade with countries along

the Belt and Road grew by 16.7 percent year on year to 118.09 billion yuan in the first nine months, accounting for 70.9 percent of the province's total trade volume.

The province's export volume to B&R countries reached nearly 46.47 billion yuan, up 23.7 percent year on year, and the import volume grew to 71.62 billion yuan, with an increase of 12.5 percent compared with the same period of last year. (Xinhua)

IN PICS

Golden autumn sights in Shangri-La



Against the backdrop of blue sky, white clouds, grasslands and high moun-

tain, the leaves form an enchanting sight for tourists in late autumn, in Shangri-

La, northwest Yunnan's Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. By Cili Qici

EXPO

The 2nd China Import Expo to be held in Shanghai

The 2nd China International Import Expo will take place at the Shanghai National Convention and Exhibition Center from November 5 to 10, 2019.

The expo will have three sections: the national comprehensive exhibition, enterprise business exhibition, and Hongqiao international economic forum.

For the national comprehensive

exhibition, 15 countries including France, Italy and Uzbekistan have been confirmed as guests of honour. The enterprise business exhibition will have an exhibition area exceeding the planned target of 300,000 square metres, as the numbers of participating countries, enterprises, the Belt and Road countries and the world's top 500 and industry-leading enterprises have

exceeded that of the first expo. The Hongqiao international economic forum will continue to adhere to the position of high-level to discuss topics of business environment, artificial intelligence, WTO reform, e-commerce and so on.

Sixty-four countries have already confirmed their participation. (By Li Hongkai)

CULTURE

Tile cats: A special artwork

Tile cats – normally crouching on rooftops of those white folk houses typical in west Yunnan's Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture – are characterized particularly by their round and staring eyes as well as huge and open mouths.

The Bai people, who dominate the local ethnic population of Dali, for long have believed that these gargoyle-like statuettes have been made into souvenirs by Su Longxiang, a native-born clay sculptor, and it has been gaining popularity among tourists ever since.

Born in the Fengyi township of the Dali Prefecture, Su took over the job of making clay sculptures from his grandfather at the young age of 10. Now, he is recognised by the province as an inheritor of intangible cultural heritage.

The tile cat is definitely not a



Tile cats made by Su Longxiang

Photo by Duan Jianxin

simple artefact to make. To begin with, wet clay has to be blended with some amount of sand to increase its viscosity. This could effectively prevent clay from being cracked in the oven later, and thus is considered an ideal method to make tile cats. Then, Su would take a big lump of clay and press it with palms and fingers until it gets completely flat—as the base for a statuette. Once this is done, the sculptor is able to

work carefully on the limbs, eyes, mouth and other details of the cat. A quality and elegant tile cat is marked by the materials used, as well as its shape and style created by artist.

Now, Su's works—all themed elements of tile cats—range from pen containers to tea sets, from incense burners to dolls. "Tile cats could not only be guardians for the Bai people," said Su. (By Duan Jianxin)

CONNECTIVITY

Yunnan builds up efficient aviation network



Kunming Changshui airport is busy

Photo by Sun Xiaoyun

Yunnan province has built 15 airports and ranks third nationwide for its

airport network. Initially, the airports in Kunming, Lijiang and Xishuangbanna were the

backbone of the province for air travel.

Dating back to earlier years, the Kunming Wujia-ba Airport came into being in 1922, the second airport in China.

In 2012, the Kunming airport was moved out of the city to a new venue and named Kunming Changshui International Airport, breaking the "infrastructural bottleneck" that had long restricted the development of Yunnan's air service.

Airport density in Yunnan reached 0.38/10,000 square kilometres, well above the national average of 0.24/10,000 square

kilometres. Each of the seven airports in Kunming, Lijiang, Xishuangbanna, Mangshi, Dali and Tengchong, has an annual passenger throughput of over one million.

In total, the province has opened 524 air routes, including 441 domestic ones, 78 international ones and 5 regional routes. Now Yunnan is connected by air routes with national capitals of South and Southeast Asian countries. Among all Chinese airports, Kunming Airport has the most air routes to South and Southeast Asia.

In October 2018,

Yunnan Airport Group launched the Kunming-Dubai cargo route, extending the province's air service from South and Southeast Asia to the Middle East. It makes Yunnan products directly reach six destinations in South Asia by air.

The 15 Yunnan airports saw 501,800 take-offs and landings in 2018, with a passenger throughput of 627.9 million and a cargo throughput of 463,300 tonnes. Compared with data in 2013, the figures represent increases of 40.78 per cent, 56.96 per cent and 47.22 per cent respectively. By Hu Xiaorong