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KANGANA'S
LOOK AS PILOT
RELEASED
13 VIVACITY



Women in non-combat command

SC also orders permanent commission for women in Army within 3 months

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court on Monday opened the way for women in command positions in the Army and directed the Centre to grant permanent commission to all women officers within three months. The apex court orders, on grounds of the need to end gender bias in the Armed forces, will directly benefit more than 300 women officers, including making them eligible for pension.

The women officers, however, will not be inducted into the combat arms such as the infantry, artillery and armoured corps as the Supreme Court clarified that their deployment is a matter of policy as held by the Delhi High Court.

While directing the Centre to grant permanent commission, the court termed the Government's argument of physiological limitations and social norms for denying them command posts as "disturbing."

The court said women officers in the past have brought laurels to the country and change of mindset is required on the part of the Government to put an end to gender bias in Armed forces. A Bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud said there will not be any absolute bar on giving women command postings.

Landmark judgment

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The top court said despite there being no stay on the 2010 Delhi High Court verdict allowing grant of permanent commission to women officers, the Centre showed scant regard in implementing the directive in the past one decade.

"There is no reason and justification for the union of India not to act as per the Delhi High Court verdict. On September 2, 2011, the Supreme Court clarified this aspect and said there is no stay on the High Court verdict. Despite that scant regard has been paid to the verdict of the HC and the order of Supreme Court as well," the Bench said.

The SC said it is of the opinion that physiological features of women have no effect in granting permanent commission and they have to be given equal opportunity on a par with their male counterparts in the armed forces.

It said the Centre's submission of physiological limitation is based on flawed notion and there is no constitutional basis to deny them equal opportunity. The SC said permanent commission can be given to women officers in the Army irrespective of their tenure of service.

On February 9, serving women officers in the Indian Army had countered the Centre's stand in the SC on denying command posts to women on the ground of their physiological limitations, terming it not only "regressive but also completely contrary to the demonstrated record and statistics." In their written submission to the court, the women officers had sought rejection of the submission of the Centre and said it is unfortunate that such grounds have been raised, which are completely contrary to the demonstrated records of the case.

The women officers had said they have been serving in the 10 Combat Support Arms, for the last 27 to 28 years and have proven their mettle and courage under fire. The written submission had also said the women officers have demonstrated that they do not lack in any manner in the roles that have been assigned to them.



(Left to right) Short Service Commission women officers Anjali Bisht, Seema Singh and Sandhya Yadav flash victory sign outside the Supreme Court in New Delhi on Monday

5 theatre commands for modern warfare by 2022

RAHUL DATTA ■ NEW DELHI

With the objective of fighting modern-day warfare, India will roll out two to five theatre commands by 2022 to take care of security challenges along the western (Pakistan) and northern (China) borders.

While Jammu & Kashmir will be a separate theatre, the western and eastern Navy commands will operate as one and known as peninsular command to guard the strategically important Indian Ocean, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat said here



on Monday.

Stressing that his charter as CDS is clearly enunciated, he said the mandate is to achieve jointness and synergy between the three Services by under-

taking these reforms.

Rawat said the theatre commands will be geographically defined and demarcated and a study will be conducted from March 31 onwards.

The study will be submitted for scrutiny by the end of next year and hopefully the commands will roll out by 2020, said Rawat, adding the study groups will evaluate the options of number of commands which could vary from two to five.

At present, the three Services have their own commands and operate in silos.

Now, Nirbhaya rapists to hang on March 3

Death warrant issued for third time even as convicts' bids on to exploit legal lacunae

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Monday issued fresh death warrants against the four death-row convicts in the Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case. The four convicts will be now hanged to death on March 3 at 6 am. This is the third time that death warrants have been issued against them.

Additional Sessions Judge (ASJ) Dharmender Rana issued fresh warrants against death row convicts Mukesh Kumar Singh (32), Pawan Gupta (25), Vinay Kumar Sharma (26) and Akshay Kumar (31).

The first date of execution, January 22, was postponed to February 1 by a January 17 court order. Then the trial court on January 31 stayed "till further orders" the execution of the four convicts as they had not exhausted all their legal remedies.

Mukesh on Monday told the court that he didn't want to be represented by advocate Vrinda Grover, after which advocate Ravi Qazi was picked to represent him.



Nirbhaya gangrape case convicts

The court was also informed that Vinay is on hunger strike. Vinay was assaulted in jail and has head injuries, his lawyer told the court, adding that he was suffering from acute mental illness and hence the death sentence cannot be carried out. The court directed the Tihar Jail superintendent to take appropriate care of Vinay as per law. Pawan's counsel informed the court that he wanted to move curative petition and the mercy plea against the death sentence before the President.

Pawan is the only one among the four convicts who has not yet filed the curative petition — the last legal remedy available to a person, which is decided in-chamber.

Citizens to get all services at doorstep by Aug 15

All depts under Mo Sarkar by Mar 5: CM
Govt provided untrue info in House through Guv, says Opp

PABITRA SENAPATY ■ BHUBANESWAR

In a major announcement in the State Assembly, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Monday said that citizens will have the freedom not to visit Government offices for any service.

"They (citizens) will have the option of online services or professionally run common service centre or door delivery," Patnaik said while replying to a debate on the Motion of Thanks to the Governor's Address.

He also announced that April 1 is the deadline for shifting of all wage payments through banks for all line departments.

Maintaining that all departments will come under the purview of Mo Sarkar by March 5 this year, Patnaik said

every department has been given transformational targets while IMFS across all departments would be done by April 1 this year.

"Our attempt is to provide pipe water supply to each and every urban household for which an ambitious initiative '24x7 Drink from Tap', assured quality supply has been planned and being put in place," announced the Chief Minister.

Stating that there was a time Odisha was identified with acute poverty and calamities, he said the State is now known for highest reduction of poverty in the Country and setting global benchmarks in disaster management.

"Our resolve to carve out a New Odisha-Empowered Odisha is firm," he asserted.

He claimed that eight million people have been brought out of poverty in the last decade. He termed the KALLA scheme as unique and said the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana is providing free healthcare services to all citizens irrespective of their income, or status in all Government medical facilities.

He said empowerment of women is very close to his heart. The "Mission Shakti" and the Women Self Help Group movement is spread



in every corner of the State. More than 40 lakh mothers have been assisted under MAMATA, he said.

Through Jaga Mission we have granted Land Rights to more than 50,000 families on in-situ basis in all the 109 Municipalities and NACs. Jaga Mission has got global recognition in the "World Habitat Awards-2019".

Our intervention in providing education to more than 5 lakh ST and SC students with hostel facility is unprecedented in scale.

"My Government is determined to work hard for the complete transformation of the State by implementing the '5T Mantra', he said.

Earlier participating in the discussion on the Governor's Address, Opposition BJP and

Congress members had alleged that the State Government has furnished untrue information in the House through the Governor.

"The Government has always promised big but has done little. In 2006, the Government had told this House through the Governor that 30% irrigation facility will be created in all blocks, but nothing such has happened as yet," said Congress Legislature Party Leader Narasingha Mishra.

Congress members Santosh Singh Saluja and Tara Prasad Bahinipati, BJP members Mukesh Mahaling, Bhaskar Madehi and Nityanand Gond and CPI (M) member Laxman Munda too alleged that the Government has made untrue claims.

State to conduct backward classes survey

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha will conduct a survey for assessment of population belonging to backward classes even as the Centre doesn't agree to do it along with the General Census-2021.

The State Assembly passed the Odisha State Commission for Backward Classes (Amendment) Bill unanimously on Monday.

"In a historic move, this August House has resolved to amend the Odisha State Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993 to enable the Commission to make survey of the social and educational conditions of the people belonging to the backward classes," said Chief Minister Patnaik.

He thanked all members for passing the Bill unanimously. Earlier, SC and ST Development and Backward Classes Minister Jagannath Saraka had presented the Bill.

The legislation aimed to empower the backward commission to conduct survey of social and educational conditions of the backward classes, said Patnaik.

Kejriwal takes charge as CM sans portfolio, DJB goes to Satyendar

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his Cabinet colleagues took charge of their respective offices on Monday and asserted that they would work to fulfil the promises made in the "guarantee card", released during the poll campaign, including reduction in pollution and the expansion of metro network.

The Chief Minister later issued an order making minor changes in the portfolios of the Ministers. Gopal Rai has been given Environment apart from holding Labour and Employment. Satyendar Jain has been allocated Delhi Jal Board apart from key portfolios of Health, PWD, Urban Development, Power and Home. Women and Child department has been given to Rajender Pal Gautam. Earlier this department was with Manish Sisodia.

Kejriwal has not assigned any department under his control. He will continue to oversee and guide all departments.

Soon after taking the charge, the AAP Government made its priorities clear and said the Government will fulfil the promises made to the



AAP supreme Arvind Kejriwal takes charge as the Chief Minister of Delhi for the third time at Delhi Secretariat in New Delhi on Monday

people in its manifesto.

Soon after taking the charge, Deputy CM and Finance Minister Sisodia announced about Delhi Budget. The AAP Government will present Delhi's 2020-21 Budget after Holi, Sisodia said while kicking off the budgetary exercise with holding several back to back meetings with officers.

He discussed issues pertaining to poll promises made by the AAP in the run up to recently-concluded Assembly

elections and asked officials to make those provisions in the Budget.

Holding another meeting with officials of the trade and taxes department, Sisodia directed it to take steps to prevent tax evasion.

He said, "Earlier, the budgetary exercise used to start from December, but as there was Delhi Assembly election, we could not do so. In the next 20-25 days, we will work hard to prepare the budget and present it after Holi."

Group clash in Puri: 3 Cong men injured

PNS ■ PURI

Tension ran high on the premises of the Congress Bhawan in Puri on Monday afternoon when two groups clashed leaving three party members injured.

The injured Swapnajit Ray, Alok Das and Ashutosh Mishra were admitted to the Puri Sadar hospital. Of them, the condition of Ashutosh was stated to be critical.

The fight broke out in the presence of Congress Odisha

in-charge Jitendra Singh, PCC president Niranjana Patnaik and former MP Pradeep Majhi.

When Singh and Patnaik were entering the party office premises to attend a review meeting, the rival groups attacked each other with sharp weapons and iron rods.

Based on a complaint lodged at the town's Kumbharapada police station, cops initiated a probe and detained a person for questioning.

State growth rate dips; per capita income rises

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha's growth rate is expected to decline to 6.16% of GSDP in 2019-20 against 7.90% in 2018-19, the Economic Survey Report tabled in the Legislative Assembly on Monday said.

Lower agriculture production due to cyclone and deceleration in mining and manufacturing led to the dip in the growth rate, the report said.

However, the per capita income in the State in 2019-20 is expected to reach Rs 1,01,587 from Rs 95,164 in 2018-19. As per advance estimates for 2019-20, the State's

per capita net domestic product at current price is estimated to grow at 6.75%. During the same period, the per capita net national income is estimated at Rs 1,35,050 making an increase of 6.84% compared to Rs 1,26,406 in 2018-19.

The report further said that services sector is the largest contributor to the State's GVA with 40.51% followed by the industries sector with 39.60% and the agriculture and allied sectors with 19.90% in 2019-20(AE).

During the same period, the agriculture and allied sectors are expected to achieve growth at constant price

(2011-12) of 7.61% while the industries sector will attain growth of 4.88% and the services sector with 6.84%.

The average annual inflation in the State based on CPI remained stable between 2% and 3% during 2017-18 to 2018-19 and increased to 3.8% in 2019-20 (till December). While inflation in rural Odisha was mainly driven by miscellaneous groups followed by food items and fuel and light, inflation in urban Odisha was influenced by miscellaneous groups followed by housing and food items, the report stated.

Double murder: Two vehicles used in crime

Sai's nephew summoned by cops for appearance

PNS ■ JHARSUGUDA

Former MLA Anup Sai's driver, who was arrested by the Chhattisgarh police on Saturday for his alleged involvement in the murder of a woman and her minor daughter in 2016, confessed to having committed the crime and revealed sensational details during interrogation on Monday.

The driver Burdhan Toppo revealed that two SUVs had

been used to execute the crime, said reports. Later, the police asked Sai's nephew to personally appear before them with the Bolero and an Innova on Tuesday for questioning.

Police are trying to establish whether the two vehicles owned by the former MLA are the same which were used in the killing of Kalpana Das and her daughter Babli. The cops are also suspecting the involvement of other persons in the double murder and have intensified the investigation.

On Sunday, Toppo was taken to the crime scene in Hamirpur by the Chhattisgarh police where he reconstructed the murder.

"Following the confession about his involvement in the murder, we took Toppo to the

crime spot and tried to recreate the scene. He told that apart from a Bolero, an Innova car was also used to kill the duo. He also said there were some other persons in the Innova too," said police.

Meanwhile, a number of teams of Chhattisgarh police have been sent to Bhubaneswar and Jharsuguda for further investigation into the incident.

A team also visited the Lamitibahal SBI branch on Monday to examine the bank accounts of Sai which the cops claim could play a crucial role as evidence in the entire investigation.

Moreover, notices have been served to several people, including a relative of Kalpana, to appear in person at police station on Tuesday.

BJP protests PMAY houses named after Biju

BJD says nothing wrong as State bears 40% cost

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Assembly on Monday witnessed heated exchanges of words between the Opposition BJP and the ruling BJD over naming of rural housing projects on physical structures.

Raising the issue during the Zero Hour, Leader of Opposition Pradipta Naik severely criticised the State Government saying that houses constructed under the Prime Minister Awas Yojana (PMAY) are being named as the Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana, a State-scheme.

"The State Government has not allocated a single pie to provide houses under the Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana. It is disappointing that the State Government has named all houses constructed under the PMAY as BPGY houses," resented Naik.

He urged the Speaker to give a ruling to resolve the issue at the earliest. Soon, other BJP members joined the LoP in demanding a ruling. At this time, Government Chief Whip Pramila Mallick raised a Point of Order to speak on the issue. The Speaker said that Treasury Bench members should also be allowed keep their views.

"While the State Government is providing 60 per cent share, the State Government is providing 40 per cent share and is employing administration for implementation of the PMAY. What is the problem in naming the projects as BPGY," wanted to

know Mallick. She also demanded that the houses constructed under the PMAY as BPGY.

BJD member Debi Prasad Mishra said BJP members should not be impatient by the move. "Till 2014, the Union Governments had been funding rural houses 100 per cent. After the BJP-led NDA Government came to the power in 2014, it slashed the Central share to 60 per cent. If the State Government will not bear 40 per cent of expenditure, the houses can't be constructed. All should have patience," he said.

The Leader of Opposition protested it again and said let there be written "Central share 60% and State share 40%" on the walls of the houses. The Re-1-a-kg Rice schemes should also bear "Rs 27:Rs2:Re1" as Central Government, State Government and beneficiary's shares, respectively, he said.

5T Secy visits OUAT for inspection



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister's Transformation and Initiatives (5T) Secretary V Karthikeyan Pandian visited the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) here for an inspection early on Monday morning.

Pandian inspected the university's infrastructure facilities, including its students' hostels. Besides, he went to the Basic Science College and the College

of Forestry in the campus.

He had discussions with the university authorities and stressed on construction of a sports complex and more numbers of hostels for students. He also asked the officials concerned to maintain cleanliness in the campus.

Among others, OUAT Vice-Chancellor Pawan Kumar Agarwal and Basic Science College Director Bikash Chandra Panda were present during the 5T Secretary's visit.

pioneer interview of the week

OKCL has made 25L students computer-savvy in 5 years



Its uniqueness is being a Special Purpose Vehicle promoted by the Government, yet a self-sustaining autonomous company. Its DNA is PPCP (public, private and community partnership). Government support and community participation is essential to fulfil its mandates given by the Government.



What are the challenges you face in striving towards the mandate?

The major challenge is to offer education, governance and empowerment solutions and services to a large and diverse population with world-class quality at an affordable cost with widest accessibility from cities to rural, tribal and hilly areas. Over these years, the OKCL has built an image among its 400+ entrepreneur partners who established 400+

afford to migrate to cities. I am sure our effort to create workforces to grasp the opportunity for people has a potential to develop 2.5 million online freelancers. India has a potential to earn 20 billion US\$ through online freelancing by 2025.

What is your experience working with the Government?

It is always a wonderful experience to be part of the

The Odisha Knowledge Corporation Limited (OKCL) is not just a figment of imagination of the State Government. It is not either an idle piece of ostentation meant for displaying the vain glory of prodigality of the State exchequer. It is an essential need for bridging the digital divide in providing e-empowerment to the bottom of the pyramid in our society. This will act as a stair to every youth to climb the ladder of success. This will ensure an intersection of the four emerging trends of the 21st century: digitisation, virtualisation, mobilisation and mass-personalisation. The man here at the helm of affairs is Dr Manoranjan Puthal. Success has dawned upon him like no fluke. A senior management executive achieving sanguine success year after year with revenue profit, and business growth objectives within start-up, turnaround, and rapid-change environments, he follows his lofty goals from morning to midnight by making whirlwind tours to the nook and corner of the State the year around. A keen planner with expertise in project appraisal, evaluation, resource planning and deployment, project estimation, scheduling, tracking and implementation, he is an expert in strategic partnerships, leadership development, team leadership, operations management, customer relationship management and organic business growth. He also has wide-ranging experiences in ERP, CRM and PPP (BOOT) projects with complete delivery responsibility. He has worked with TISCO, AV Birla (EMIL), IndianOil, EC Railway, FACOR, Rungta Mines and Reliance Energy. He has earned a fat bouquet of awards in recognition of his achievements. In an interview to *The Pioneer*, Dr Puthal spoke to *Sugyan Choudhury*.

What's unique about Odisha Knowledge Corporation Limited?

The main mission of the OKCL is to create new paradigms in education, governance and empowerment of people at large in the context of an emerging knowledge-based society and knowledge-based economy. It attempts to bring about the mainstreaming of this unique educational transformation through a continuous blend of pedagogic, technology and business innovations. This will create a unique blend of four mega trends of 21st century -- digitisation, virtualisation, mobilisation and mass-personalisation. It aims at bridging the digital divide through universalisation and integration of information technology in all walks of life.

"Hard work is like stairs and luck is like lift.... Sometimes lift may fall but stairs will always take you at the top," says the immortal bard William Shakespeare

IT training centres across the State. It has created a positive impact through its digital literacy programme, OS-CIT. With its presence in all districts, the OKCL has remarkably improved the access to high-quality computer education at affordable costs to masses. It has built a huge workforce; and more than 1.5 l youths are ready for 21st-century workplaces through the OS-CIT digital literacy programme. It has also impacted school education in 4000 ICT computer labs in Government and Government-aided schools which has direct benefit to bridging the digital divide and make computer literacy and computer-aided education possible for 25 lakh students within a period of five years. The project has been evaluated by the Programme Performance & Outcome Monitoring Unit (PPOMU). The evaluation report states, "This project has visibly enhanced the level of motivation and engagement of students which has elevated the learning curve. The scholastic accomplishments of students, especially the slow learners, have increased due to greater clarity of students on the different subjects."

How have your products and technologies been beneficial for youths and for the society?

All its products and services deploy state-of-the-art eLearning, eGovernance and eEmpowerment technologies in collaboration with the MKCL, which has many proven technologies and been working for years since 2000. All the OKCL technologies, products, solutions and services are comparable to the best options in the global context in terms of architecture, performance and customer satisfaction. The need of the time is to create a sustainable local self-employment for semi-urban and rural youths who cannot

Government and its policies to reach the rural and semi urban masses. The mandates given to us enable our presence in all rural belts to empower the "Last Person First" with our eEmpowerment programmes. Since its incorporation, our Chairmen and Board Members have guided us rationally to grow organic. Till date, the OKCL has paid Rs 90 lakh to the Government as dividend and contribution to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. Besides, it has contributed over Rs 7 crore to the Government exchequer in different forms during last seven years. In fact, by setting up the OKCL, the Government has benefited the State in making available a huge pool of digital citizens and creating new opportunities for employment generation for the last-mile person.

What is your corporate culture like?

Our corporate culture is a happening thing evolving all the time naturally. We are not building it commercially. Our leaders are seeing the possibilities with the last-mile people to ignite their growth engine. We are not sitting on somebody's will; we are investing our time and energy to explore the possibilities with somebody to happen. Our corporate growth culture is to determine how many people's lives we are touching and how deep is our operation to reach the last person of our society. All our employees, network partners and learners are tuned to openness of exploring all ideas from every member; and we are proud of the decent culture that our organisation carries with integrity. Our aim is to create equal opportunity, to identify the areas to have decent and dignified work for youths without any prejudice, discrimination to race, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, regional origin and veteran or disability status.

B'swar man gets 20-yr RI for raping minor

PNS ■ BALESWAR

The Special POCSCO Court Judge and Additional Sessions Judge Girija Prasad Mohapatra on Monday convicted a rape accused and sentenced him to undergo 20 years' rigorous imprisonment (RI).

The court also asked the convict to pay Rs 30,000 as penalty and in default to undergo another 13 months imprisonment. The convict Augusta Singh (28) had committed the offence on August 15, 2017 and a case was registered against him under the Simulia police station based on the complaint of the victim's father. The case pertaining to a

14-year-old girl was marked as a Red flag case by the Crime Branch said Special Public Prosecutor Pranab Panda.

"The convict is sentenced different terms for crimes under different sections. However, since they would run concurrently he would undergo 20 years imprisonment. The court pronounced the judgment after cross examining 13 witnesses and verifying 28 exhibited documents," added Panda.

According to the case report the convict Augusta, a resident of Raghupur under the Baisinga PS of Mayurbhanj district had kidnapped the victim and committed the crime.

RSP eviction staffs threatened with sword

Man held; weapon seized; eviction stopped

PNS ■ ROURKELA

While attempting to clear an encroachment, the Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) staffers were threatened of dire consequences by the encroacher. Sources said that in the Fertilizer Township area one Bhajahari Rout has been residing for last many years building a house. While on Sunday he was making more constructions, the RSP officials and land guards prevented him.

But angry Rout soon threatened the RSP officials to kill them by flaunting a sword.



Terrorised, the RSP officials sought the help of police. Tangpalli police rushed to the spot, seized the sword and arrested Rout.

On the other hand, spouse of Rout lodged a police complaint that the RSP officials misbehaved with her. Basing on

her complaint, the police launched a probe. Meanwhile, the eviction process was stopped. Notably, a few days ago, similar law and order problem had occurred in Mishra Khatal Basti of Sector-20 under Sector-19 police station limits.

Scores from Chhatrapur join BJD

PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR

Eminent personalities of Chhatrapur Assembly constituency including senior lawyer Parama Mishra, Podapadar GP leader D Simanchal, D Karleya, D Surinarayan Achari and D Simhadri along with local leaders with hundreds of their supporters joined the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in a special function held at Chhatrapur on Sunday.

Former Assembly Deputy Speaker and Advisor of Odisha Agri Marketing Board Rama Chandra Panda, Chhatrapur MLA Subash Chandra Behera, Chhatrapur Block Chairman Dhanajaya Reddy, Zilla Parishad member Kishore Reddy and several other leaders attended the merger function and welcomed the leaders into the party fold.

Mystery shrouds minor girl's death in city

• Died falling off roof of apartment • Suicide suspected

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Mystery shrouded the death of a 14-year-old girl, who died when she fell off the terrace of a four-storey apartment building in the city on Sunday.

As per reports, the Class VIII student of a private school was seen on the terrace of Gitanjali Apartment in BJB Nagar area between 4.30 pm and 5 pm. Later she fell off from the apartment building.

The Badagada police have registered an unnatural death case and began investigation. It is not clear whether someone else was present at the apart-

ment's terrace apart from the girl. Police have also found the word 'Perfect' written with a pen on the forehead of the deceased.

However, a message that she posted on her Instagram handle few hours before her death indicates that she might have committed suicide by jumping off the building's terrace.

The Instagram status reads: "Bye Bye People". Later, after being asked by one of her friends about where she was



going, she replied 'Hell. May be Heaven.'

A police official said the body of the deceased has been handed over to her family after postmortem.

SC imposes ₹10L penalty on State

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha is among five States on which the Supreme Court on Monday imposed an additional penalty of Rs 5 lakh for having not deposited Rs 5 lakh imposed earlier and not complying with its direction to file affidavits on a PIL that pleads for setting up of community kitchens in the country.

Further, the other four States are Delhi, Maharashtra, Goa and Manipur. An apex court Bench headed by Justice NV Ramana declined some States' plea to exempt the additional penalty.

The court scheduled the next hearing on the matter on April 8.

Notably, the court had last week noted that only seven States and Union Territories have filed their affidavits in the matter of food security and community kitchens.

'Will BJD join Shah's pro-CAA rally?'

Cong MLA Saluja wants CM to clarify

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Congress MLA Santosh Singh Saluja on Monday demanded in the State Assembly that Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik clarify as to whether his party BJD would provide support to the pro-Citizenship Amendment Act rally to be addressed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Bhubaneswar on February 28 or not.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Saluja said the BJP and the BJD are working as brothers. They had formed Government in the State for

long nine years. Now, the BJD is supporting all Bills being brought by the BJP-led NDA Government. It had also supported the CAA in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. But after coming under pressure from different circles, the Chief Minister said his Government would not implement the National Register of Citizenship (NRC).

"BJP leader and Union Home Minister Amit Shah is coming to address a pro-CAA rally in Bhubaneswar on February 28. The Chief Minister should make a statement in the House as to whether BJD would attend the meeting and extend support to Shah," demanded Saluja.

Brutal assault on youth in city

7 including 3 minors nabbed; 9 still on run

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Saheed Nagar police have arrested seven persons including two minor boys on the charge of attacking a youth in Unit-9 area here on Saturday. The cops have also seized three vehicles used in the incident.

Shockingly, 14 of the 16 accused reportedly happen to be minors and are students of a reputed English medium school in the city.

According to sources, a member of the student wing of the BJD, Akash Dora was chatting with one of his friends near his house in Postal Colony in Unit-9 when around 16 to 20 motorbike-borne youths came and brutally attacked Dora, leaving him critically injured.

Dora was immediately rushed to a private hospital here where he is currently undergoing treatment.

So far, 16 of the attackers have been identified, among which seven have been arrested. All other accused in the case are reportedly absconding after the incident.

Later, the city DCP on Monday tweeted, "Seven accused persons have been arrested in connection with Saheednagar police station case no 87, with regard to the case of assault on a youth near



postal colony, Unit-9. Three vehicles used by the accused persons have also been seized. Efforts are on to nab the others involved," it said.

While initial reports claimed that the attack could be fallout of political rivalry, sources also suggest that there could be a possible triangular love affair behind the attack.

Narasingha raps Govt for rising murders, loots

Speaker directs Min to take note of issues

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Congress Legislature Party Leader Narasingha Mihsra on Monday severely criticised the Government for rising incidents of murder, loot and other law and order incidents in the State.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Mihsra read out some murder and loot related headlines from a vernacular daily and said, "There is no rule of law in the State. Rather, a

jungle rule has prevailed all over the State."

He cited incidents of all family members of a man killed by his younger brother for property in Sundargarh district, killing of two youths, including a journalist, in the Banki area, loot in a shop in Balangir and attack on a nurse at the Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital. Mihsra demanded a statement from the Chief Minister on the law and order issues and a direction



from the Chair on the hospital matter.

Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro directed the Minister of State for Home to take note of the law and order issues raised by Mihsra.

3 K'jhar mining firms' assets to be seized

For nonpayment of fines

MALAY MOHAPATRA ■ KEONJHAR

The Keonjhar district Collector has issued orders to seize assets of three mining companies who have failed to pay penalty imposed by court for illegal mining. He has also ordered to freeze the bank accounts of the companies too, which included M/s SD Sharma, M/s Arjun Lodha and M/s Gandhamardan Sponge Industries Ltd. Another defaulter mining company Mid East Integrated Steel Ltd had filed an appeal at the Central Mines Tribunal for recalculation of the penalty for which the Collector has ordered the company to comply with deposit of penalty within a week. Hearing a certificate case,

Collector Ashis Thakare issued warrant to confiscate the property and assets including vehicles and machinery of SD Sharma, besides freezing their bank accounts. Similarly in an OPDR case, the Gandhamardan sponge had defaulted in paying Rs 295 crore for which its assets and bank accounts were ordered to be seized for realization of the fines. Again in another OPDR case, Arjun Lodha was declared guilty of nonpayment of penalty and all its assets and bank accounts were ordered for seizure. Since the company office and assets are outside the State, proper legal steps would be taken for seizure of assets outside Odisha, the Collector said. So far, cases have been booked against 23 mining companies holding 31 leases and steps were initiated to collect a total sum of Rs 6,350 crore penalty from them.

Security forces, Maoists exchange fire

Ultras' uniforms, mobiles, kits seized



PNS ■ MALKANGIRI

A gun battle broke out between security forces and Maoists in the Bondapada-Sambalpur forest area under the Mudulipada police station in Malkangiri district on Sunday. But there were no reports of any casualties from any of the sides. Acting on inputs about the movement of 20 to 30 armed Red rebels in the forest,

a joint team of District Voluntary Force (DVF) and Special Operations Group (SOG) of Odisha police launched a combing operation, during which the ultras spotting

the security forces opened fire. In the face of heavy retaliation by the jawans, the rebels backtracked and managed to escape into the dense forest leaving behind their belongings and articles. Maoist uniforms, kit bags, mobile phone and other articles were seized from the encounter site. Security forces have intensified search operations in the area to trace the fleeing Maoists.

Vegetable Jagannath idol in marriage feast sparks row



PNS ■ BALESWAR

Idols of a Hindu god and a Hindu goddess carved out of vegetables at a marriage reception feast in Baleswar town on Sunday night have sparked huge resentment among locals. The picture of this food art is doing the rounds on social media. The idols of Lord Jagannath and Maa Tarini were kept at the dining space of the marriage venue at Hotel Suraj in Sahadevkhunta. The idols were on display

while non-vegetarian food was being served at the party. This has drawn severe criticism from guests and social media users. An invitee posted a picture of this on social media platform where the users expressed their discontentment. "Food art is a form of art and it should not be used to demean our gods and goddesses. We should respect our culture and tradition. Appropriate steps should be taken so that it is not repeated again," an invitee expressed.

Nesco drive in 5 dists 832 consumers' connections snapped

₹1.25-cr arrears recovered

PNS ■ BALESWAR

Cracking the whip on defaulting electricity consumers, the Nesco snapped connection of 832 consumers and recovered Rs 1.25 crore pending amount. According to the reports, the company had formed 98 squads for five districts, including Baleswar, Bhadrak, Mayurbhanj, Jajpur and Keonjhar to take remedial measures against the whopping pending amount of Nesco from the consumers. In Baleswar, 27 squads while recovered Rs 21.42 lakh from 451 consumers and

snapped supply of 282 consumers, in Bhadrak power connections of 130 consumers were severed while Rs 14.55 lakh was recovered from 402 errant consumers. Similarly, in Baripada, Rs 41 lakh was recovered from 456 consumers by 22 squads while connections for 183 defaulters were severed. In Jajpur, 18 squads besides recovering Rs 12.10 lakh from 330 consumers, cut off the power connections 112. In the Keonjhar district, the 14 engaged squads severed connections of 125 consumers and recovered about Rs 12 lakh. Thus the total disconnections while reached 832, the recovered amount was about Rs 1.25 crore, said sources adding that such exercise would continue in future too to recover the pending amount and actions in case of nonpayment of arrear dues.

B'pur Lions Club camp ₹24 lakh worth of kits distributed to disabled

PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR

The Lions Club, Brahmampur organised a district level camp for distribution of disabled kits at Gokuldhama, Gosaninuagaon, here on Sunday. While Lion Sarasati Patra presided, Brahmampur MP Chandrasekhar Sahu joined as chief guest. Brahmampur MLA Bikram Kumar Panda, Gopalpur MLA Dr Pradip Kumar Panigrahi, former MLA Ramesh Chandra Chayupattanaik and former BDA Chairman Subash Chandra Maharana attended as honourable guests. Besides, former district governor, Lion Prasant Kumar Tripathy, Lion Er. Padmava Rao, Lion Dr NC Padhi and Lion Suresh

Chandra Padhi were present. In the camp, as many as 149 differently-abled got tri-cycles, 38 got wheel chairs, 92 got hearing aids and 13 got artificial limbs. Besides, 166 walking sticks, four smart phones and 20 blinding sticks were distributed. Total 297 persons got kits worth Rs 23.51 lakh. The dignitaries focused on the development of the disabled and bringing them to the mainstream. District Social Security Officer Subhansu Kumar Maharana, ALIMCO chief KD Gote and manager Dilip Kumar Samal among



others spoke. Gokuldhama founder Jagannath Rout, Lion Soumik Sahu, Lion Bharati Patra, Lion Debiprabha Ratha, Lion Sujata Das, Lion Arnapurna Behera, Lion Chabindra Patra, Lion Minati Patra, Lion Namita Rani Rout, Lion Kumudini Choudhury, Lion Sisir Das, Lion Laxminarayan Mohanty and Lion Rabi Narayan Mishra assisted.

State Lokayukta registers 272 cases

Disposes of 56

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

The Odisha Lokayukta has registered 272 cases this year of which 56 have been disposed of till now, Chairman Justice Ajit Singh said. He urged people to directly approach the Lokayukta with complaints of corruption against any public servant. "In 2020, we registered 272 cases of which 56 have been disposed of as of now," Singh said here. The Lokayukta had received 1,418 complaints against corruption in the year 2019 of which 166 cases have been disposed of, he said on Saturday. 29 cases of erstwhile Lokpals are pending for disposal and 1,223 cases involving personal grievances have been transferred to the State

Government under the Odisha Lokayukta Act. Singh called upon the people to come forward to fight corruption and alleged corrupt practices are being perpetrated by influential and powerful people. "All public servants including the Chief Minister, MPs, MLAs and other public representatives come under the purview of Lokayukta. Complaints lodged against them will be duly dealt with in accordance with the Lokayukta law," he said. The Odisha Lokayukta Act came into effect from July 7, 2018, and the Lokayukta was established on February 28, 2019, to inquire into allegations of corruption against certain public functionaries. Justice Singh joined the office as the first Chairperson of Odisha Lokayukta on March 20, 2019.

Andhra Bank disburses housing loans

PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR

Ahead of the visit of Executive Director of Andhra Bank Khulbhusan Singh to Brahmampur zone, a meeting was organised by the Aska Road branch to provide housing loans to the beneficiaries of housing complex built under Rajiv Awas Yojana by the Brahmampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) under Slum Area Development Programme. The housing complex was developed by the BeMC for providing affordable pucca houses to the slum dwellers for their rehabilitation. The meeting was attended by CGM Ramakanta Pradhan, DGM Bhubaneswar Nayak and AGM of Brahmampur Zone Anoj Kumar Pradhan along with Branch Manager of Aska Road. Andhra Bank has taken a lead for financing about 2,000 housing units within the BeMC area out of which Aska Road branch has already sanctioned loans for 600 units in three complexes located in Somnath Nagar, Niladri Vihar and Dhoba Bandha Huda. Jain lauded the initiative taken by the bank in providing housing loan for rehabilitation of the slum dwellers and thus fulfilling a social cause. He urged the beneficiaries for timely repayment of the loan. The dwellers of the com-



plex were happy and expressed their gratitude to the Andhra Bank. They also assured to pay the monthly loan instalments regularly. Jain distributed the sanction letters to the beneficiaries. Vote of thanks was given by Branch Manager, Aska Road, Bashudev Swain.

Two killed as truck hits bike in Boudh

PNS ■ BOUDH

Two persons were killed and three others injured in a head-on collision between an Omni vehicle and motorcycle near Khatkhatia Metakani temple under the Manamunda police station in Boudh district on Sunday evening. One of the deceased was identified as Kishore Swain of Gopalimala village whereas the identity of the other person is yet to be ascertained. The Omni vehicle which was on its way to Kantamal from Manamunda hit the motorcycle coming from oppo-

site direction. Kishore, who was driving the motorcycle died on the spot. Four others injured in the accident were rushed to the Subarnapur District Headquarters Hospital. While undergoing treatment at the hospital, one of the injured succumbed. Alleging delay in arrival of the 108 ambulance, locals staged a blockade on the road affecting vehicular movement. Also, the agitators demanded adequate compensation for families of the deceased. Later, police reached the spot and pacified the protesting locals.

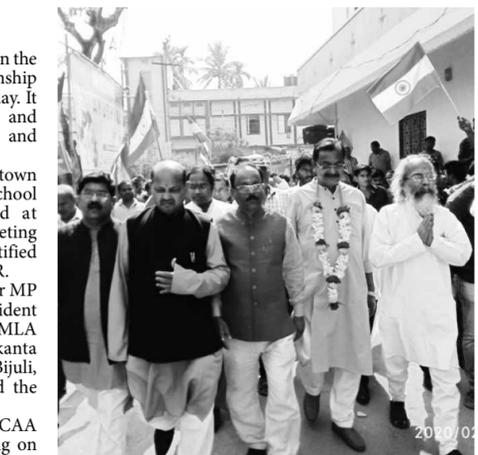
₹2L looted from PEO in Rayagada

RAYAGADA: Unidentified miscreants looted Rs 2 lakh from a Panchayat Executive Officer (PEO) at Derasahi in Gunupur area in the district on Monday. The incident came to the fore when the victim, identified as Balaram Mahapatra, lodged a complaint with police. According to sources, Balaram had withdrawn Rs 2 lakh from State Bank of India. After reaching home, Balaram was taking out the bag containing the money from his motorbike dicky when some masked miscreants reached the spot and snatched away the cash bag from him and sped away from the spot. Based on the complaint, police launched a probe into the incident.

BJP holds pro-CAA rally in Baleswar

PNS ■ BALESWAR

The BJP staged a massive rally in the support of the CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) here on Monday. It was attended by party leaders and workers of Baleswar, Bhadrak and Mayurbhanj districts. The rally went around the town beginning from the Mission School compound and culminated at Gopalgaon, where a public meeting was held where the speakers justified the need of CAA, NRC and NPR. Union Minister and Baleswar MP Pratap Sarangi, party State president Samir Mohanty, Baleswar Sadar MLA MM Dutta, Nilgiri MLA Sukanta Nayak, Badasahi MLA Santan Bijuli, among other leaders, addressed the meeting. Samir Mohanty said the pro-CAA campaign in the State was going on since January and this was the last one ahead of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to the State on February 28 when he would address a massive gathering in support of the



CAA. Mohanty alleged that it is the Congress along with some small political parties which is misleading people about the CAA.

Protest held against CAA in N'rangpur

PNS ■ NABARANGPUR

Hundreds of people of all religions came together and took out a massive rally to protest the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) here on Monday. The protesters gathered under the banner of the District ST, SC Christian and Muslim Minority Forum at the Chamuriaguda ground and marched towards the district Collectorate, submitted a memorandum to the Collector

which was addressed to the President of India urging for non-implementation of the controversial laws. The protesters said that religious discrimination in the name of the CAA would not be accepted by them. They also opposed the National Register of Citizens (SRC). Police personnel, who were deployed to maintain law and order, cordoned the Collectorate to prevent the agitators from enter into the office. However, the protest remained peaceful.

Jumbo terror goes unabated in B'swar

Many residents rendered homeless

PNS ■ BALESWAR

The residents of Raibania (Jaleswar) were living in fear as migrant elephants continued to wreck havoc in the area for over a month. In the meantime, while the administration had not been able to take any tangible steps to provide relief to the residents, several people had been rendered homeless after their dwelling houses were pulled down by the jumbos. They were taking shelter under polythene roofs and on verandahs.

A tusker broke the boundary wall of Dhanghera forest office as well. The residents said that a herd of 18 pachyderms was camping in a cashew jungle of Rangamatia and Bhadua. The villagers alleged that the Forest department had failed to drive the elephants out. "There is no coconut and mango trees left in the area," said a villager. They alleged that the Forest department had spent over Rs 1 lakh in blasting crackers to scare away the elephants but to no avail. They demanded deployment of horses like it was done in Mayurbhanj to chase away the elephants.

Union Budget analysed at UCCI meet

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Utkal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UCCI) held an analysis on the Union Budget 2020-21 here on Saturday under the chairmanship of its president Ramesh Mahapatra. Former State Finance Minister Panchanan Kanungo, NINL Managing Director Sashi Sekhar Mohanty, senior chartered accountant Rajib Sekhar Sahoo and Dean, KSOM, Bhubaneswar, Dr Satya Narayan Mishra attended the programme as resource persons. Kanungo predicted that the GDP would not exceed 5%

in the coming financial year. SS Mohanty, while applauding the Budget in right perspective, mentioned that the proposals of Corporate Tax and the manufacturer and power sectors are quite acceptable. Chartered accountant Sahoo welcomed the proposals taken for nationalised banks. Dr Mishra mentioned that this is a budget for the people and predicted that next year the GDP would be around 6% to 6.5%. UCCI VP (Commerce) AK Sharda and VP (Industry) Saswata Patnaik were also present on the dais. VP (General) Dipak S Rathor proposed a vote of thanks.

Sabar tribals hold demo in Bhubaneswar

'Give power to DMs to correct caste error in land patta'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Thousands of Sabar tribals from all over the State, led by activist Er Debashisha Hota, congregated under the banner of Odisha Praja Sangharsha Samiti at Lower PMG on Monday. They demanded before CM Naveen Patnaik to delegate power of caste correction in RORs to all district Collectors. Over 6,000 women participated in the rally. The agitators from the poor Sabar tribe warned of continuing the stir for an indefinite period if their genuine demand was not fulfilled. Notably, 11 years ago on



June 12, 2009, a letter on proposal of rectification of all land RORs from "Saara" to "Sabar" had been submitted by the then Principal Secretary in ST and SC Development Department to the Commissioner-cum-Secretary in Revenue and Disaster Management Department to delegate the power of Member of Board of Revenue to Collectors, so that erroneous recording of caste in RORs could be rectified at lower level. Unfortunately, the proposal was still pending. Hota alleged that for the deliberate negligence, the poor "Sabar" tribals were deprived of all types of Government benefits as they were not given the status of ST. "Even if in some places, the father's caste is recorded as Saara and his son's recorded as Sabar. Due to the mistakes, while the father is not recognized as ST, son is recognized so," lamented Hota.

State invites AIS officers to join on deputation

To help run administration

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

With the State Government facing shortage of officers to run the show, it has invited All India Services (AIS) and Allied Services to join Odisha Government on deputation basis.

The Department of General Administration and Public Grievance (DoGAPG) has invited applications from Group A officers of AIS and Allied Services at the level of Director and below to serve in the Government of Odisha for a period of 3 to 5 years.

Inter cadre deputations are allowed by the Government of India and the State Government is interested to rope in services of Group A officers having proven track record of delivering results.

In fact, earlier, a number of



officers have come to Odisha from various All India Services and served exceedingly well. However, for the first time, the State Government has issued an advertisement in this regard and sought applications.

Now, senior IRS, IRTS officers are holding crucial posts in the State administration and have proved their mettle. Those officers who will apply will be posted keeping in view their experience and expertise in respective fields, once they are cleared by the respective cadre

controlling authorities. With advertisements out in several national newspapers, a lot of interest has been generated among the AIS officers as Odisha is peaceful, its climate is conducive and there is a most stable Government running in the State.

Officials are given free hand to handle the affairs and there is little political interference, said an IAS officer serving in Kerala, who is interested to work under the Odisha Government.

DM grievances camp held at Pallahara



PNS ■ PALLAHARA

A Collector grievance hearing programme was held here on Monday where Collector Angul Manoj Kumar Mohanty heard grievances of 120 persons pertaining to education, land deeds, health, drinking water, electricity and KALIA Scheme etc.

Mohanty solved 92 grievances on the spot.

Sub-Collector Pallahara Ajit Kumar Pradhan, Block Chairman Naba Naik, Additional SP Jagannath Hasda, Deputy Collector Becious Ddungdung, CDMO Amarendra Mohanty, PD DRDA Atulya Champatiray along with officials of the sub-division were present. Collector Mohanty went to Jamaradhi Kanyashram and inquired about the problems of the hostel.

Diet allowance for players increased in Haryana

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana government has increased the diet allowance of sportspersons participating in State and national-level school sports competitions, Education Minister Kanwar Pal said on Monday. He said the diet allowance of sportspersons participating in state-level school sports competition will be increased from ₹125 to ₹200 per day and for the players who participate in the national-level competition the allowance will be increased from ₹200 to ₹250 per day.

The Education Minister said sportspersons of Haryana have been dominating in competition like, Khelo India, Asian, Commonwealth, and Olympic Games. Haryana has made it to the second place in Khelo-India in the last two years despite being a small state.

INBRIEF

CM'S RS 1-CR GRANT TO B'PUR MOSQUE HAILED



Brahmapur: BJD Minority Cell secretary Md Faiz Khan and the Muslim community here hailed the move by Chief Minister to sanction Rs 1 crore for the renovation of Jama Masjid of Brahmapur. The financial grant would come as a boost for the development of the old mosque. Notably, CM Patnaik has sanctioned Rs 16 crore for the development of religious institutions of the minorities in the State.

CHIDATMIKA GETS DOCTORATE FROM C'WEALTH VOCATIONAL VARSITY



Bhubaneswar: Odisha social entrepreneur and founder of India's first Tribal Queen Contest, Dr Chidatmika Khatua has been conferred with various national and international awards for her social work. Recently, she was conferred with an Honorary Doctorate from the Commonwealth Vocational University, Kingdom of Tonga, UAE, for her outstanding contribution for tribal development. On this occasion, her book on tribal development "Adi Rani" (Queen of Queens) was also launched.

SHALLU JINDAL GETS URBASHEE AWARD



Bhubaneswar: Noted Kuchipudi danseuse and JSPL Foundation chairperson Shalalu Jindal has been honoured with the Urbashee Award for her contribution to Indian dance and music. She received the award here on Sunday during the music festival 'Kamala Desha Rajakumara' organised by the Prafulla Kar Foundation and the Sanskar on the occasion of the 81st birthday of eminent musician Prafulla Kar.

24-HR INTER-COLLEGE COMPUTER MARATHON AT TRIDENT



Bhubaneswar: A nonstop 24-hour inter-college marathon computer programming/coding (Hackathon) competition final (TRITHON 2020) was held at the Trident Academy of Technology here recently. The event had 28 teams as finalists who continued working overnight. Prizes of Rs 50,000, Rs 30,000 and Rs 20,000 were handed over to the winners Xaviers University Bhubaneswar, Trident Academy of Technology and Gandhi Institute for Technology, respectively. Trident Group of Institutions Chairperson Dr RN Behera, Trident Academy Principal Smitarani Panigrahi, Dr MN Dwivedi and Dean Prof AK Samal were present.

MINOR BOY LOSES FINGERS IN BATTERY BLAST

Bhadrak: A minor boy lost three fingers and another was also injured in a battery explosion at Tarasuni village under the Thidi police limits in Bhadrak district on Sunday night. The victims, students of Classes-IV and VI, were recharging a battery of a microphone when it exploded severing the fingers of right hand of the Class-IV student. The duo was initially rushed to the Thidi Community Health Centre and later shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital for better treatment.

COBRA PANIC IN JSPUR COLLECTORATE

Jagatsinghpur: Panic struck the Jagatsinghpur district Collectorate



when a cobra was found on the office verandah on Monday at around 11.30 am when a large number of people had gathered for a public hearing. The frightened public started running away from the premises. While everyone was asking to contact the Snake Helpline to catch the venomous snake, a courageous youth rescued the cobra, which was hiding under a mat on the verandah and confined it in a plastic container.

BJP protests 'irregularities' in question selection

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Assembly was adjourned till 11.30 am today as Opposition BJP members protested the alleged irregularities in selection of questions for discussions in the House.

As the House met at 10.30 am, BJP Chief Whip Mohan Charan Majhi stood up at his seat and alleged that questions being put by members are not being selected through lottery system for discussion in the House. Rather, they are being chosen by concerned Ministers to suit their wishes, he alleged.

While Majhi demanded that the Speaker give a direction to resolve the issue,

Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro asked him to take his seat and participate in the Question Hour discussion. He informed he has received a letter from the Leader of Opposition and asked Majhi to come to his chamber later for a discussion.

However, Majhi and his party MLAs did not accept the proposal and rushed to the Well of the House and shouted slogans. Unable to run the proceedings, Patro adjourned the House at 10.32 am till 11.30 pm and subsequently twice till 11.45 am. Later, he said he has not found any irregularity and assured that all members would be informed about the selected questions by the Assembly Secretariat.

BJP flays State's dipping growth rate

Govt's inefficiency exposed: Mohanty

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The BJP targeted the BJD Government for dipping growth rate in the State after the Economic Survey Report tabled in the Assembly on Monday projected that the GSDP in 2019-20 would come down to 6.16 per cent from 7.90 per cent in 2018-19.

State BJP president Samir Mohanty told reporters that the GSDP in the State has been decreasing constantly from 7.94 per cent in 2015-16 to 7.14 per cent in 2016-17.

Mohanty told that the contribution of the services sector to the economy too has decreased from 45.25 per cent in 2018-19 to 40.51 per cent in 2019-20. Similarly, the contribution of agriculture and allied sector too is 19.90 per cent. While 62 per cent of the population of the State is farmers, the negligible contribution of the farming sector has pointed out their wretched conditions, told Mohanty.

He also flayed the galloping loan burden which is calculated to be Rs 1,6,526 crore by the end of this financial year. Mohanty told that though the per capita income has increased compared to the previous year, but it is still less than the rate of other States and national average. Mohanty told that the poverty alleviation slogan of the State Government was hollow and a mere self advertisement.

5th FC sets ₹50K cr for State PRIs, ULBs

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Fifth Finance Commission (FC) has assessed total requirements of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) at Rs 50,282 crore.

The Government has taken decision for distribution of devolution amount among the three-tier PRIs (Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad) in the ratio of 60:30:10 with 50 per cent tied up funds. During the fourth SFC, it was in the order of 70:25:05.

As per the action taken report on the recommendation of the Fifth Finance Commission of the Odisha State Finance Commission which was tabled in the State

Assembly on Saturday, the total amount of transfer to PRIs as recommended by the Commission would remain unchanged.

"During the fourth SFC, it was in the order of 70:25:05. But the Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department has suggested the three tiers of PRIs in the order of 60:30:10 and out of 30 per cent allocated to Panchayat Samitis, 50 per cent will be tied up for drinking water, sanitation, solid waste management and rest 50 per cent will be united fund to be utilised for providing basic services like communication, improvement of secondary educational institutions and health care institutions like CHCs and PHCs," it said.

BJD, BJP are anti-SC, ST, OBC: Congress

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Congress on Monday lashed out at the BJD Government in Odisha and the BJP-led Government at the Centre alleging that both are against providing reservations to the SCs, STs and OBCs.

Speaking at a Press conference here, AICC Odisha in-charge Jitendra Singh said the BJD Government has failed to provide required quota to OBCs and Socially and Economically Backward Classes (SEBCs) in last 20 years.

While over 94 per cent of Odisha's population is eligible to get caste-based reservations, only six per cent are getting all benefits, he said, adding some States are providing total quotas much higher than 50 per cent.

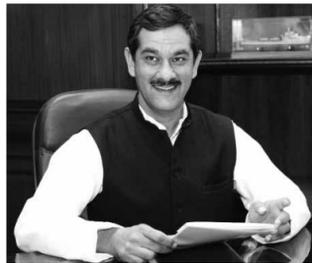
While Tamil Nadu provides a total quota of 69 per cent, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra have raised it to

67 per cent, he claimed.

He demanded that the State should immediately implement 27 per cent reservation for OBCs and 38.5 per cent quota for SCs and STs in employment and education.

Hitting out at the BJP, he said the BJP Government is misleading the entire nation and the Parliament. Instead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi apologising to the country for their conspiracy and correcting the historical wrong being done to the SC, ST and OBCs, the BJP is trying to shift the responsibility by leveling false allegations.

Also the BJP permitted the Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 to be quashed in the Supreme Court



and it was only after the Congress blocked the Parliament, the act was restored. Dalit atrocities as per NCRB data has reached 43, 2033. Even the backlog in SC, ST and OBC jobs continues, he added.

Time has come to launch a nationwide agitation and ensure that the conspiracy of the BJP of abolition of fundamental rights of reservation of SC, ST and OBCs in Government jobs is defeated, said Singh.

Khattar holds pre-Budget consultation with MLAs

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Monday held pre-budget consultation meeting with different stakeholders including the MLAs and described it as a historical step, adding that Haryana is probably the first State in the country where the Budget of the State is being finalized with the participation of all.

In the inaugural of 3-day Pre-Budget Consultation Meeting 2020-21 at Panchkula, Deputy Chief Minister, Dushyant Chautala, Speaker, Haryana Vidhan Sabha Gian Chand Gupta and Deputy Speaker Ranbir Gangwa were also present in the meeting. MLAs from different polit-

ical parties gave their suggestions on different topics including measures to increase farmer's income, eliminate stubble burning, improve the receding ground water table, fisheries, increase production and productivity and nutritional and adequate food for all.

In his address, the Chief Minister said that it is a matter pride that today the MLAs have given their suggestions by rising above the party lines and assured them that all their viable suggestions would be incorporated in the State Budget for the year 2020-21.

Khattar made it clear that the Budget is yet to be finalized assuring that suggestions to be given by the public representa-

tives in 6 sessions during the 3-day discussion would be given due importance in the upcoming budget. He exhorted the opposition parties not to politicize this issue which holds great public importance.

The Chief Minister said that prior to the consultation with MLAs, he also held pre-budget consultations with different other stakeholders including those associated with industry, service sector, agriculture, real estate, women and MPs. He said that even Lok Sabha Speaker felt extremely happy when he was informed about this initiative of the State Government where the suggestions of the people are being taken before finalizing the budget.

BHUBANESWAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
e-Procurement Notice
e-Mail: ee1@bmc.gov.in

- Bid Reference No. : BMC-DIV-1-14/2019-20 Dt.15.02.2020
- Tender Call Notice No : 5606 dtd.15.02.2020
- No. of works : 35 (Thirty Five)
- Bid Value : Rs.212681/- to Rs.59,27,202/-
- Period of Completion : 15 days to 120 days

Date and Time Schedule		
Start	End	Opening
11.00 A.M of 20.02.2020	5.00 P.M of 03.03.2020	4.30 P.M of 04.03.2020

6. Tender details can be seen for the e-Procurement portal <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in> & BMC Website <https://www.bmc.gov.in>

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
BMC Division-1
OIPR-13002/11/0015/1920

Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. 13 of 2019-20

1	Number of Works	: 1 no. of Building work
2	Estimated Cost	: Rs. 23.01 Lakh
3	Period of Completion	: 6 calendar months
4	Date & Time of availability of Bid documents in the Portal	: 20/02/2020 at 11:00 hrs
5	Last date & time for receipt of Bids in the Portal	: 27/02/2020 at 17:00 hrs
6	Last date & time of seeking tender clarification in the Portal	: 26/02/2020 at 15:00 hrs
7	Date of Opening of Tender	: 28/02/2020 at 11:00 hrs
8	Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Jagatsinghpur

Further details can be seen from the Government website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Rural Works Division
Jagatsinghpur
OIPR-25056/11/0011/1920

e- Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.- DMID / 04 / 2019-20
No 267 / Dt. 11.02.2020

The Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division Dhenkanal on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites online Item rate tender through "e" procurement to be received in online mode only for the works as detailed in the Annexure to this bid notice.

Name of the work	: Balance Work of Head Works of Damsal MIP (Res) in Kankadahad Block of Dhenkanal District under DRIP Scheme for the year 2019-20
No. of Works	: 01 (One) Only
Estimated Cost	: 44.00 lakh (Approximately)
Cost of Tender Paper	: 6000/- (Non- Refundable)
Period of Completion	: 03 (Three) Calendar months
Availability of bid documents for sale and receipt through on-line	: From dt.20.02.2020, 10.00 A.M, to dt.06.3.2020, up to 5.00 P.M.
Last date / time of receipt of bids in the portal	: 06.03.2020 (5.00PM)
Date of opening of bid through online	: On dt. 07.3.2020 at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the E.E, M.I. Division, Dhenkanal.
Mode of payment of Bid Cost and Bid security	: Online
Digital Signature Certificate of Bidder	: The Bidder must possess compatible digital signature certificate (DSC).

The detail tender call notice can also be seen in the DOWR web site <http://dowrorissa.gov.in>

Name & Address of the OIT : Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Dhenkanal. At I.P.O/District - Dhenkanal. Ph.No/Fax No.-06762-224461, Email ID:eeimidl@yahoo.co.in

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement market place. <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
M.I.Division, Dhenkanal
OIPR-32027/11/0007/1920

SEXUAL HARASSMENT CASE

HRD to pursue action against Prof Jena

Enquiry was stopped due to Delhi Assembly elections

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

With the electioneering process over in the national Capital and Arvind Kejriwal back at the helm, the Union HRD Ministry is now planning to pursue the initiation of administrative action against a former Central Government employee, currently working as Professor and Dean at Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD), falling under the purview of the Delhi Government.

The don, Professor Sitanshu Shekar Jena, was held guilty of sexual harassment at workplace by HRD Ministry's Internal Complaints Committee during his tenure as Chairman of National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). Subsequently, IGNOU, parent cadre, had punished him by reducing his pay band and

- The don, Professor Sitanshu Shekar Jena works as Professor and Dean at Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD), falling under purview of the Delhi Government
● The don was held guilty of sexual harassment at workplace by HRD Ministry's Internal Complaints Committee during his tenure as Chairman of National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). Subsequently, IGNOU, parent cadre, had punished him by reducing his pay band and increments
● There are allegations in the complaints to the

increments.

There are allegations in the complaints to the HRD Ministry and the Delhi Government that Jena concealed the punishment fact when applying for the post at AUD. Further, he also did not inform his parent department while applying to AUD. And to facilitate his appointment in AUD, he applied for VRS from IGNOU.

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, as

HRD Ministry and the Delhi Government that Jena concealed the punishment fact when applying for the post at AUD.

- Further, he also did not inform his parent department while applying to AUD. And to facilitate his appointment in AUD, he applied for VRS from IGNOU
● Jena was appointed by the Delhi Government as Professor and Dean in the AUD School of Vocational Studies almost two years ago
● For his part, Jena said he was not aware of the complaints and such matters against him

Education Minister in his last tenure, had initiated a probe a year ago and a report was to be submitted within seven days but which hasn't been done so far. The inordinate delay in the proceedings has now led the HRD Ministry to pursue the matter as it has received complaints against the AUD Professor.

Jena was appointed by the Delhi Government as Professor and Dean in the AUD School of Vocational Studies almost two

years ago. A senior official said now that the elections are over and the Delhi Government is in place, the matter will be expedited and taken up in the first meeting of Education Ministry.

For his part, Jena said he was not aware of the complaints and such matters against him. "I am not a Central Government employee anymore as I have already taken VRS from IGNOU three years ago. When the case, which is

being talked about now, has already been settled then no controversy stands," Jena told The Pioneer over phone.

Under the Government rules, sexual harassment invokes a major punishment which includes dismissal from service. IGNOU recently took strict action against an official found guilty of sexual harassment by immediately suspending him and then awarding a major punishment.

"As per the allegation of manipulation against Dr Jena, it was also stated that he was given undue favour by awarding a minor punishment and that too retrospectively which is against rules. Jena also has an inquiry of financial irregularity pending against him when he applied. The Delhi Government probe is expected to look into the role of AUD officials too," sources said at the HRD Ministry.

ED unearths unaccounted ₹3.75 cr cash, 39 kg gold

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) unearthed unaccounted cash worth ₹3.75 crore and over 39 kg of gold and silver after conducting raids in Jaipur, Kolkata and Chennai against jewellers associated with an alleged gold-smuggling hawala racket.

The ED claimed that the action under Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) has led to detection of "huge evasion" of customs duty, GST as well as Income Tax.

"The ED received reliable input that Maharaja Jewellers (proprietor Tara Chand Soni), Bhagwati Jewellers (owner Ram Gopal Soni) and Ladiwala Associates (owner Honey Ladiwala) of Jaipur were purchasing smuggled gold bars from Harsh Bothra of Chennai and Banka Bullions Pvt. Ltd etc," the agency said in a statement.

While acting on the information, it was found that vari-

HAWALARACKET

Agency too discovered over 39 kg of gold and silver after conducting raids in Jaipur, Kolkata and Chennai against jewellers associated with an alleged gold-smuggling hawala racket



ous individuals were involved in smuggling of gold bars and subsequent dispatch of those to Jaipur. Gold bars were mainly arriving in Jaipur via Kolkata and had high purity level, it said.

The suspects used to remove the foreign mark of manufacturer or bank engraved or embossed on the gold bars and then smuggle those into the country, the ED said. These

bars were then dispatched to various domestic markets by different modes of transportation to evade action from the law enforcement agencies.

The accused jewellers did not account for jewellery manufactured from smuggled gold and illegal funds generated were then transferred through hawala agents based in these cities, the agency said.

Hawala denotes the illegal manner of transferring funds by skirting banking channels and dealing in cash through agents. "Searches at various premises in Jaipur, Kolkata and Chennai resulted in seizure of unaccounted Indian and foreign currency worth ₹3.75 crore, gold bar and jewellery weighing 26.97 kg and silver weighing 12.22 kg along with incriminating documents. Electronic and digital devices seized are still to be examined and may lead to further details of illegal dealings," the agency added.

India issues strong demarche to Turkey on Kashmir remarks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Following its President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's comments expressing concern over the prevailing situation in Kashmir and comparing the "struggle" of Kashmiri people with that of the fight by the Turkish during the World War I, India on Monday issued a strong demarche to Turkey.

In a strongly worded statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Erdogan's remarks reflected neither an understanding of history nor of the conduct of diplomacy and that they will have strong implications on India's ties with Turkey. MEA Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said India rejected the repeated attempts by Turkey to justify the cross-border terrorism "practised so blatantly" by Pakistan.

In an address to a joint session of Pakistan's Parliament on Friday, Erdogan compared the "struggle" of Kashmiri people with that of the fight by Turkish people against foreign domination during the World War I, and threw his weight behind Islamabad on the Kashmir

issue. "India has made a strong demarche with the Turkish government on the remarks made by President Erdogan on the Indian Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir during his recent visit to Islamabad. These remarks reflect neither an understanding of history nor of the conduct of diplomacy," Kumar said in a statement.

He said the Turkish President's remarks "distorted" events of the past to advance a "narrow minded" view of the present. "This recent episode is but one more example of a pattern of Turkey interfering in the internal affairs of other countries. India finds that completely unacceptable," Kumar said.

The demarche was made by Secretary (West) Vikash Swarup to the Ambassador of Turkey.

JAMIAVIDEO

Cong stands for those operating against country's interests: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday condemned the Congress for "giving political colour" to the violence at Jamia Millia Islamia on December 15 last year saying the party criticises security forces and stands for those operating against country's interests.

The BJP reacted after the Congress criticised Modi Government following circulation of a video showing police and paramilitary hitting students with their batons in the university library on December 15 evening. Another video had gone viral in social media captured images with a few masked "students" moving around the library with stones in their hands.

"Congress party is continuously supporting anti-social elements and those who indulge in violence. It raises voice against the security forces and police personnel of the country," BJP spokesperson GVL Narasimha Rao said. Talking about the second video in which people were seen in the gangway with some covering their faces, Rao asked why were students wearing masks and what were they studying with stones in their hands. "Which academic discipline requires students to wear masks and hold stones while studying?" he asked.

"The Congress party always chooses to stand with those who are inimical to the country and rile up security forces," the BJP spokesperson said.

CAA, NRC, NPR

154 prominent citizens to Prez: False, motivated campaign being launched

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 154 prominent citizens, including former judges, bureaucrats, armed forces officers and academicians, on Monday, wrote to President Ram Nath Kovind, saying a "false and motivated" campaign is being launched against the CAA, NPR and NRC with a sinister design to harm the nation and sought action against trouble-makers.

In the letter to the President, the citizens urged the Central Government to look into the ongoing protests with all seriousness and safeguard the democratic institutions of the country, and take stern action against those people behind them.

The citizens, including 11 former judges of different high courts, 24 retired IAS officers, 11 former Indian Foreign Service officers, 16 retired IPS and 18 former Lieutenant Generals, said "fear" is being spread across the length and breadth of India which appears to be "motivated and with a sinister design" to harm the nation.

They said the campaign is being carried out in a "coordinated manner" leading to violent protests in which public and private property has been destroyed.

The citizens said there has been a "false and nefarious narrative" about the recently enacted legislations like the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the idea of the National Population Register (NPR) and National Register of Citizens (NRC).

They said that while the CAA has been enacted, the idea of NPR and NRC which has been a part of the Indian discourse since Independence remains to be implemented.

"This (protests) has grave security implications and does not bode well for our motherland.

"These protests, while ostensibly claiming to oppose the policies of Government of India, are in effect designed to destroy the very fabric of this country and harm the nation's unity and integrity," they said.

The citizens claimed that they strongly feel that there is also an external dimension to the disturbances being created.

According to CAA, members of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities who have come from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan till December 31, 2014, facing religious persecution there will not be treated as illegal immigrants but given Indian citizenship.

MHA-appointed panel suggests 1951 cut-off for ILP in Assam

To control movement of people from outside State

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Ministry appointed committee has suggested that 1951 should be the cut-off year for defining the indigenous people of Assam and introduction of the Inner Line Permit (ILP) to control the movement of people from outside the State.

The committee has also suggested two formulas for the reservation of seats for the indigenous people in the Assam Assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies of the State, including 67 per cent quota for them.

The high-level committee was set up by the Ministry to suggest ways to provide constitutional safeguards to Assam's indigenous people. The sources said the 13-member panel, headed by Justice (Retd) Biplab Kumar Sharma, finalised its report last week conveyed to the Home Ministry that it was ready to submit it to Union Home Minister Amit Shah and sought

an appointment with him. The report is expected to be submitted this week itself.

The committee, according to the sources, unanimously recommended that those who were residents of Assam in 1951 and their descendants, irrespective of community, caste, language, religion or heritage, will be considered as indigenous people of the state.

Besides, the panel suggested that the ILP should be introduced in Assam so that movement of people from outside the State could be controlled.

As per the rules, outsiders have to take permission from designated authorities before entering the areas where the ILP is applicable.

In case of State Government jobs, the committee recommended 80 per cent reservation for the locals. A number of other recommendations were also given for the protection and growth of Assamese and other indigenous languages.

PERMANENT COMMISSION TO WOMEN IN ARMY

Rajnath Singh welcomes SC ruling

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday welcomed the Supreme Court's judgement on Permanent Commission for women in Army and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has supported the idea of permanent commission for women and announced the change in policy in his Independence Day speech in 2018.

Tweeting this message he also said, "A historic decision to allow women in field operations came earlier when the then Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that women will be inducted into

the Military Police. The recruitment process has started in 2019. The plan was to recruit women in roles ranging from probing crime cases to assisting the army in field operations wherever required," Raksha Mantri said.

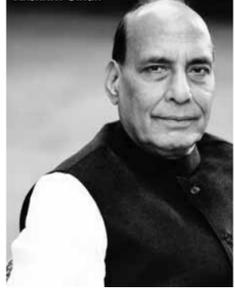
"There have been instances where certain women officers have been in the job for nearly 20 years, while SSC term terminates in 14 years. In 2019, the Defence Ministry granted a permanent commission to women in all 10 branches of the Indian Army, including Signal Corps, intelligence, aviation, engineering, service corps and ordinance corps," Singh added.

Before 2016, women made

up just 2.5 per cent of India's armed forces, working in mainly non-combat roles. As of January 2019, 3.89 per cent of the army personnel comprised women, while 6.7 per cent of the navy and 13.28 per cent of the air force personnel respectively were women as of June 2019. As of June 2019, women were inducted in all branches of the Indian Air Force, with terms and conditions for women officers being issued from time to time.

Singh said, "The Government is working to strengthen the 'Stree Shakti' in our Armed Forces and we stand committed to move forward in this direction."

The Government is working to strengthen the 'Stree Shakti' in our Armed Forces and we stand committed to move forward in this direction



BJP Govt disrespected women by arguing they don't deserve command posts in Army: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday said that the BJP Government disrespected Indian women by arguing in Supreme Court that women Army officers did not deserve command posts or permanent service because they were inferior to men.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi attack on the Government came after the Supreme Court directed the Centre to grant permanent commission to all women officers in the Army within three months, terming the Centre's argument of physiological limitations and social norms for

denying them command posts "disturbing".

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on her part said the historic judgment of the Supreme Court has given new wings to the flight of women in the country. "Women are capable -- in the Army, in valor, in water, land and sky. This is a befitting reply to the prejudiced Modi Government, which is opposed to women's power," the Congress general secretary said.

Rahul Gandhi, in a tweet, also lauded the women for standing up and proving the Government wrong. "The Government disrespected every Indian woman, by argu-

ing in the SC that women Army officers didn't deserve command posts or permanent service because they were inferior to men," he said.

He also attached a news report that said the apex court asked the government to grant permanent commission to women in the Army. A Bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud said there will not be any absolute bar on giving them command postings.

It said women officers in the past have brought laurels to the country and change of mindset is required on the part of the Government to put an end to gender bias in armed forces.



The Government disrespected every Indian woman, by arguing in the SC that women Army officers didn't deserve command posts or permanent service because they were inferior to men

RAHUL GANDHI

Bihar becomes 4th State to have bird tagging station

Other 3 are in Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Odisha

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bihar has become the fourth State in the country to have a bird ringing (tagging) station wherein rings will be placed on legs of winged wonders to study their migration pattern, mortality, territoriality and other behaviour with the help of encrypted codes embedded in the attached tracking device.

The other three ringing stations are in Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Odisha. A pact was inked between representatives of the Bihar Government and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) at Gandhinagar in



A pact was inked between representatives of the Bihar Government and the Bombay Natural History Society at Gandhinagar in Gujarat on the first day of the opening of the CMS — COP13 (conservation of Migratory species — Conference of Parties)

Gujarat on the first day of the opening of the CMS — COP13 (conservation of Migratory species — Conference of Parties) attended by over 2,500 delegates from 111 countries.

"This will be fourth ringing station in India and the first in North India. The pact is for five years in which our

Government will dole out almost ₹5 crore," Bihar Principal Secretary, Environment and Forests, Dipak Kumar Singh said, adding the station will monitor the areas where large no of migratory birds visit such as Nagi Nakti (in Jamui District), Kusheshwarsthan (in Darbhanga District), Barailla jheel (Vaishali), Kanwar lake (Begusarai).

He added it is also the first ringing station to be set up with the support of a State Government. The pact was signed by Director BNHS, Pradeep Apte and Bihar's Chief Wildlife Warden, Prabhat Kumar Gupta.

The ringing station will be manned by trained scientists and other technical manpower from BNHS. For monitoring the migratory birds, rings are



Bihar Government and Bombay Natural History Society on Monday signed and exchanged an MoU in presence of Environment Secretary CK Mishra and Bihar Department of Environment, Forest and Climate change Principal Secretary Dipak Kumar Singh, Director BNHS Dr Deepak Apte and Chief Wildlife Warden of Bihar Prabhat Kumar Gupta

used which have chips containing the details about their origin, route taken by them etc.

Bhagalpur will be the main centre as the Ganges and its Diyara are favourite destination

of migratory birds. Significantly, Bhagalpur is also one of the only three known breeding places of Greater Adjutant in the whole world, apart from Cambodia and Assam.

At these stations, rings are placed on legs of birds. The rings come with chips which help in tracking the origin of the birds and the route taken by these during migration.

An official from the BNHS explained that the ring's encrypted BNHS code numbers ensure that wherever a ringed bird dies, is shot or is spotted with binoculars or photographed, the data can be sent back to the organisation and the bird's migration is charted. BNHS has ringed over a million birds at different places in the Indian subcontinent, with the initiation of bird ringing study in India in 1950s.

Sabarimala: Law can regulate offerings at religious places if used for terrorism, casinos, says SC

New Delhi: A 9-judge Bench of the Supreme Court observed on Monday that making offerings at places of worship may be a religious practice, but the law can regulate the money donated at such places if it is used for "terrorism" or "running casinos".

The top court said the old practices of "human sacrifices" and 'sati' amounted to murder under law and could not be saved on ground of "essential religious practice".

The Constitution bench, headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde, made these observations as it commenced hearing to decide upon the issues pertaining to the scope of freedom of religion as also of judicial scrutiny into "essential religious practices" of separate "religious

denominations".

The Bench is also examining the issue whether a person, who does not belong to a particular faith, can file a PIL questioning the religious practice of another religion or sect of a religion. The questions have arisen out of a judgement in the Sabarimala case.

"The IPC can be read as the guard against the practice of human sacrifices, because it is murder under the IPC. Likewise 'sati' also amounted to murder... Even a religious aspect can be the subject matter of reform," said the Bench which also included justices R Banumathi, Ashok Bhushan, L Nageswara Rao, MM Shantanagoudar, SA Nazeer, R Subhash Reddy, BR Gavai and Surya Kant. PTI

PALANISWAMI JOURNEY

EPS completes 3 yrs in CM office

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

When he was sworn in as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu on February 17, 2017, even Edappadi Palaniswami would not have thought that he will survive in the chair at least for one year.

Why the post of Chief Minister was thrust on him was because of a Supreme Court verdict which upheld the judgment of the Special Court in Bangalore which had sentenced VK Sasikala, the then general secretary of the AIADMK and her two close relations to four years imprisonment in the Disproportionate Asset Case in which the former Chief Minister J Jayalalitha was the prime accused.

Since Jayalalitha went to meet her maker on December 5, 2016, she was saved from the ignominy of being seen as a convict marching to the Parappana Agrahara central Jail near Bangalore. Sasikala, who had been elected "unani-

mously" as the Chief Minister after the ouster of O Panneerselvam, instead of driving down to the Centenary Hall of Madras University for the oath taking ceremony had to travel all the way to Bangalore to surrender before the jail officials on her day of reckoning.

But before proceeding to Bangalore to server her term, Sasikala had nominated Edappadi Palaniswami, her long term confidante, as the Chief Minister.

To keep Palaniswami under a tight leash, Sasikala had also nominated TTV Dhinakaran as the deputy general secretary of the party, much to the shock of the AIADMK cadre. Dhinakaran was a non-entity in the party when Jayalalitha was alive but had managed to sneak into Veda Nilayam (Jayalalitha's private residence in Poes Garden) after Amma was admitted to Apollo Hospital in Chennai in an unconscious condition in September 2016.



With Dhinakaran breathing down his neck on a round-the-clock basis, Palaniswami had to perform a tight rope walk in governance and the party.

No one had given him a chance of survival and things worsened further when Dhinakaran decided to contest the by election from R K Nagar assembly constituency, a seat held by Jayalalitha at the time of her demise. By the time Dhinakaran won from R K Nagar constituency, Palaniswami had joined hands

with arch rival O Panneerselvam and the duo succeeded in easing out the Mannargudi Mafia (as Sasikala and her relations were known in Tamil Nadu) from the AIADMK.

Though there were tense moments about the majority of the AIADMK in the House as some of the MLAs decided to cast their lots with the Dhinakaran faction, Palaniswami has proved that he is a wonderful survivor. The setback the AIADMK had suffered in the Lok Sabha elec-

tion of 2019 is long forgotten as the party has wrested two assembly seats in by-elections held recently.

"More than Palaniswami, it is Stalin who is tense and nervous now. The DMK has been out of power in the State since 2011 and from the Centre since 2013. If he fails to win the 2021 assembly election, it is going to be the end of the road for Stalin," said T Ramakrishnan, author and commentator.

Tamil Nadu is seeing a resurgence in industrialisation and development over the last two years thanks to the silent manoeuvring by Palaniswami from the Secretariat.

Other than the anti-CAA agitation, the Chief Minister has no major issues haunting his Government for the time being. The question being asked is whether EPS is the person who could resuscitate the AIADMK from its slumber following the demise of Jayalalitha. Remember, the DMK is yet to get a saviour in the mould of M Karunanidhi.

Cong for conditional participation in J&K Panchayat bypolls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

After National Conference, the State Unit of the Congress party on Monday announced 'conditional' participation in the Panchayat bypolls, being held to fill over 12,000 vacant seats in Jammu & Kashmir.

Since these by-polls are going to take place on party lines the mainstream political parties are keen on taking the plunge to test political waters at the grass roots.

Addressing a press conference here at party headquarters in Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee Chief, GA Mir told reporters, "The Congress party is ready to participate in the Panchayat bypolls, as they are being held on party lines, but it is not possible for them to contest the same by remaining indoors".

Mir said, "on what basis bypolls are going to be conducted on party lines. He asked, where are the parties. Except BJP, leaders of no other mainstream parties are in the field. He said,

those who want to participate in the polls even they are not being allowed to roam around freely and meet people. "They are being prevented to visit their constituencies and carry out political activity", he alleged.

Seeking immediate release of political leaders, detained since August 5, and freedom to campaign without any roadblocks and security restrictions, GA Mir appealed to the J&K administration to facilitate their participation in the polls by creating conducive atmosphere otherwise they won't be able to participate in these polls.

He said, "the Government is compelling us to boycott the polls but we will not boycott them". "Even if we are not allowed by the Government to participate in the polls i appeal to the common voters to expose evil designs of BJP and elect good candidates to fully empower them at the grass



roots". Earlier, on Sunday National Conference too had appealed local administration to remove "roadblocks" so that it can campaign freely.

In a letter to Jammu and Kashmir Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Shailendra Kumar, NC central secretary Rattan Lal Gupta had stated it is practically impossible for the party to participate in the election when its top leaders, including its president Farooq Abdullah, vice-president Omar Abdullah, general secretary Ali Mohammed Sagar, are in detention under the stringent Public Safety Act.

No rifles missing from SAPB, says Kerala police

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURM

Days after the CAG report found shortage of 25 INSAS rifles and 12,061 live cartridges at the Special Armed Police Battalion here, Kerala police on Monday said a physical verification has found that no rifles were missing.

"As the CAG is a very responsible auditing agency and their allegation has to be taken seriously, a crime has been registered as per their report," ADGP, Crime Branch, Tomlin Thachankery, told reporters here.

He said it was SAPB's responsibility to come clean on the matter since the charge was against them.

The battalion was asked to produce all their rifles for inspection, he said.

The ADGP said a physical examination of the 647 guns brought from 13 locations found no guns had gone miss-

ing. "At least 647 rifles from 13 places were brought to the camp on Sunday and a physical verification and preliminary inspection was held", he said.

The corresponding body numbers of each rifle was physically examined and verified with the records, after which it was concluded that no guns were missing. Thirteen guns are at Manipur I R battalion.

"We held a video conference and their body numbers were checked and matched with records.

When the police personnel return from their training from Manipur in March, it will be examined once again", he said. However, the probe on the missing cartridges was continuing, he said.

The CAG, in a damning report tabled in the state assembly on Feb 12, had found shortage of 5.56 mm INSAS rifles and 12,061 live cartridges from the battalion here.

Goa to get largest super-specialty facility under PMSSY

PTI ■ PANAJI

The country's largest super-specialty medical block under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) will be inaugurated within next six months in Goa, State health Minister Vishwajit Rane said on Monday.

The facility is coming up in Bambolim near the Goa Medical College and Hospital and the state will invite Prime Minister Narendra Modi to throw it open for the public, Rane added.

"My dream project for state of Goa Super Specialty Block. I am fortunate to be a health Minister of Goa under the BJP Government and for being able to take further, the vision of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi in providing quality health care to all citizens," Rane tweeted.



He also tweeted, "I am very pleased to have been able to implement his vision under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana that has made this dream project a reality for every Goan at the cost of Rs 450 crores." "Within the next six months, we will be commissioning this hospital under the NITI Aayog and the Centre," he added. He said he was looking for to the inauguration of the facility at the hands of the prime minister in the presence of state chief minister Pramod Sawant.

Young, educated people give hope in troubling times: Ratna, Naseeruddin

PTI ■ MUMBAI

For actors Ratna Pathak Shah and Naseeruddin Shah, India is their Valentine.

The Shahs, always vocal about their opinions, say they are firm in their belief that the educated young give them hope in troubling times.

The couple was speaking at an event titled 'India My Valentine' here on Sunday.

According to Ratna Pathak, the "khalbali" (churning) she saw in the 60s and 70s is back but the young and educated give her hope.

"During that time everyone was thinking about the progress of India. How to make the nation ours, what kind of nation it should be. Because my family has always been associated with performing arts, we used to have discussions on these topics," she said at the event featuring musical performances, stand-up comedy acts and speeches to celebrate love and unity in the country.

Over a dozen artistes, including Naseeruddin Shah, Vishal Bhardwaj, Rekha

Bhardwaj and Swanand Kirkire, came together on one stage at the event.

Ratna Pathak, the daughter of the late actor Dina Pathak, said questions related to nation building were on everyone's mind in the decades past. Now, there is "a possibility of the nation breaking, changing", she said.

"The 'khalbali', the brainstorming of that time, can be seen reflected today. Of course, things have changed, the situation is extremely serious. What I saw and heard today, what I see around me, it definitely increases hope.

Never before has India had so many young, educated people alive at one time. It's making a difference and we are seeing it all over the country," she said.

The churn is not limited to Shaheen Bagh or Mumbai Bagh but spread across, she said, referring to the anti-CAA protests in several places in the country.

"Again, art is showing the way. This kind of 'khalbali' is producing such wonderful

writing, music, performances," she said.

Naseeruddin Shah said he can't help but wonder about the current situation when he looks around at the state of the nation.

"At a time when a lot of us are grappling to understand what's going on around us, I think I'm not alone in agonising over a question: whether all this was always latent and has finally burst forth, not being able to contained any longer.

"Or has there been in the last decade a complete change in our country... I'm not a social scientist, so I don't know the answer."

The actor then read selections from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's "The Discovery of India" and said the book can shed some light.

"May be it'll show you the direction. I've also in these times felt the need to re-examine, rediscover what it is that is unique about this country, what it is that has always been our pride and has won the admiration of the entire world," he added.

LOCUST ATTACK Central team reaches Raj to assess damage to crops

PTI ■ JAIPUR

A 10-member central team will be visiting locust-affected areas of Rajasthan in next two days to take stock of the damage to crops due to the insects.

Rajasthan Agriculture Minister Lal Chand Kataria had informed the state assembly earlier in the month that crop on over 1.49 lakh hectares was damaged in various districts due to the locust attack since May last year.

The team, which arrived in Jaipur on Monday, will assess the damage in Bikaner and Jodhpur divisions in three parts.

The team held a meeting with Chief Secretary D B Gupta and other officials of the state Agriculture Department.

The state officials urged the Centre to provide an early assistance of ₹200 crore.

Digital process fulfilled Muslims' haj dream: Naqvi

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The digital/online Haj process Has fulfilled the dream of "Ease of doing Haj" for the Indian Muslims, Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said here on Monday.

Addressing a training programme of Haj 2020 trainers at Haj House in south Mumbai, Naqvi said the unprecedented reforms undertaken by the Modi Government ensured that the entire Haj process has been made digital and transparent and the Haj pilgrimage has become affordable.

Making the Haj process 100 per cent digital/online has removed middlemen ensuring Haj pilgrimage becomes affordable in comparison to the cost incurred in last several decades,

he said. Even after removal of Haj subsidy, no additional financial burden has been put on the pilgrims, Naqvi said.

India has become the first country to make the entire Haj 2020 process 100 per cent digital, he said. Online application, e-visa, Haj mobile app, E-MASIIHA health facility, E-luggage pre-tagging providing information in India itself regarding accommodation/transportation in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina have been provided to Indian Muslims going for Haj, he said.

For the first time, facilities have been provided for digital pre-tagging of baggages of Haj pilgrims, he said.

Linking SIM card to the mobile app ensures Haj pilgrims immediately get the lat-

est information regarding Haj in Mecca-Medina on their mobile phone, he said.

Haj Group Organisers (HGOs) have also been connected with the 100 per cent digital system which has ensured transparency in their functioning and this has also led to better facilities to Indian Haj pilgrims. A portal (http://haj.Nic.In/pto) for Haj Group Organisers has been developed. It contains details of HGOs and their packages, he said.

India in coordination with Saudi Arabia is working to ensure safety and better medical facilities for the pilgrims during Haj 2020, he said. This year, a total of two lakh Indian Muslims will perform Haj, that too without any subsidy, he said.

About 1.23 lakh Muslims

will go through Haj Committee of India and remaining through Haj Group Organisers, he said. This year over 2100 Muslim women will go to Haj without Mehram (male companion), he said.

A total of 650 trainers participated in the training programme.

They will train Haj pilgrims in their respective states regarding the pilgrimage, accommodation in Mecca and Medina, transport, health facilities and safety measures.

The trainers include a large number of women trainers. Officials from the Haj Committee of India, Customs, Air India, BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation, various banks and disaster management agencies guided the trainers.

Speeding school bus overturns in UP 14 students injured

PTI ■ GORAKHPUR (UP)

Fourteen children were injured on Monday when a speeding school bus overturned in Shohratgarh area of Siddharthnagar district here, police said.

The incident took place in the morning when the bus carrying 25 children of Saraswati Shishu Mandir lost control and overturned, they said.

The injured students were rushed to the hospital where their condition is stated to be

stable, police said. "A case has been registered against the driver, Prem Sagar, under various sections of IPC, including Section 279 (rash driving or riding on a public way) and Section 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others)," Shohratgarh SHO Ramashish Yadav said.

Efforts are on to trace the absconding driver, he said. Parents of the students admitted in the hospital told reporters that the bus driver was drunk at the time of the incident, and that they had made verbal complaints against him in the past.

District Magistrate Deepak Meena said the driver escaped from the scene after the incident.

3 WB tourists rescued from Ganga in Rishikesh

PTI ■ DEHRADUN

Three tourists from West Bengal were rescued from the Ganga in Uttarakhand's Rishikesh after they were stranded on a dry patch in the river, police said on Monday.

The tourists were stuck there due to a sudden rise in the water level, they said.

Police sprang into action immediately and rescued them with the help of ropes and rafts, Muni ki Reti police station in-charge R K Saklani said.

When the police team reached the spot near the Poornanand ghat, three men were seen stranded on a thin patch of dry land slightly above the surface of the river, he said.

Police personnel wearing life jackets reached the spot on rafts and brought them back with the help of ropes, Saklani said.

When the tourist waded into the river, the water level was low but when they walked downstream for a while, it rose all of a sudden, causing panic.

They somehow reached the dry patch of the land and raised an alarm, catching the attention of passersby who informed police, the official said.

The tourists have been identified as Gautam Majumdar and Sushil Halder from North 24 Parganas and Konand Chakraborty from Jalpaiguri.

IGNOU holds 33rd convocation ceremony

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' on Monday praised IGNOU for making education accessible to people in all parts of the country and developing analytical ability in students through their research activities.

He was speaking at the 33rd convocation ceremony of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). Over 2.31 lakh students from throughout India received their degrees across 39 regional centres of the university.

Crediting IGNOU for taking education to every house in the country, the minister said, "I congratulate IGNOU for the excellence achieved by it in developing critical and analyt-

ical ability of students through their research activities".

Gold medals were awarded to over 50 meritorious students during the convocation by the minister.

In his convocation address, 'Nishank' lauded IGNOU for having "unprecedented expertise in developing and launching academic programmes that are needed in the present context and very useful for learning communities".

He also mentioned the skill-oriented curriculum weaved around a conducive environment for learners by the university. Stressing upon the need to develop courses in Indian languages for wider reach, he stressed upon further development of Hindi and Sanskrit in universities.

He appreciated IGNOU for increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), which he said cannot be achieved by the conventional system of education alone. He urged the university to introduce programmes which are employment-centric and help in employment generation.

Prof Nageshwar Rao, the vice-chancellor of the university, said the varsity has introduced 26 new academic programmes including three graduate degree (general), 9 graduate honours programmes under CBCS and 3 online programmes in the last two admission cycles to meet diversified needs in the disciplines of health sciences, vocational areas, tourism, environment change, yoga, development studies, etc.

Naxals raid road work site, torch trucks, machinery in C'garh

PTI ■ BALRAMPUR

Trucks and construction Machinery engaged in road work in Chhattisgarh's Balrampur were set ablaze by Naxals on Monday morning, police said.

Around a dozen armed Maoists raided the construction site near Bandarchua village under Samri police station limits, some 450 kilometres from here, between 10am and 11am and set afire three trucks, two excavators and one concrete mixer machine, an official said.

"The vehicles and machines were deployed for a work under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. The site is on the border of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. The ultras escaped into the jungles of the neighbouring state. A team under Balrampur Superintendent of Police TR Koshima has rushed to the spot," he added.

The arson took place in north Chhattisgarh which incidentally the State Government has earlier claimed to be an area freed from Left Wing Extremism (LWE).

Wanted for 3 murders, man arrested by Mumbai cops from Delhi

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A 38-year-old security guard, accused of murdering three persons since 2000 — two in Uttar Pradesh and one in Mumbai — and carrying a ₹10,000 reward on his head, was arrested by the city police from New Delhi, an official said on Monday. According to the official, the accused, Avinash Kumar Laxmikant Pandey, was nabbed from New Delhi's Kamala Market locality on Sunday in connection with the murder of a fellow security guard in suburban Powai last year.

Pandey has allegedly killed two persons, including his cousin, in Prayagraj (earlier Allahabad) in his native state of Uttar Pradesh, where the police has announced a reward of ₹10,000 for information leading to this arrest, he said.



The 38-year-old also faces a case under the Arms Act in Uttar Pradesh, the official said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone X) Ankit Goyal said On October 27, 2019, he brutally killed one Ankit Deviprasad Singh (22) and left his body at the parking lot in Lodha Supreme Apartment at Tunga Village in Powai. "After killing Singh, the accused fled to Pune, then went to Gujarat and finally reached Delhi after spending sometime in Odisha."

"In 2000, he killed one of his friends and in 2002 he murdered his cousin (in Uttar Pradesh). We nabbed him from New Delhi after receiving a tip-off about his presence in the national capital," the DCP said.

He has been booked in the murder case registered by the Powai police, Goyal said, adding further investigation was underway. The accused had been working as a security guard in Mumbai for the last 12 years, he said.

Pandey allegedly stabbed to death Singh, a fellow security guard, following a tiff over a game of ludo, the DCP said. He was produced before a local court, which remanded him in police custody till February 21, Goyal added.

The motive behind the two murders in Uttar Pradesh was not yet known, police said.

CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT

TN CM blames extremist organisations for riot-like situation

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami blamed various Islamist organisations for the riot like situation prevailing in some parts of the State and complimented the Police for showing restraint despite severe provocation from trouble makers.

Making a statement in the Assembly on Monday, Palaniswami said that there were no untoward incidents anywhere in the State despite the demonstrators staging rallies without permission from the police. "Many policemen

including officers were grievously injured in the stone pelting by demonstrators when they were asked to disperse from the venue of protest.

The Social Democratic Party of India, Popular Front of India, Towheed Jamaath and some Islamic political parties were hand in glove with the trouble makers.

Many policemen injured in stone pelting have been admitted to various government hospitals in the city," said the Chief Minister.

He said though nearly 100 trouble makers who went on a rampage were taken into custody by the police and put in

- Nearly 100 trouble makers who went on a rampage were taken into custody by police & put in various marriage halls, all of them were released after filing charges against them
- DMK and other opposition parties led by MK Stalin staged a walk out claiming that they were not content with the statement made by the CM
- This is the 1st time TN Govt named the Islamist organisations & their role in the anti-CAA agitations across State

going out of control," the chief minister announced.

The DMK and other opposition parties led by M K Stalin staged a walk out claiming that they were not content with the statement made by the Chief Minister.

"We want Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly to pass a resolution asking the Centre to negate the CAA. Nothing less than that would make us happy," he told reporters outside the assembly.

This is the first time the Tamil Nadu Government named the Islamist organisations and their role in the anti-CAA agitations across the State.

Sunday night saw the Chief Minister holding a high level meeting which was attended among others by the Chief Secretary, Home Secretary, State Police Chief and heads of various intelligence wings.

"The Government has clear picture and evidence about the role of various political organisations in the demonstrations being held in the State.

We will come out with more details in the days to come," said a senior source in Fort Saint George (Tamil Nadu Government's seat of power, the secretariat).

The Washerment set in

on Monday witnessed a novel protest by the Islamists as they held a marriage in the venue and offered sumptuous lunch to those who staged the rally.

It may be remembered that Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, had told the Kerala Legislative Assembly that extremist organizations like PFI and SDPI had infiltrated into the anti-CAA agitations staged in the State under directions from religious clergy and the Mahuls.

Since then, the anti-CAA agitations promoted by the CPI(M) has come to an end in Kerala.

King Momo opposes feni tax, backs Goa Govt's 'no CAA' diktat during fest

PTI ■ PANAJI

Shalom Sardinha, who has been selected to play King Momo for the Goa Carnival beginning on February 22, on Monday expressed dissatisfaction with the Pramod Sawant Government levying tax on feni from fiscal 2020-21.

It is the first time that tax, announced in the State's Budget tabled in the Assembly on February 6, will be levied on the popular Goan beverage made from fermented and distilled juice of cashew apples, or from coconuts.

Momo is the mythical king of carnivals and is chosen by the state's tourism department, with Sardinha getting to head the float parade for the second time, the first being in 2016.

"The Budget announcement about tax on feni will result in prices going up. It will affect the tourism industry in a big way," he said.

On the first day of the Carnival, which will culminate on February 25, King Momo issues a decree asking people to "eat, drink and be merry", with Sardinha adding that "when we say drink, we mean drink responsibly".

He called for a ban on drugs as well as electronic dance music festivals and other events that promote this vice, pointing out that three youngsters lost their lives during one such festival recently.

Queried on the ban on floats making statements on political issues like the con-

Clarify your Govt, party's stand on Shah's pro-CAA rally: Cong to Odisha CM

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

The opposition Congress in Odisha hit out at the ruling Biju Janata Dal over Home Minister Amit Shah's proposed pro-Citizenship (Amendment) Act rally in the state capital and asked Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to make his government and party's stand on the event clear.

Shah will be on a two-day visit to Odisha from February 28 during which he is slated to address a pro-CAA public meeting.

Raising the issue in the Legislative Assembly during Zero Hour, Congress MLA S S Saluja said, "Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MPs supported

BJP likely to move pro-CAA resolution in Karnataka Assembly

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The ruling BJP in Karnataka is likely to push for a resolution in favour of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) during the ongoing Assembly session, top sources said on Monday.

The resolution is expected to be moved towards the end of the special discussion on the Constitution, scheduled for March 2 and 3, the sources said.

The move is bound to face stiff resistance from opposition parties - the Congress and JDS - in the Assembly.

Assembly Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri has decided to hold a special discussion on the Constitution on the two days to commemorate 70 years of the adoption of the Constitution.

Though the Speaker has expressed hope that the discussion will focus on the Constitution and legislators would take part in it rising above party politics, there are apprehensions in some quarters that issues like CAA and NRC may figure in the debate.

Gujarat in January passed a resolution, congratulating Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for securing the passage of the CAA, amid opposition from the Congress. Several opposition-led states like Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal have passed anti-CAA resolutions in their state assemblies.

Joining the ranks of anti-CAA states, the Telangana government has also decided to pass a resolution in the assembly against the act. Like in other parts of the county, Karnataka too has witnessed a series of pro and anti-CAA protests and demonstrations.

On December one, an anti-CAA protest turned violent in the coastal city of Mangaluru, resulting in the death of two in police firing. According to the CAA, members of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities, who have come from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan till December 31, 2014, and facing religious persecution there, would not be treated as illegal immigrants, but given Indian citizenship.

The Act says refugees of the six communities would be given Indian citizenship after residing in India for five years, instead of 11 earlier.

Pawar calls for good coordination between Mins, CM

Ask party Mins to avoid controversial statements

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Amid reports about the differences among the constituents of the MVA Government over certain issues, NCP chief Sharad Pawar said on Monday that if the Shiv Sena-led Government were to complete its full five year term, it was essential for the Ministers in the State Cabinet to have good coordination with Chief

BHIMA KOREGAON-ELGAAR PARISHAD CASE NCP mulls over SIT probe

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Upset with the Shiv Sena over Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's decision to let the NIA take over the investigations into the 2018 Bhima Koregaon-Elgaar Parishad case, the ruling NCP is keen on setting up a parallel inquiry into the case by a Special Investigation Team (SIT). It is seeking a legal opinion in the matter before going ahead with its plan.

Four days after Uddhav overruled its reservations on the issue and decided to let the NIA take over the probe into the Bhima Koregaon-Elgaar Parishad case, NCP - at a meeting of the party's Ministers in the Shiv Sena-MVA Govt -

convened by its chief Sharad Pawar on Monday - decided to explore the possibility of ordering a parallel inquiry by the SIT.

Talking to media persons after the meeting, State Home Minister Anil Deshmukh said: "The Maharashtra Govt may have let the NIA carry out the investigations in the Bhima Koregaon-Elgaar Parishad case to the NIA.

But we will seek a legal opinion if we can institute an SIT to investigate the case".

"There is insistence within the NCP to set up an SIT probe into the case - independent of the one being done by the NIA. We will also consult the chief minister in this regard," Deshmukh said.

If the NCP—which holds

Action sought against Marathi preacher

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Nirmalan Samiti (MANS), an outfit crusading against superstitious beliefs, on Monday demanded criminal action against popular Marathi kirtankar (preacher) Indurikar Maharaj for his questionable claim that "if an intercourse with female on an even date will result in a male child and if it is done on an odd date, a female child is born".

Upping the ante over a video clip containing Indurikar Maharaj's questionable claim that has gone viral on social media, MANS has written to Ahmednagar's District Police Superintendent and Civil Surgeon, making a strong case for booking the controversial preacher under the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act.

In the video, Indurikar Maharaj is seen telling a large gathering of his followers that if a man has intercourse with a woman on an even date, a male child is born, while he does it on an odd date, a girl child is born.

"If intercourse is done at inauspicious time, the child that is born would bring a bad name to the family. If the timing (of intercourse) is missed, the quality of the output (child) will be sub-standard,"

Indurikar Maharaj also heard telling his followers, at a religious gathering held in a village in Ahmednagar district last week.

Objecting to Indurikar Maharaj's claims which he described as "scientific, outlandish, irresponsible", "insulting to women", and against the law and Constitution", MANS executive president Avinash Patil—in his representation to the district police superintendent and civil surgeon - said that the controversial preacher had violated the PCPNDT Act, which was enacted with an aim of stopping female foeticide and curb the declining sex ratio in the country.

Mamta meets Guv with basket of sweets

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In a rare sight indicating some recovery in their choppy relationship Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday met State Governor Jagdeep Dhanekar with a basket of sweets apparently as a show of gratitude for his accommodating role during the presentation of inaugural speech in the Budget Session.

The rare development immediately became news even as a smiling Banerjee was received by the Governor and his wife Sudesh. Later after merging from a one-hour rap session the Governor said the meeting was extremely satisfactory.



"Had an extremely satisfying an hour long interaction with Hon'ble Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at Raj Bhavan" the Governor usually known for spitting fire against the State Government on his twitterhandle wrote.

Raj Bhavan sources would not throw much light on the agenda of the talks and said the twosome met privately for an hour and that no onewas present during that occasion. "This meeting was between the CM and the Governor and no one else was present there," said sources. The meeting of the two leaders just after the Budget Session assumessignificance particularly considering the fact that the State

Government and the Chief Minister regularly charging him with attempts of running a parallel Govt in the State.

With no love lost between the Raj Bhavan and Nabanna (Statesecretariat) and the Governor threatening to create "history" duringhis maiden speech in the House the inaugural day of the Budget session was expected to be a tumultuous one.

After giving the Government goose pimples dropping cloaked threats that he might deviate from the established tradition of reading out

the speech prepared by the State Government the Governor had fallen inline reading out the text prepared by the Government.

State BJP president Dilip Ghosh immediately reacted to the Monday meeting taking place saying "healthy relationship between the Governor and Chief Minister is a prime condition for the State's development. Where a constitutional post like that of the Governor is ignored by ahaughty State Government the State will never improve. Happy that themeting took place today".

The relations between the two sides was hit by controversies ever since the Governor assumed office and more so after he ignored the advice of the Chief Minister to personally visit the Jadavpur University to rescue Union Minister Babul Supriyo on September 19 after he was ghaeroed by the agitating students for more than five hours. Subsequently the Governor and the Government would not see eye-to-eyon a number of issues particularly when he was attacked by the Chief Minister for attempting to host administrative meetings in districts in an alleged defiance of the constitutional provisions. The mutual chemistry between the state's two highest offices worsened to the level of each side choosing to each other at a programme in the State Assembly.

Guj Cong warns of protest at stadium

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Unhappy over a recent Supreme Court order on reservation, the Gujarat Congress on Monday threatened to stage a protest on February 24 outside the newly built cricket stadium here where US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will take part in a mega event.

On February 24, the stadium at Motera would be inaugurated by Trump and Modi, and the two leaders will also address a gathering on the occasion. The opposition party said it will not hesitate to hold a protest against the BJP out-

side the stadium if the Centre fails to take appropriate decision over the apex court's ruling on reservation in jobs for SC/ST communities.

The Gujarat Cong on Monday organised a 'Save Constitution' rally in the Sarangpur area over the last week's SC judgement which says states are not bound to provide reservation in appointments and there is no fundamental right to claim quota in promotions.

The Congress demanded that the NDA Govt file a review petition against the SC ruling or bring a Constitution amendment to nullify the order.

"The Congress will not let the rights of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Castes taken away. No one can snatch reservation rights till the Congress is there.

"This protest is just the beginning. In coming days, we will reach out to people in small towns and villages.

If needed, we will hold protests at Motera and Delhi," Gujarat Congress president Amit Chavda said while speaking at the rally.

In his address to party workers, All India Congress

CM accuses Bedi of causing 'mental agony' to CENTAC officials as CBI gives clean chit

PTI ■ PUDUCHERRY

Citing a CBI letter giving a clean chit to some Puducherry Government officials on alleged irregularities in medical admissions here in 2017, taken up by Lt Governor Kiran Bedi, Chief Minister V Narayanasamy on Monday accused her of causing 'mental agony' to them.

Speaking to reporters here, he said the Government had received a letter from the CBI Director on February 10 that no prima facie case has been made out against the officials and no action has been contemplated against them.

The six member Central Admission Committee (CENTAC), including those from the health department, selected students for medical courses in four deemed to be universities and three medical colleges in 2017 on merit, he said.

However, the management had failed to admit some students recommended by the Medical Council of India for the courses, he said.

UNITED TEXTILES LIMITED						
Registered Office 7th K.M. Stone, Barvala Road, Hisar						
CIN: L17115HR1993PLC032092						
STATEMENT OF UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTH ENDED 31ST December, 2019						
(Rs. in Lakhs, except per Share data)						
Sr. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended		Nine Months Ended		Till date
		31.12.2019	30.9.2019	31.12.2018	31.12.2018	
I	Revenue from operations	322.99	187.91	136.28	664.90	483.79
II	Other income	8.73	0.36	0.34	1.45	1.08
III	Total Revenue (I+II)	323.72	188.27	136.62	686.35	484.79
IV	Expenses					
(a)	Cost of materials consumed	241.80	127.30	62.07	468.27	291.30
(b)	Changes in inventories of finished goods, work-in-progress and stock-in-trade	19.76	(17.66)	5.71	14.10	4.32
(c)	Employee benefits expense	7.25	7.93	5.90	20.24	20.23
(d)	Finance Costs	6.01	6.46	6.28	19.82	19.06
(e)	Depreciation and amortization expense	6.88	6.12	7.38	18.43	22.14
(f)	Other expenses	40.57	55.87	44.14	139.36	127.20
	Total Expenses (IV)	322.27	186.02	131.48	680.22	484.25
V	Profit/(Loss) before exceptional items and tax (III-V)	1.45	2.25	(0.86)	6.13	0.54
VI	Exceptional items					
VII	Profit/(Loss) after exceptional items but before tax (V+VI)	1.45	2.25	(0.86)	6.13	0.54
VIII	Tax expense					
(i)	Current Tax	1.37	0.44	(0.08)	2.38	0.88
(ii)	Deferred Tax	0.08	1.81	(0.78)	3.75	(0.34)
	Total Tax expense	1.37	0.44	(0.08)	2.38	0.88
IX	Profit/(Loss) for the period (VII-VIII)	0.08	1.81	(0.78)	3.75	(0.34)
X	Other comprehensive income (OCI):					
A.	Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss					
(i)	Re-measurement gain/(losses) on defined benefit plans	0.29	0.85	0.16	0.51	0.95
(ii)	Income tax effect on above	(0.07)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.13)	(0.18)
(iii)	Equity Instruments through Other Comprehensive Income (Gain on Fair Valuation of Long Term Investment)					
	Income tax effect on above					
	Total other comprehensive income (X)	0.22	0.83	0.12	0.38	0.77
XI	Total Comprehensive Income (Comprising Profit/(Loss) and other comprehensive income for the period) (IX+X)	0.30	1.85	(0.66)	4.13	0.37
XII	Pay-up equity share capital (10 per share)	300.00	300.00	300.00	300.00	300.00
XIII	Reserve/Other Equity					78.86
XIV	Earning per equity share:					
(1) Basic		0.01	0.06	(0.002)	0.14	0.001
(2) Diluted		0.01	0.06	(0.002)	0.14	0.001

Notes:
1. The aforesaid results were placed before and reviewed by the Audit Committee at its meeting held on 13th February, 2020 and approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting held on the same date. The Statutory auditors have carried out limited review of these financial results.
2. The Company has adopted Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS) from April 1, 2017 with a transition date of April 1, 2016 and these Financial Results have been prepared in accordance with the recognition and measurement principles prescribed under Section 133 of Companies Act, 2013 read with relevant rules issued there under.
3. There are no separate reportable segments as per the Indian Accounting Standard (Ind AS) 108 on segment reporting.
4. The figures have been regrouped/rearranged wherever considered necessary to facilitate a comparison.
For UNITED TEXTILES LIMITED (ARUN KUMAR AGGARWAL) Whole Time Director
Place: Hisar
Date: 13th February, 2020
DIN No. 00248510

Lead from the front

SC allows women officers to get command positions in the Army and quashes use of gender stereotypes as an argument



Thanks to the Supreme Court, women officers in the Army can now get command positions at par with male officers and break the glass ceiling in the forces. In non-combat roles for the time being. However, the sad part is that they had to fight for it legally rather than being naturalised in the just order of things, considering that they were inducted in the Army in 1992, a long 28 years ago. An entire generation has grown up in between. In this sense, the ruling is more than significant, it is a landmark. For it reminded the armed

forces that as part of an institution that codified discipline, values, honesty, decency and honour, their despotic version of patriarchy, preventing women from leading men beyond event parades, was “discriminatory” and “disturbing.” In fact, it went against the very principles of equality and fairness that the Army professes from time to time. In the process, the court also underlined the need for a mindset change in the evolutionary flow of changing times, not just in the Army but everywhere. It said that deep-rooted stereotypes, that men are dominant and women are primary caretakers, need to go away. It even dismissed the argument of women being unfit physically and compromised by family duties as creating an “artificial” distinction, considering that they have still not been cleared for active combat. The court demolished all chauvinist arguments that can be used as a precedent in deciding similar cases of gender parity, tersely: “To cast aspersions on gender is an affront to their (the women’s) dignity and to the country. Time has come that women officers are not adjunct to their male counterparts. Physiological features of women have no link to their rights. The mindset must change. Women work shoulder to shoulder with men.” With these words, Justices DY Chandrachud and Ajay Rastogi upheld the equality of opportunity for all citizens, elevating functionality above gender and treating human resource in any discipline as deserving of respect than either an entitlement or a consolation prize. It also implied that cultural arguments have no place when it comes to the larger duty of protecting the nation. The court, knowing the tendency of institutions to not follow its orders, said permanent commission would be available to all women, regardless of their years of service and that the judgment had to be implemented within three months. What all this means is that service conditions of men and women officers will be exactly the same and that the latter shall also be provided with choices of specialisation like their male counterparts. A woman can rise to the rank of Colonel and even lead battalions. Women officers, who have been retired, will also get pension benefits.

If the court had to admonish one of the highest institutions of the land — one that is expected to rise above societal ills and be progressive and liberal — on gender injustice, then clearly it is confirmation of inherent biases among the privileged, too. Where women officers can be test cases but not decisive enough, where they may be relegated to staff duties but not challenge the male bastion. The Government’s regressive stand on limiting women’s role in the Army is hypocritical considering its own departments have had all-women marching contingents in Republic Day parades, the Indian Air Force (IAF) allows them to become fighter pilots and the Army has even sent them to tough UN peacekeeping missions globally. Unless they were just tokenism to boost propaganda than really honour winners of the Seva medals and Vishisth Seva medals. The next question, therefore, is should the buck stop with just entrusting greater responsibility to them? Are women just worthy of being included in non-combat roles only? In actuality, like their male counterparts, they, too, give up on all familial commitments to be part of the Army. They, too, undergo the same rigorous selection and training procedures as their male peers. None is arguing that the Army lower its standards. But if women have made it through all kinds of selection criteria, then they should at least be given a chance to prove their mettle. For they are often made a scapegoat for the failure in upgrading standards and changing the status quo. The issue is not only about whether women can be inducted in combat roles but how to make it happen with a radical overhaul of personnel policy. Other nations, including the US, Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany and Israel, allow women to be part of certain combat units. By resisting change, the Army wouldn’t want to be out of sync with an India that is resetting itself. Certainly, it doesn’t suit its image when the court has to prod it all the time. It needs to be the initiator, not a follower.

Smashing heads

Young people will always find innovative ways of getting hurt for thrills. But the latest game craze is plain stupid



When you are young, you feel invincible. And because death feels so far away, you tend to take physical risks that you never will once you cross the 30s. Nobody is saying that older humans are boring and refuse to take challenges. But the physical ability to take risks is far reduced by simple physiology. There is a reason why an average infantryman is 22 years old; you would not want to go to war with a physically old army. But thanks to young people pulling off crazy stunts, we have seen the proliferation

of adventure sports and some death-defying feats of human achievement. This has been the story ever since human beings gained cognisance of the idea of “self”, which after all, separates us from animals. Until the dare tempts death.

From every generation, some activity or the other emerges that the adventure sports X-Games might take up. But the latest challenge by the young, called the “Skull breaker” is downright stupid and has parents across the world in a state of panic. As the name implies, the challenge is not a smart one. It involves a trio of teens, who stand in a line and jump, and when the central participant’s feet leaves the ground, his/her companions on either side attempt to knock his/her feet out from under them. The prospect of the central participant making a head-fall backwards, with chances of smacking his/her head besides injuring other parts of the body, looms larger. Some children have already been fatally injured and many are suffering the impacts of a concussion. It is beyond one’s rational understanding as to why would anyone want to get a concussion deliberately. However, there are a few things that we must understand: Banning this practice will not end it. The best way to deal with this is to talk to adults at social media firms and actively prevent the widespread sharing of videos. The second way is for parents, teachers and doctors to talk to children and explain what a concussion is and how it can have long-term ramifications. One can get a concussion or an injury while playing sports, particularly contact sports. That is accidental; this stupid activity causes self-harm and it must be classified as such. We must ensure that it is one that is ended and not emulated by future generations while ensuring that the creative physicality of the next generation continues. Just like an army of youth needs a grizzled veteran to maintain discipline and order, this army of children needs some common sense from adults.

Pseudo-Caliphate and India

By throwing his weight behind Islamabad on the Kashmir issue, Erdogan unambiguously signalled his intention to emerge as the imam of the new Caliphate he hopes to lead



SANDHYA JAIN

Even if we overlook the facts about which nation is “occupying” Kashmir, by stating that there is “no difference between Gallipoli and occupied Kashmir”, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan unambiguously signalled his intention to emerge as the “imam” of the new (pseudo) Caliphate he hopes to lead by 2023, the centenary of the Turkish Republic. Addressing a joint session of Pakistan’s Parliament (February 14), he lauded sacrifices made by it in the war on terror and the “positive contributions” it made to the Afghanistan peace process and promised support during the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) meet in Paris (February 16-21, 2020). His denunciation of US President Donald Trump’s Mideast plan hints at an eventual challenge to Riyadh in the region. Erdogan’s determination to restore the Caliphate has created a visible schism between the Arab States formally led by Saudi Arabia and the non-Arab States led by Turkey. A nascent axis is discernible between Turkey, Malaysia and Pakistan; Iran and Qatar complete the anti-Riyadh alignment. Erdogan declared in February 2018, “The Republic of Turkey is a continuation of the Ottoman Empire... the essence is the same, soul is the same...”

Unsurprisingly, Ankara has emerged as the new hub for anti-India activities by Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Unknown to most people, Turkey has universal jurisdiction laws as part of its domestic laws. Article 13 of the Turkish Penal Code states, “Turkish law shall apply to” the crime of torture “committed in a foreign country whether or not committed by a citizen or non-citizen.”

Khalistanis tried to invoke these laws. Sikhs for Justice, a group working for a referendum (“Referendum 2020”) to create Khalistan, is believed to be funded by the ISI. In October 2018, its legal advisor, Gurbatwant Singh Pannun, filed a case against Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh when he visited Turkey to pay homage at Gallipoli to soldiers from the First Patiala Infantry Regiment (now 15 Punjab), who lost their lives in World War I, on the centenary of the Great War.

Pannun went to Gallipoli to secure an arrest warrant and restrain the Punjab Chief Minister from leaving Turkey. As the Captain was on a non-official trip, he lacked diplomatic immunity as under the Vienna Protocol, only the Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister are “protected persons” when abroad in personal capacity. In Pakistan, Erdogan lauded a 1915 rally in Lahore, led by Allama Iqbal, where people from present-day Pakistan supported the Turkish people and blatantly ignored the sacrifices made by Indian soldiers at Gallipoli (Battle of Çanakkale), possibly because the bells tolled for the Ottoman Empire.

Turkey’s domestic laws explain why ex-



IAS officer Shah Faesal was going to Turkey on August 14, 2019, soon after the Centre abrogated Article 370 and divided the State of Jammu & Kashmir into the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. It is possible that some foreign mentors asked Faesal to invoke these laws in Turkey. He was to file a case of human rights violations against Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the then Chief of Army Staff Gen Bipin Rawat and others, on behalf of his political party, Jammu & Kashmir People’s Movement (JKPM).

Media reports stated that from Ankara, Faesal was likely to try to take the Kashmir issue to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague, the Netherlands. But this would not take off for want of jurisdiction; no individual can file a case in the ICJ, only States can. Of course, his arrival in the Netherlands would be embarrassing for India.

But if Faesal really wanted to go to The Hague, he could have taken a direct flight to Amsterdam. His plan was to exploit Turkey’s Article 13 universal jurisdiction law. Some human rights NGO would receive him at Ankara, where he would be lionised as a civil service topper (2010) and Harvard alumni who quit a Government job to protest against the activities of the Indian State in Kashmir. Actually Faesal

“**ANKARA HAS EMERGED AS THE NEW HUB FOR ANTI-INDIA ACTIVITIES BY PAKISTAN’S ISI. UNKNOWN TO MOST PEOPLE, TURKEY HAS UNIVERSAL JURISDICTION LAWS AS PART OF ITS DOMESTIC LAWS. ITS ARTICLE 13 APPLIES TO THE CRIME OF TORTURE ‘COMMITTED IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY BY A CITIZEN OR NON-CITIZEN.’ KHALISTANIS TRIED TO USE IT BEFORE**”

resigned from the service in January 2019 in order to enter politics. However, the sudden split of Jammu & Kashmir and freeze on political activity nixed his unborn political career, leaving NGO activism his only alternative.

Had he reached Ankara, the international media would have splashed Kashmir on the front pages of all important newspapers and magazines and the Indian media would follow suit, thus making Faesal the global face of the anti-India Islamic movement. Once he managed to file a case in Turkey, Islamabad would almost certainly have followed up by filing a case against India at the ICJ, where it has suffered reverses in the Kulbhushan Jadhav case.

However, Faesal’s mentors could not anticipate the look-out notices for Kashmiris trying to leave the country; he was caught at the airport, sent back to Srinagar and placed in preventive custody. He has now been booked under the Public Safety Act (February 15).

This argument can be corroborated from Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan’s tweet on August 15, 2019, where he invoked Srebrenica, site of the 1995 genocide of over 8,000 Bosnians by the Bosnian Serb Army led by Ratko Mladic. Khan tweeted: “Will the world silently witness another Srebrenica-type massacre and ethnic cleansing of Muslims in

IOK? I want to warn the international community if it allows this to happen, it will have severe repercussions and reactions in the Muslim world setting off radicalisation and cycles of violence.” The talk of “massacre and ethnic cleansing” of Kashmiri Muslims is, of course, pure bunkum but the tweet suggests an ISI hand in the aborted Turkish escapade.

Meanwhile, Erdogan has been cultivating separatist, religious and business leaders and Islamic groups in Kashmir after the tweaking of Article 370; this goes deeper than his traditional support to Pakistan at the Organisation of Islamic Conference. Previously also, he supported Pakistan in the FATF. While addressing the UN General Assembly on September 25, 2019, he chided the international community for not paying proper attention to Kashmir over the past seven decades.

Interestingly, soon after the FATF and UNGA meetings, the Indian Overseas Congress headed by Rahul Gandhi loyalist Sam Pitroda opened an office in Istanbul in November 2019. Possibly the Congress hopes to recover its once-committed Muslim vote bank by cultivating the emerging Caliphate; the repercussions on India’s internal affairs will need careful observation.

(The author is a senior journalist. Views expressed are personal)

SOUNDBITE

Erdogan’s remarks are completely unacceptable. They reflect neither an understanding of history nor of the conduct of diplomacy.

MEA Spokesperson
—Raveesh Kumar



I’m happy that I can now do the work that I’ve wanted to. I want to continue working all my life because it’s difficult as people say that actresses have a shelf-life.

Actor
—Kareena Kapoor



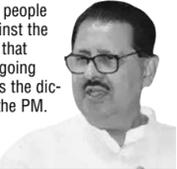
The global community must step up efforts to help bring peace in war-torn Afghanistan. The Afghan people need and deserve peace, prosperity and full respect of their human rights.

UN chief
—Antonio Guterres



Lakhs and lakhs of people are up in arms against the CAA. His assertion that there would be no going back on CAA shows the dictatorial attitude of the PM.

Congress leader
—Sanjay Dutt



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Corrupt rule the roost

Sir — Interestingly, though the electoral bonds (corporate-sponsored cash money to political parties excluding goods and services tax and without the donor’s name) scheme was originally formulated for the Lok Sabha polls, the window for the sale of bonds was opened before the Assembly elections as well. The last instance for this was seen in the just-concluded elections in Delhi.

As per the election watchdog, the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR), in the run-up to the Delhi Assembly elections, 139 electoral bonds (78 bonds were worth ₹1 crore each, 34 bonds worth ₹10 lakh each while the remaining 27 bonds were worth ₹1 lakh each) worth ₹81.67 crore were sold by various branches of State Bank of India (SBI).

So far, ₹6,210 crore have been donated through this method ever since the scheme began. In the name of election reform, this electoral bond scheme is the invention of the BJP. This is yet another way of concealing facts and encouraging corruption without a trail.

The dark side of Indian politics

If the ever-rising number of criminal cases against politicians is anything to go by, politics and crime seem inseparable in India. At present, over 40 per cent of the Lok Sabha MPs have criminal cases pending against them. The Representation of the People Act, 1951, does not bar politicians from contesting polls. It just states that individuals punished with a jail term of more than two years cannot contest an election for six years after the jail term has ended. Shortcomings in the RPA cannot be ignored. Nevertheless, it’s welcome that in a fresh initiative to cleanse the electoral system, the Supreme Court has directed parties to upload details of criminal cases pending against candidates in the poll fray on their respective websites. According to statistics, in 2004, about one in four MPs had criminal cases against them. However, the frequency grew to about one in three between 2009 and 2014. Last year, it was much closer to one in two. If almost every other MP stands accused of a serious crime, something is seriously wrong with the choice made by parties. The apex court has done well to reiterate its concern but it could have drawn the line by exerting moral force on political parties, which are clearly violators.

The top court has repeatedly asserted that it’s the voter’s democratic right to know about a candidate’s criminal antecedents, if any. These details help the citizens



make an informed choice. Despite landmark judgments, parties and contestants are reluctant to do the needful for the obvious reason that such disclosure can harm their poll prospects. This time, too, the onus of cleaning the system has been put on the Election Commission (EC). It has been made responsible for enforcing the court’s order so as to ensure “transparency.” But at a time when the institution itself is toothless, how can it change the situation on the ground? The EC should be granted the power to disqualify candidates and de-register parties in case of concealment of vital information and other grave electoral offences.

Abhijit Roy
Jamshedpur

Digest the irony

Sir — The appointment of Rishi Sunak as the UK’s new Finance Minister is proof of the acceptance of Indian talent. His work is cut

out. It is likely that he will overcome all challenges on account of his vast financial acumen and practical understanding of the issues at hand. Sunak’s rise to prominence has not come without undertones. While we feel proud that Indian-origin men and women are gaining prominence, we brand them as “termites” when they come home in search of livelihood. They are viewed as a “danger” to the nation.

Ruchi
Via email

When will we learn?

Sir — Union Home Minister Amit Shah’s admission that his party failed to feel the pulse of the people in Delhi makes one feel the country is a “picture hall,” where the politicians are the “entertainers” and the citizens cast their vote to rate the level of entertainment. Why can’t our leaders realise that people assess their worthiness with reference to the job done?

PP Sen
New Delhi

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A win-win for Modi and Trump

While India will benefit from stronger defence ties and technology, the US President will gain from his pro-India image in an election year



SIMI MEHTA

On February 24, US President Donald Trump will inaugurate the world's largest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad. He will also be welcomed with resounding calls of "Kern Cho, Trump" while participating in a seven-kilometre long roadshow from the airport to the Sabarmati Ashram accompanied by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi. Celebrating the close ties between America and India, this will be the first visit of a US President since 2015 and Trump's first foreign tour after his impeachment trial. The palpable excitement over the visit is evident, with Modi underscoring that this would "go a long way in further cementing India-US ties."

The tour is expected to overtake the obvious optics and engage in serious discussions on broad, strategic ingredients that bring India and the US together. On February 25, the Trumps will be accorded a ceremonial welcome in the second leg of their trip to New Delhi. Defence cooperation is expected to occupy the centrestage and India is set to give a final approval for the \$2.6 billion 24 MH-60R Seahawk helicopters equipped with torpedoes and submarine-detection capacities for the Indian Navy. Additionally, there is a US approval already in place for the sale of an Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS) or the National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System-II to India estimated at \$1.8 billion. This will strengthen Indian defence capabilities and aid the modernisation process of its armed forces.

This will build upon the Trump Administration's previous decisions to ease the controls for high and sensitive technology product sales to India. This will grant to India the same access as NATO allies through the Strategic Trade Authorisation-1 status, as well as sale of armed drones and integrated air and missile defence technology. India would demonstrate its will to modernise its armed forces and strengthen military capabilities and bilateral defence cooperation through the agreements with the US that guide the sharing of sensitive military and communications technology and reciprocal use of facilities.

Trump's maiden visit to India as the US President will strengthen the respective countries' Indo-Pacific policies and witness a synergy in their pushback strategies against the China-Russia alignment in Asia. It would be of relevance to see if the Blue Dot network finds mention at the leadership level. This network, launched by the US Government in November 2019 is a global certification for projects as market-driven, financially-sustainable and transparent and is a reaction to the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative. It needs to be highlighted that Australia and Japan — the other two members of Quad (apart from the US and India), have already signed up for the network.

In an endeavour to push for deeper trade and business ties, the two countries have been trying to reach a modest trade deal with lower tariffs. But the long-awaited "mini" trade deal may not see the anticipated fruition as talks have run into problems due to concerns over data privacy and e-commerce controls. Add to this the recent withdrawal of India from the list of "developing countries" — a status given in line with the WTO's system of Generalised System of Preferences, on February 10. This would emboss the issues of increased tariff barriers, which could act as an impediment for India getting favourable trade terms. So far, Indian exporters benefitted from the tariff-free access to US markets and receiving the "developed country" tag would subject exports to scrutiny regarding the harm they do the US industry. Despite this, Indian Inc is optimistic about higher investments from US companies, demanding exemption from high duties imposed by the US on certain steel and aluminium products from India and greater market access for its agricultural, automobile, auto components and engineering products.

Reflecting the strong personal rapport between Trump and Modi, this visit will be the fifth meeting between the two leaders in the last three years to elevate bilateral strategic relations. It would demonstrate the two countries' affirmation of the shared values of commitment to democracy and rule of law and to a more peaceful and open Indo-Pacific, plus the US' acknowledgement of India as its major partner in maintaining the international global order.

Trump's visit to India is possibly the final major foreign tour before the presidential elections in November 2020. Given the fact that Indian-Americans constitute a huge population and voter base in the US, if Trump reaffirms America's commitment to diversity, inclusion and immigrants, this visit would steer a significant number of their votes his way as it will showcase his close ties with their home country. In fact, Modi already blew the US election bugle at the Howdy Modi event in September 2019 in Texas. Swarmed by Indian-American crowd, he endorsed Trump for a second term saying, "Abki baar Trump sarkar."

(The writer is CEO and Editorial Director, IMPRI)

I BROUGHT THE EAST-WEST METRO TO KOLKATA AFTER MUCH SACRIFICE BUT NOW WHEN ITS INAUGURATION DATE CAME, I WAS KEPT OUT OF IT.

—WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER MAMATA BANERJEE

POINT COUNTERPOINT



MAMATA SHOULD STOP MAKING ISSUES OUT OF NON-ISSUES LIKE THIS IN PUBLIC AND CONCENTRATE ON GIVING GOOD GOVERNANCE TO THE STATE.

—STATE BJP PRESIDENT DILIP GHOSH

Make your choice

If demand doesn't improve, firms might retain the tax cut bonanza instead of investing. It would've been better to put more cash in the pockets of individuals by giving more IT relief



UTTAM GUPTA

Amid an atmosphere of gloom and doom (triggered by growth plunging to a low of less than five per cent during the current year and muted projections for next year), it is necessary to closely scrutinise tax proposals in the Union Budget for 2020-21 to assess whether or not these will generate the much-needed growth impulses.

The four major factors impinging on a surge are private consumption, investment, export and spending by the State. The Modi Government has kept up the tempo of expenditure by way of building infrastructure and spending on welfare schemes. On the export front, given the all-round depressed growth and international trading environment, there is little that it can do in terms of using this lever for providing the much-needed fillip.

Therefore, much of the focus has to be on the first two levers, i.e. private consumption and investment. The big question is whether the tax proposals will help in boosting demand. First, let us look at the changes in personal income tax (PIT).

At present, a person having an income of ₹2,50,001-₹5,00,000 per annum pays a tax of five per cent, those earning more than ₹5,00,000 but less than ₹10,00,000 pay 20 per cent tax whereas, someone having an income higher than ₹10,00,000 pays 30 per cent. Accompanying this are a plethora of exemptions and deductions viz. Section 80C (annual investment, expenses, life insurance premium and so on, up to ₹1,50,000), Section 80D (health insurance premiums), Section 24 (interest on home loans), Section 80CCD (including extra NPS contribution up to ₹50,000), Section 80E (education loan interest) and Section 16 (standard deduction on salary income) and so on.

This Budget, even while retaining five per cent tax for annual income in the ₹2,50,001-₹5,00,000 range, on income higher than ₹5,00,000, proposes a differentiated structure with five slabs against two under the existing scheme of things. The proposed slabs and corresponding tax rates are 10 per cent for ₹5,00,001-₹7,50,000; 15 per cent for ₹7,50,001-₹10,00,000; 20 per cent for ₹10,00,001-₹12,50,000; 25 per cent for ₹12,50,001-₹15,00,000 and for those earning above ₹15,00,000 a tax of 30 per cent. A person who decides to avail lower tax rates under the new scheme will have to forego most exemptions and deductions. In other words, he can either continue with the existing scheme or go for the new regime. No cherry picking is permitted.

For a person availing of most tax breaks, switch-over to the new regime won't yield any savings. He could even be worse off depending on the income profile and deductions/exemptions availed. For instance, a person having an annual income of ₹15,00,000 and availing tax breaks aggregating ₹3,75,000 (Section 80C: ₹1,50,000; Section 80D: ₹25,000; Section 24: ₹2,00,000) or net income ₹11,25,000 will have to pay ₹1,56,000 as tax. In case however, he opts for the new scheme i.e. taxable income remaining at ₹15,00,000 but lower rates, his tax liability will be ₹1,95,000. This being ₹39,000 higher, he would prefer to continue with the old scheme. However, the reality on ground zero is that an overwhelming number of assesses are unable to avail of the tax breaks. This is because people in the early stages of their family life have high expenditure commitment and hence need more cash in hand, leaving little surplus to invest which is necessary for availing deductions. Then, there are people at the age end, say age 55 years plus, who are



“ THE BUDGET PROPOSALS (SEPTEMBER 2019 AND NOW) ENTAIL A MAMMOTH GIVEAWAY OF ABOUT ₹1,50,000 CRORE PER ANNUM. THIS SHOULD HELP IN SPURRING INVESTMENT DEMAND. HOWEVER, CONSIDERING THAT AT PRESENT, CONSUMPTION IS SUBDUED AND ALREADY SURPLUS CAPACITY EXISTS IN SEVERAL SECTORS, ITS IMPACT ON GROWTH IN THE SHORT-TERM MAY NOT BE MUCH

under no compulsion to save (he has already built a house or nearly completed education of the children). Such people who are unable or unwilling to invest — due to economic circumstances facing them — and hence, unable to avail exemptions and deductions would stand to gain by switching over to the new dispensation. In the above example (annual income ₹15,00,000), the tax liability of such a person under the old regime would be ₹2,73,000, which is ₹78,000 higher than under the new regime (₹1,95,000). Without doubt, he/she will be inclined to go for the latter. That apart, the FM's proposals empower assesses to take their own decisions instead of being constrained by available tax breaks. Someone wanting to have more cash in hand can opt for the new scheme whereas another person keen to save more can continue with the old regime.

According to an internal exercise by the Union Finance Ministry, the proposal will entail a loss of ₹40,000 crore to the exchequer, which means that much extra cash in the hand of tax payers which they can spend, thereby giving a boost to demand and in turn, growth.

Another proposal expected to put more cash in the hands of individuals, especially those earning less than ₹10,00,000 per annum, relates to the manner of levying dividend distribution tax (DDT). At present, a company is required to deduct tax (known as DDT) at the rate of 20 per cent (including surcharge and education cess, this comes to 20.35 per cent) from the surplus/profit set aside for distribution of dividend to shareholders. The Budget proposes to substitute this by taxing dividends in the hands of recipients/shareholders.

This substitution means that retail investors, whose earnings are in the ₹500,001-₹750,000 and ₹750,001-

₹10,00,000 range, will stand to gain as they will pay tax on dividend at 10 per cent and 15 per cent respectively, as against 20 per cent they pay currently. This will also be a booster to foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) who will be able to claim offset for the tax paid on dividend received from companies here in their respective jurisdictions (this is not possible under the subsisting dispensation of levying tax before distributing profit).

Implementation of this proposal will entail an annual loss of ₹25,000 crore to the exchequer. This much extra money in the hands of investors will also help augment purchasing power. Coming to corporate tax, on September 20, 2019, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced steep reduction in the rate of corporate tax for "new entities" incorporated from October 1, 2019 in the manufacturing sector and start production by March 31, 2023 from the existing 25 per cent to 15 per cent. Such companies won't have to pay minimum alternate tax (MAT) (levied on book profit of firms which have no taxable profit courtesies, exemptions and incentives).

Furthermore, the tax rate on existing companies was reduced from 30 per cent to 22 per cent (for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) annually with a turnover of less than ₹400 crore. This was reduced from the already preferential 25 per cent to 22 per cent) sans exemptions and deductions. These firms are also exempt from MAT. For companies who decide to continue with the old regime viz. tax at 30 per cent with tax breaks, MAT was reduced from existing 18.5 per cent to 15 per cent. In the Budget for 2020-21, the FM has extended the benefit of 15 per cent rate to "new" power companies. Besides, "cooperatives" are eligible for the 22 per cent rate sans exemptions and deductions. The steep reduction in tax rate

(for new enterprises, it is at 15 per cent. This is lower than other major countries viz the US 21 per cent, China 25 per cent; even for existing firms at 22 per cent, this is comparable) is a major structural reform aimed at making Indian firms more competitive and leaving more resources with them for increasing investment. The FM has given a choice, enabling them to choose either the old regime (higher tax rate with exemptions) or new regime (lower tax rate sans exemptions).

The Budget proposals (September 2019 and now) entail a mammoth give-away of about ₹1,50,000 crore per annum. This should help in spurring investment demand. However, considering that at present, consumption is subdued and already, surplus capacity exists in several sectors (major investment by way of setting up new projects can come only after existing capacities are fully utilised), its impact on growth in the short-term may not be much.

Unless private demand improves significantly, companies might be inclined to retain the tax cut bonanza instead of investing. It would have been better if the Government had put more money in the pockets of individuals by giving extra relief in PIT (say, by applying 10 per cent tax to the entire income range ₹5,00,001-₹10,00,000 instead of limiting this up to ₹7,50,000) as the need for resurrecting growth now is far more pressing.

To conclude, tax proposals in the 2020-21 Budget are in the right direction. However, a lot more needs to be done in terms of further reducing and simplifying the PIT. With regard to corporate tax, the Government should aim at 15 per cent rate applicable uniformly to enterprises in all sectors, new and existing (sans exemptions).

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

Pay taxes for a developed nation

The Government needs to proactively create the culture of paying taxes in order to be able to fulfil the dream of us becoming a \$5 trillion economy in five years



RAJEEV AHUJA KEERTI PRADHAN

The Indian Government aspires to take the economy to the \$5 trillion level over the next five years. It is a difficult goal by its own admission but not an impossible one. Given the current economic slowdown, many experts had hoped for a much stronger fiscal stimulus than what is contained in the recent Union Budget. That being what it is, some experts believe that the Government has missed an opportunity. However, the Centre seems to think differently. While acknowledging the need for growth-enhancing measures, the Niti Aayog's Vice-Chairman, Rajiv Kumar, had hinted prior to the Budget on using "alternate" measures in the face of limit-

ed fiscal headroom. Subsequently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in its monetary policy, used unconventional tools to give the economy a shot in the arm. Without getting into the debate on what's an optimal dose of economic stimulus and what combination of fiscal and monetary policy could deliver it, Government spending does have an important role in the revival of the economy. The Centre believes that a decent dose of fiscal stimulus is already contained in the Budget.

Be that as it may, growth revival is closely tied to Government spending, which in turn is closely tied to revenues and taxes are an important source of it.

It is startling to note some income tax statistics that have recently been cited: That only 8,600 individuals have reported incomes above ₹5 crore and only 2,200 professionals (doctors, chartered accountants, lawyers and so on) have declared professional income above ₹1 crore in the entire country in the fiscal year 2018-19. These figures don't match well with some other statistics, such

as the number of premium cars sold or the total people travelling abroad. There seems to be significant scope for improving tax compliance, which is essential to India achieving its \$5 trillion goal.

No rationale for tax avoidance: Tax evasion or underreporting may have been justified when corruption in public administration ran high. But now that the Narendra Modi Government has been able to provide a cleaner administration, this justification is no longer valid.

Further, the taxpayers can be reasonably certain that their money is being used responsibly. Indeed, the Modi Government has a vision of creating a "New India" and is focussed on the economic development of the entire country.

The Government's focus on the development of the North-east region, on "aspirational" districts and on Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities is all aimed at unleashing economic development across the entire country. Furthermore, several policies and programmes such as Skill India, Mudra Yojana, Start-up India, dou-

bling of farmers' income with the promotion of agriculture and allied activities such as animal husbandry and so on are aimed at benefiting all sections of society.

Additionally, the Government is working towards ease of paying taxes. It is simplifying the taxation system and making it citizen-centric. It has taken or is taking several steps such as simplifying laws, reducing the tax burden, making tax assessment faceless, bringing taxpayers' charter and so forth that should instil trust and confidence among tax-payers. But trust and confidence alone are not sufficient to persuade people to pay taxes honestly. The culture of tax avoidance developed over the last few decades will need to be changed consciously.

Promote tax-paying culture: The Government needs to promote the culture of paying taxes in the country. This can be done through a combination of measures. First, the example of clean administration at the national level needs to percolate down to the sub-national level too. Second, it's not enough for the Prime

Minister or Chief Ministers to be clean. Every Minister as an individual taxpayer ought to set an example. Third, the Government needs to run media campaigns to inform the public of their civic duty and also to connect the dots transparently on how their taxes are contributing towards nation-building. Fourth, the Government needs to rope in popular personalities with a large fan following to drive home the message of paying taxes — pretty much the same way as it has been doing for some other social campaigns. The culture of paying taxes honestly has to be instilled consciously and proactively.

India has a rich tradition of people donating to social organisations involved in helping the needy. However, in a well-functioning system, the Government, through its various programmes and initiatives, ought to be taking care of the needy. Although people are free to continue giving private donations, they don't necessarily have to, as long as they are paying their taxes and holding their Government accountable

for its performance, including its welfare role.

Tax culture essential: India is considered to be a lower-middle income country as per the World Bank's country classification which is based on income per person. Even if India becomes a \$5 trillion economy by 2025, it would still be considered as a lower-middle income country as per the World Bank classification.

The changes in the taxation system that the Government has or is introducing can help it generate revenues to fuel economic growth. Achieving a \$5 trillion economy in the next few years is not difficult. India may take a year or two longer but the goal is within reach.

However, to become a truly developed economy, India will need to change the mindset of its people. It will have to consciously and proactively create the culture of paying taxes.

(Ahuja is a development economist formerly with the World Bank and Pradhan is advisor and adjunct professor, Chitkara University, Punjab)



LEND A HAND TO IDLIB REFUGEES

As abrupt as the surge in those fleeing Idlib has been, this is a long-awaited disaster; the end result of decisions made over the years. Only an immediate ceasefire and unhindered flow of aid can offer these desperate civilians any hope of respite: Western powers should be doing everything they can to press for them. This is far less than those now huddled in Idlib are owed — and even this, it seems, may be too much to expect.

(The Guardian editorial)

HEALTH

BeSmart

Researchers have developed a smart jumpsuit that accurately measures the spontaneous and voluntary movement of infants from the age of five months — data that can help in assessing abnormal neurological development, among other things



SECRET TO GOOD SLEEP

A safe, non-toxic mattress determines whether your child sleeps well. PANKAJ GUPTA tells you things to look out for

One of the most important decisions a parent can make is choosing an organic kids mattress. Sleep is critical to your child's health and well-being, and since kids spend more than one third of their lives in direct exposure to their mattress materials it's crucial to their health that those mattress materials be safe, organic and non-toxic.

A safe, non-toxic mattress can determine whether your child sleeps well or not. Kids are more vulnerable to the toxins in mattresses since their fragile organ and elimination systems are developing and they can't easily detoxify. During sleep, children's bodies work to recover from the accumulation of toxins and stress from their day. The cells attempt to regenerate and the body tries to eliminate toxins. The last thing you want to do is introduce more toxins from your child's mattress.

The way to ensure a non-toxic sleep environment is to avoid polyurethane foam, memory foam and other synthetic materials. Also avoid mattresses with fire retardants. Your kids need a mattress with good quality organic, non-toxic materials.

While firm support for your child is the most important feature in a safer mattress for kids, comfort counts too! Many mattresses contain conventional cotton fiber (treated with pesticides), synthetic filling materials made with harmful chemicals, or polyurethane foam for comfort.

Pay attention to how your child sleeps to help you select the ideal comfort and support levels needed in the best organic mattress for their needs.

■ **Side Sleepers:** If your child sleeps on their side, they need a little more cushion to reduce tension and pressure on their developing skeletal system. Check out the Naturepedic Verse with encased coil support if your child is older or a side sleeper. You can also get a quilted mattress pad to provide extra comfort.

■ **Tummy Sleepers:** For kids who sleep on their stomachs, a firm mattress is important to help reduce pressure on the back and shoulders.

■ **Back Sleepers:** If your big kid sleeps on their back, this is the best position for spinal health! Medium or cushion firm support is great for back sleepers, but remember that kids need a little more firmness than adults.

Be careful of what you pay for. A cheap bed may not necessarily be the safest option for your child. When buying a bed for your toddler, it is important to consider their weight and age. The changeover from cot to a regular bed should occur between 18 and 36 months.

One of the most important things that matter for a sleeping child is their spine support. Both the neck and spine must be in a neutral position. This reduces stress and encourages spinal growth.

The spine of a toddler can grow up to 1.5 cm at night, and this comes from filling of the intervertebral discs between the vertebrae with water. This means the mattress should be soft enough to make them comfortable, yet stable enough to prevent sinking in.

It can be tempting to save money by going with the smallest mattress for a small child, but consider the big picture. Children grow quickly, and the ideal mattress will be one with a long lifespan that can adjust to a child's needs as he or she gets bigger. To avoid having to go through the process again in just a year or two, it's best to buy the highest quality you can afford with the long-term in mind.

The writer is Director, RP Foam Home India Pvt Ltd



BELLY OH BELLY

Food poisoning and stomach flu are common ailments. However, most people get confused between the two. DR SK MUNDHRA tells you how to tackle both

Food poisoning and stomach flu are often confused due to their similar symptoms. Food poisoning is caused by eating food that contains bacteria, viruses, or parasites, which can get into food at various points during production. While stomach flu is caused by a viral infection that attacks the digestive system and is highly contagious and spreads rapidly.

A stomach flu has a few common symptoms that can last for up to 10 days. They include:

- Diarrhea that may be watery or bloody
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea or vomiting
- Stomach cramps, muscle aches, or weakness
- Low-grade fever
- Headaches
- Light-headedness or dizziness

There are a few things that people can do at home while recovering from a stomach virus:

- People with a stomach virus should avoid food for a while to let their stomach settle.
- Let the stomach settle: Try not to eat any solid foods for several hours.
- Take small sips of water: People should drink plenty of liquids to not get dehydrated. Avoid juice or other beverages which can make diarrhea worse.
- Ease back into eating: Start with bland easy-to-digest food such as soda crackers, toast, and rice. Stop eating if nausea returns.
- Avoid certain substances: These include dairy, caffeine, alcohol, sugar, and fatty or highly seasoned foods.
- People should be cautious of over-the-counter medications as some can make the infection worse. Even anti-diarrhea medications can make the situation worse if the cause of the infection is certain bacteria. The stomach flu typically goes away within 24 to 28 hours, but home care is vital for a speedy recovery. See a doctor if you have any of the following symptoms:
- Bloody stool or vomit
- Unable to keep liquid down for at least 24 hours
- Dehydration
- Fever above 104°F.

Better safe than sorry

Some foods are more likely to cause food poisoning because of the way they're produced and prepared. Meat, poultry, eggs, and shellfish may harbor infectious agents that are killed during cooking. If these foods are eaten in their raw form, not cooked properly, or if hands and surfaces are not cleaned after contact, food poisoning can occur.

Always wash your hands before cooking or eating food. Make sure that your food is properly sealed and stored. Thoroughly cook meat and eggs. Anything that comes in contact with raw products should be sanitised before using it to prepare other foods. Make sure to always wash fruits and vegetables before serving.

The following may be the reasons to cause food poisoning and infections.

- Dirty utensils, hands and kitchen area: If the utensils and the kitchen area is dirty, the food you prepare is prone to infections and cause food poisoning. Wash your hands properly to avoid the spread of bacteria and contaminating the food.
- Keeping raw material and ready-to-eat food together: Ready to eat food are not cooked and if kept along with raw meat, it is vulnerable to pick up germs even after cooking process.
- Keeping cut fruits and vegetables outside: Warm place is a breeding ground for bacteria. Cut fruits or vegetables need to be kept in refrigerator immediately.
- If the leftovers are not cooled: Nobody wants to waste the delicious food prepared. Cooling leftovers within 90 minutes of being prepared, then making sure they go straight in the fridge is the best

way to ensure that your delicious leftovers will still be good for the next few days.

- Reheating meat more than once: If you've got something meaty in your leftovers, ensure that you don't heat it up more than once. Continuously heating and then cooling meat allows bacteria to grow and multiply, potentially causing food poisoning. If you've got a lot of leftovers, the best thing to do is to only heat up the portion you're planning to eat, rather than the entire dish.

The symptoms of food poisoning occur more quickly than those of a stomach virus.

Cross-contamination is often the cause of food poisoning. This is when harmful organisms transfer from one surface to another. Raw foods and ready-to-eat foods like salads are particularly at risk of contamination.

Bacteria can also grow rapidly when foods such as meats, dairy products, and sauces are not kept at the right temperature. The bacteria and other harmful organisms can produce poisonous substances that cause inflammation of the intestines when eaten.

Symptoms can vary depending on the source of the infection. Common cases of food poisoning will typically include at least three of the following symptoms — abdominal cramps, diarrhoea, vomiting, loss of appetite, mild fever, weakness, nausea and headaches.

The best way to prevent food poisoning is to handle your food safely and to avoid any food that may be unsafe.

The writer is HOD, Internal Medicine, Saroj Super Speciality Hospital, New Delhi

Always wash your hands before cooking or eating. Make sure that your food is properly sealed and stored. Thoroughly cook meat and eggs

DOGYARD

DR ARUN KUMAR VERMA

Senior Oncologist

MAX HOSPITAL, NEW DELHI



Oral cancer can be prevented

Oral cancer is a major problem in the Indian subcontinent where it ranks among the top three types of cancer in the country. Age-adjusted rates of oral cancer in India is high, that is, 20 per 100,000 population and accounts for over 30 per cent of all cancers in the country. The variation in incidence and pattern of the disease can be attributed to the combined effect of ageing of the population, as well as regional differences in the prevalence of disease-specific risk factors.

Oral cancer is of significant public health importance to India. First, it is diagnosed at later stages which result in low treatment outcomes and considerable costs to the patients who typically cannot afford this type of treatment. Second, rural areas in middle and low-income countries also have inadequate access to trained providers and limited health services. As a result, delay has also been largely associated with advanced stages of oral cancer. Earlier detection of oral cancer offers the best chance for long term survival and has the potential to improve treatment outcomes and make healthcare affordable. Third, oral cancer affects those from the lower socioeconomic groups, that is, people from the lower socio-economic strata of society due to a higher exposure to risk factors such as the use of tobacco. Last, even though clinical diagnosis occurs via examination of the oral cavity and tongue which is accessible by current diagnostic tools, many cases present to a healthcare facility at later stages of cancer subtypes, thereby reducing chances of survival due to delays in diagnosis.

Causes: Mouth cancers form when cells on the lips or in the mouth develop changes (mutations) in their DNA. A cell's DNA contains the instructions that tell a cell what to do. The mutations changes tell the cells to continue growing and dividing when healthy cells would die. The accumulating abnormal mouth cancer cells can form a tumour. With time they may spread inside the mouth and on to other areas of the head and neck or other parts of the body. Mouth cancers most commonly begin in the flat, thin cells (squamous cells) that line your lips and the inside of your mouth. Most oral cancers are squamous cell carcinomas.

Prevention: There's no proven way to prevent mouth cancer. However, you can reduce your risk of mouth cancer if you:

- Stop using tobacco or don't start.
- Drink alcohol only in moderation, if at all.
- Avoid excessive sun exposure to your lips.

■ See your dentist regularly. As part of a routine dental exam, ask your dentist to inspect your entire mouth for abnormal areas that may indicate mouth cancer or precancerous changes.

Treatment:

- Surgery: Tumour present in lips, mouth, tongue can be removed with surgery. Surgical excision leads to disfigurement of face, drooling of saliva from angle of mouth, partial or complete loss of tongue and voice, reduced mouth opening in case of lip cancer. Disfigurement can be corrected cosmetically by plastic surgery. Functional losses may persist.

■ Radiation therapy: Treatment of cancer by rays (gamma, electron, photos and protons) is called radiation therapy. IMRT, IGRT are advanced form of radiation therapy that have the ability to spare surrounding organs as well as precisely deliver accurate dose to tumour. Post-surgery radiation therapy is called adjuvant therapy and reduces possibility of locoregional recurrence.

■ Chemotherapy: Chemotherapy is a medicine which is given in form of injections or tablets under supervision of oncologist. Mostly, it is given on a weekly basis during radiation therapy to enhance effects. Common side effects are hair loss, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, constipation and reduced blood count.

WARMFOODS

BLUEBERRY: Blueberries contain a plant compound called anthocyanin. This gives them the blue colour and is known for many health benefits. Blueberries contain iron, phosphorous, calcium, magnesium, manganese, zinc, and Vitamin K. Adequate intake of these minerals and vitamins help in maintaining bone structure and strength.

They are also rich in Vitamin C which makes them a good option for healthy skin and reduces the damage caused by the external agents.

Blueberries can also improve the heart health and help in managing Diabetes.

They also help in boosting body's immunity and thereby keeping cough and cold at bay. They also aids in digestion, helps in weight loss by making you feel full.



DadiKaKehna

The season is changing and with it comes the usual problems — sore throat, cough and cold.

ROSHNI DEVI tells you how home remedies can help ease the pain, itchiness and irritation of the throat



Is there irritation in the throat? Is their pain when you swallow? In all probability you have a sore throat — a common ailment during change of season. While the itchiness and the irritation in the throat can be painful, there are several ingredients that we have in our kitchen that can bring relief.

The most important thing to remember is that one must drink warm liquids. Soup, herbal tea and even just warm water with honey can help soothe a sore throat. For flavour one can add mint and even ginger. There is a reason why everyone suggests a saltwater

gargle. Make a saltwater solution by putting half a teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water.

Just like salt, lemons, which are packed with Vitamin C help to boost the immune system and give it more power to fight infection. Mix one tea-spoon of lemon juice into a glass of warm water and drink for quick relief.

They say prevention is better than cure. If you sense a sore throat coming, dilute one-two tablespoons of apple cider vinegar in one cup of water and gargle with it. Do this on an hourly basis. Do drink plenty of water in between the gargling sessions.



TIPTOP

Gynecological cancers or women's cancers are largely preventable if screened early. This was stated by Dr Amita Nathani and Dr Leena Dadhwal, two gynecology experts from Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre, Nityabagh South Delhi. The two doctors were speaking at a conclave attended by Moradabad based gynecologists in large numbers.

The conclave was organised by Moradabad Obstetrics Gynecological Society (MOGS), Moradabad. Dr Leena Chauhan, Dr Saba Asad and Dr Shazia Monis, President, Hony Secretary and Treasurer of MOGS presided over the function.

Speaking on cervical cancer, Dr Amita Naithani, Consultant — Gynaecology, RGCIRC argued in favour of early screening of cervical cancer which can be easi-

ly tested by a simple PAP Smear test. It can even be detected in the pre-cancerous stage thus preventing the development of cancer. Cervical cancer, though most prevalent amongst women in rural India is one of the most preventable cancers," she said.

Regarding the treatment, Dr Amita Naithani said: "In 80 per cent of the cases, cervical cancer is caused by HPV virus infection for which vaccine is available. Between nine-14 years of age, vaccine can be given in the form of two injections and between 14 to 26 years of age, three injection need to be given."

Cervical vaccine programme has been introduced in several states in the country including Sikkim and Punjab. School girls are going to get vaccinated under this programme.



SLIMLINE

In a rare turn of events, 19-year-old Mukul was rushed to the emergency department of Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals as he was stabbed over right area of the chest leading to fatal injuries and loss of blood.

On November 15, 2019, Mukul was stabbed with the iron rod which was about 15 cm of which six-seven cm entered in the lower part of the back of left side of chest after he got into a fight which resulted in puncture of the posterior chest wall. Dr Priyadarshini Singh, Head of

Department — Emergency — Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals said: "The emergency team rushed to attend the patient with immediate attention within five minutes of the patient being admitted. Our mission is to give patients the appropriate care in the fastest, most efficient manner possible."

Mukul underwent thoracotomy through which the blood clot on the aorta was removed. All the wounds were sealed. He improved gradually and was discharged on November 18, 2019.

STUDYCENTRE

On Valentine's Day, international dating service OkCupid made an annual check in with millennials in India about love, romance and relationships in the 21st century. The app reviewed findings from user responses to hopefully find the answer to what men and women really want!

While the Indian millennial today are evolved, well-travelled and like to live life king-size, they still love those old-school coffee dates. A large majority of both men and women report a preference to chat over a steaming cup while out on a first date, even now. And despite what every other generation is saying about millennial, most of them truly believe in the beautiful serendipity of falling in love and want to live 'happily ever after' rather than exploring multiple relationships. Funnily, the most interesting finding is that unlike popular perception, men are actually hopeless romantics at heart and like to go all guns blazing on planning Valentine's Day celebrations. No judgement, but love deserves to be celebrated and most people did agree that love is not overrated or over celebrated.

According to the survey, while most millennials have an unquenchable thirst for knowledge (46 per cent), love is not far behind with over 30 per cent men and women saying that they are still driven by the idea of true love. The survey also revealed that 61 per cent of women and 53 per cent of men consider love as a true stroke of serendipity and want it to just happen to them by chance.

CORONAVIRUS

99 more cases on Japan cruise ship: Media

Tokyo: An additional 99 people have tested positive for coronavirus on a cruise ship off the Japan coast, Japanese media said on Monday, citing new figures from the health ministry.

February 5 with only brief and occasional breaks to take air on deck — with face masks.

The quarantine period is over on Wednesday but many countries have decided to repatriate their citizens after an

alarming climb in cases on board.

The US was the first country to evacuate its citizens from the ship but Australia, Canada, Italy and Hong Kong have indicated they will follow suit.

On land, cases in Japan have risen to 65, with authorities warning that the outbreak is entering a “new phase” and advising people to avoid large gatherings.

A public celebration of the

new emperor's birthday on Sunday has been scrapped and organisers of the Tokyo Marathon scheduled on March 1 are reportedly considering cancelling the amateur part of the race. **AFP**

WHO experts join field inspections in China

Beijing: Top WHO experts, including from the US, have joined the fight against the novel coronavirus in China that has claimed 1,770 lives, as Beijing stepped up its efforts by deploying 30,000 more medical staff in the worst-affected Wuhan city to contain the spread of the epidemic.

China's National Health Commission (NHC) said on Monday that 105 people died of the virus on Sunday while 2,048 new cases of infection have been confirmed, taking the total number of COVID-19 infected cases to 70,548, the state run

Xinhua news agency reported.

Of the new deaths, 100 were reported from the central Hubei province, three in the central Henan province, and two in the southern Guangdong province. The efforts to combat coronavirus picked up pace with the global experts mobilised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) joining hands with their Chinese counterparts.

China has confirmed that the WHO team reportedly comprising 12 members includes experts from the US, which has been a major demand from Washington. **PTI**

German far right arrests reveal ‘shocking’ mosque attack plot

Berlin: Members of a German extreme right group arrested last week were believed to have been plotting “shocking” large-scale attacks on mosques similar to the ones carried out in New Zealand last year, a government spokesman said Monday.

Officials said that investigations into 12 men detained in police raids across Germany Friday had indicated they planned major attacks, following media reports over the weekend the group aimed to launch several simultaneous mass-casualty assaults on Muslims during prayers.

“It’s shocking what has been revealed here, that there are cells here that appear to have become radicalised in such a short space

of time,” interior ministry spokesman Bjorn Gruenewald told reporters at a Berlin press conference.

“It is the task of the state, and of course of this government, to protect free practice of religion in this country, with no reference to what religion it might be,” Chancellor Angela Merkel’s spokesman Steffen Seibert said.

“Anyone practising their religion in Germany within our legal order should be able to do so without being endangered or threatened.” According to media reports, the group planned to use semi-automatic weapons to ape last March’s attacks in Christchurch in New Zealand in which 51 people were killed at two mosques. **AFP**

China asks recovered patients to donate plasma for virus treatment

Beijing: Chinese health officials on Monday urged patients who have recovered from the coronavirus to donate blood so that plasma can be extracted to treat others who are critically ill.

Drugmakers are racing to develop a vaccine and treatment for the epidemic, which has which killed 1,770 people and infected over 70,500 people across China.

Plasma from patients who have recovered from a spell of pneumonia triggered by COVID-19 contains antibodies that can help reduce the virus

load in critically ill patients, an official from China’s National Health Commission told a press briefing Monday.

“I would like to make a call to all cured patients to donate their plasma so that they can bring hope to critically ill patients,” said Guo Yanhong, who heads the NHC’s medical administration department.

Eleven patients at a hospital in Wuhan received plasma infusions last week, said Sun Yanrong, of the Biological Center at the Ministry of Science and Technology. **AFP**

Trading quarantines, Americans from cruise land in US

Travis Air Force Base: One of two charter flights carrying cruise ship passengers from Japan landed at a California air force base early Monday, starting the clock on a quarantine period to ensure passengers don’t have the new virus that’s been spreading in Asia.

A plane carrying American passengers touched down at Travis Air Force Base in northern California just before 2:30 a.m., local time. Another flight was headed to Lackland Air Force Base in Texas.

Japan’s Defence Minister Taro Kono had tweeted earlier that Japanese troops helped transport 340 US passengers on 14 buses from Yokohama port to Tokyo’s Haneda airport. About 380 Americans were on the cruise ship. **AFP**

Donald Trump calls for Russia to stop backing Syrian ‘atrocities’

Washington: President Donald Trump has called for Russia to end its support for the Syrian regime’s “atrocities” as he expressed US concern over violence in the Idlib region, the White House said.

In a call with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Trump “expressed concern over the violence in Idlib, Syria and... Conveyed the United States’ desire to see an end to Russia’s support for the Assad regime’s atrocities.”

President Bashar al-Assad’s forces made new gains Sunday in their offensive against the last major rebel bastion in the northwest region of Idlib.

Backed by Russian air strikes, Syrian government forces have kept up the assault in Idlib and areas of neighbouring Aleppo and Latakia provinces since December.

On Sunday, after clashes and air strikes, regime forces “were in control of all the villages and small towns around

Aleppo for the first time since 2012,” the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The Russian-backed offensive has triggered the largest wave of displacement in Syria’s civil war, with 800,000 people fleeing since December, the United Nations says.

In the Saturday phone call with Erdogan, Trump also “reiterated that continued foreign interference in Libya would only serve to worsen the situation.”

Libya has been mired in chaos since a 2011 NATO-backed uprising killed long-time dictator Moamer Kadhafi, with two rival administrations vying for power.

States including Russia, France, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt support strongman Khalifa Haftar, while the UN-recognised Government of National Accord is backed by Turkey and Qatar. **AFP**

Armed gang steals toilet rolls in panic-buying Hong Kong

Hong Kong: A gang of knife-wielding men jumped a delivery driver in Hong Kong and stole hundreds of toilet rolls, police said Monday, in a city wracked by shortages caused by coronavirus panic-buying.

Toilet rolls have become hot property in the densely packed business hub, despite government assurances that supplies remain unaffected by the virus outbreak.

Supermarkets have found themselves unable to restock quickly enough, leading to sometimes lengthy queues and shelves wiped clean within moments of opening.

There has also been a run on staples such as rice and pasta, as well as hand sanitiser and other cleaning items.

Police said a truck driver was held up early Monday by three men outside a supermarket in Mong Kok, a working-class district with a history of “triad” organised crime gangs. **AFP**

Church pastor among 24 killed in Burkina Faso attack

Ouagadougou: Gunmen killed 24 men, including a church pastor, and kidnapped three others on Sunday in Burkina Faso, an official said. It was the latest attack against a religious leader in the increasingly unstable West African nation.

The mayor of Boundou commune, Sihanri Osangola Brigadie, said the attack occurred in the town of Pansy in Yagha province. The roughly 20 attackers separated men from women close to a

Protestant church. At least 10 other people were injured.

“It hurt me when I saw the people,” Brigadie said after visiting some of the victims in the hospital in Dori town, 180 kilometers (110 miles) from the attack. The gunmen looted oil and rice from shops and forced the three youth they kidnapped to help transport it on their motorbikes, he said.

Both Christians and Muslims were killed before the church was set on fire, said a

government security official in Dori who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren’t authorized to speak to the media.

Attacks have targeted religious leaders in the area in the past. Last week, also in Yagha province, a retired pastor was killed and another pastor was abducted by gunmen, according to an internal security report for aid workers seen by The Associated Press.

Extremist violence has dra-

matically escalated in once-peaceful Burkina Faso. Analysts are concerned that attacks against civilians, including against Christians, are increasing “at an alarming rate,” said Corinne Dufka, West Africa director for Human Rights Watch.

“Perpetrators use victims’ links to government or their faith to justify the killings, while others appear to be reprisal killings for killings by the government security

forces,” she said.

More than 1,300 civilians were killed in targeted attacks last year in Burkina Faso, more than seven times the previous year, according to Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, which collects and analyzes conflict information.

The insecurity has created a humanitarian crisis. More than 760,000 people are internally displaced, according to the government. **AP**

Rwandan dissident singer found dead in custody: police

Kigali: A popular Rwandan singer whose music was banned by the ruling regime “committed suicide” in custody, police announced Monday, three days after he was caught trying to flee the country.

Kizito Mihigo, a survivor of the Rwandan genocide whose songs angered the government of strongman President Paul Kagame, was found dead in a police cell in the capital Kigali around 5am (0200 GMT).

Mihigo, who was sentenced to 10 years’ jail in 2015 for conspiracy against the government but later released on pardon, was captured trying to cross the border in Rwanda’s south.

Police spokesperson John Bosco Kabera said he was visited by family members and his lawyer during his detention. **AFP**

“Investigations have begun to ascertain why he committed suicide,” he said.

Mihigo fell foul of the ruling RPF in 2013 after composing songs that questioned the government’s tight control of the legacy of the 1994 tragedy.

His music, once popular by ruling elites, was swiftly banned. Two years later he was accused of terrorism and raising support for an opposition political movement and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

His lawyers said prosecutors had little evidence to jail him. He was released on presidential pardon in September 2018.

Mihigo is not the first figure to die in mysterious circumstances under police custody in Rwanda. **AFP**

Eight killed in suicide bombing in Balochistan

Karachi: A powerful suspected suicide bombing at a religious rally in Pakistan’s restive Balochistan province killed at least eight persons, including policemen, and injured 23 others on Monday, according to media reports.

The bombing took place during the religious rally at the Quetta Press Club near the Shahrah-i-Adalat road. Several vehicles parked in the vicinity have also been damaged due to the impact of the blast, Dawn newspaper reported.

The attack came the same day UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who is in

Pakistan, termed the improved security situation in Pakistan as “absolutely remarkable.”

Security personnel have cordoned off the area and are conducting a search operation. Officials added that the nature of the blast has not yet been ascertained.

At least eight persons, including policemen, were killed and 23 others injured in the incident, Duniya News reported.

No group took responsibility of the attack but Baloch nationalists and the Taliban militants were involved in such attacks in the past. **PTI**

Taliban kill five Afghan soldiers despite violence reduction hopes

Kabul: At least five Afghan soldiers were killed when Taliban fighters stormed their base in northern Afghanistan, officials said Monday, as the country waits for an expected “reduction in violence” before a US-Taliban deal.

The attack happened in Shora Khak area of volatile Kunduz province on Sunday, days after US Defense Secretary Mark Esper said an agreement with the Taliban was in place for a “conditions-based” seven-day reduction in violence.

“Unfortunately, five army soldiers were martyred and three wounded,” the Afghan defence ministry said in a statement, adding that Taliban fighters also suffered casualties. Enhamuddin Rahmani, a spokesman for Kunduz police, told AFP the fighting lasted several hours and both sides suffered casualties.

The Taliban’s official spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed on Twitter that the militants had killed 19 security forces in the attack. **AFP**

GLOBE TROTTER

LARGEST MASS GRAVES UNCOVERED IN BURUNDI
Nairobi: Authorities in Burundi say they have opened six mass graves containing more than 6,000 bodies from unrest that occurred decades ago, the largest such discovery in years of work. The East African nation has been unearthing such graves from a past that includes massacres along ethnic lines.

QUAKE RECOVERY: ALBANIA HOPES FOR 400 MN EUROS
Brussels: Prime Minister Edi Rama warned Monday that Albania will be “in trouble” if a donor conference does not pledge at least 400 mn euros to help it recover from a powerful earthquake. The impoverished Balkan State was hit by a 6.4-magnitude quake in Nov, killing 51 people, leaving 17,000 homeless and creating a recovery bill of more than a billion euros, according to an official assessment.

DEATH PENALTY URGED OVER JAPAN CARE HOME MASSACRE
Tokyo: Japanese prosecutors on Monday called for a 30-year-old man to be executed for allegedly murdering 19 disabled care home residents in one of the country’s worst mass killings. Satoshi Uematsu, a former care home employee, did not dispute his involvement in the 2016 stabbing rampage during his first court appearance last month in Yokohama.

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Branch Office: DHFL, Dreams Mall, first Floor, L.B.S Marg, Bhandup (West), Mumbai – 400078

DEMAND NOTICE
Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd (DHFL) under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer has issued Demand Notices under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the “said Borrower(s)”), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them that are also given below. In connection with above, Notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) to pay to DHFL, within 60 days from the publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said Demand Notice(s), from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization, payable under the loan agreement read with other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to DHFL by the said Borrower(s) respectively.

Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount With NPA date	Description of secured asset (immovable property)
(LC No. 00001839 of New Delhi Branch) Tilak Raj Khurana (Borrower) Mr. Tek Ram Bhasor (Guarantor 1)	21-01-2020/ ₹ 8,68,121/- (Eight lakh Sixty Eight Thousand One Hundred Twenty One) NPA (01-06-2016)	1/23, Vijay Nagar, Delhi- 1100, Delhi.
(LC No. 00002406 of New Delhi Branch) Gautam Sharma (Borrower) Shashi Sharma (Co Borrower 1)	21-01-2020/ ₹ 11,79,324/- (Eleven lakh Seventy Nine Thousand Three Hundred Twenty Four) NPA (01-10-2017)	Unit No T2 – 401, 4th Floor Parsavnath Castle Rajpura Patiala, Rajpura, Patiala- 140401, Punjab.
(LC No. 00002920 of New Delhi Branch) Yogamber S Gosain (Borrower) Poonam Gosain (Co Borrower 1)	21-01-2020/ ₹ 36,62,458/- (Thirty Six lakh Sixty Two Thousand Four Hundred Fifty Eight) NPA (01-07-2017)	Flat No-J-1101, 11th Floor, Block-J Grand Savana(KDP Group Project) Nh-58, Noor Nagar, Ghaziabad- 201001
(LC No. 00000339 of Rohini Branch) Ranjan Bhasin (Borrower) Chitra Bhasin (Co Borrower 1)	21-01-2020/ ₹ 21,86,185/- (Twenty One lakh Eighty Six Thousand One Hundred Eighty Five) NPA (01-09-2019)	Flat No-123, 12th Floor Block- B1, Kdp, Grand Savana Raj Nagar Ext, Nh-58, Ghaziabad, Ghaziabad- 201011
(LC No. 00000265 of Faridabad Branch) Sunil Kumar Sharma (Borrower) Anil Kumar Vaishnav (Co Borrower 1)	21-01-2020/ ₹ 26,98,607/- (Twenty Six lakh Ninety Eight Thousand Five Hundred Seven) NPA (01-11-2015)	Unit No: A2-1502, 15th Floor Era Divine Court (High Rise) Sec-76, Faridabad, Ghaziabad-121002
(LC No. 00000933 of Ghaziabad Branch) Poonam Shroeken (Borrower) Sunil K Malik (Co Borrower 1)	21-01-2020/ ₹ 31,30,484/- (Thirty One lakh Thirty Thousand Four Hundred Eighty Four) NPA (01-05-2019)	Flat No. A-2 / C-12, Type C, Block A-2 12th Floor, Shubhkamna Advert Techomes Plot No. G H 05 / B, Sector 137, Noida, Gautambudh Nagar-201301
(LC No. 00000682 of Noida Branch) Anil Rohila (Borrower) Archana (Co Borrower 1)	21-01-2020/ ₹ 24,75,955/- (Twenty Four lakh Twenty Seven Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Five) NPA (01-11-2019)	Flat No-123, 12th Floor Block- B1, Aravali Heights Dwarakadhis Project, Sec-24, Dharuhera, Gurgaon-122001
(LC No. 00000758 of Noida Branch) Anuj Goel (Borrower) Poonam Goel (Co Borrower 1)	21-01-2020/ ₹ 16,01,191/- (Sixteen lakh One Thousand One Hundred Ninety One) NPA (01-04-2019)	Unit No-1612, 16th Floor, Socrates I Supertech Czar, Plot No. Gh-02 Sector-Omicron-1, Greater Noida- 201308
(LC No. 00001244 of Noida Branch) Amit Kumar (Borrower) Juhi Tiwari (Co Borrower 1)	21-01-2020/ ₹ 35,61,557/- (Thirty Five lakh Sixty One Thousand Five Hundred Fifty Seven) NPA (01-12-2019)	Flat No: 1208- A 12th Floor Tower- CS-6 Plot No: GH-01/ A Supertech Capetown Sec-74, Noida, Gautambudh Nagar- 201301
(LC No. 00001116 of Noida 1 Rajendra Place Branch) Mahabir Singh (Borrower) Raj Bala (Co Borrower 1) Act Infrastructure Pvt Ltd (Co Borrower 2)	21-01-2020/ ₹ 74,55,875/- (Seventy Four lakh Fifty Five Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy Five) NPA (01-07-2017)	Flat No. 405, 4th Floor, Ganga Tower G-2 Pocket D-6, Vasant Kunj Delhi-110070, Delhi-110070, New Delhi-110070, Delhi.
(LC No. 00001274 of Noida 1 Rajendra Place Branch) Mukesh Kumar (Borrower) Seema (Co Borrower 1)	21-01-2020/ ₹ 28,30,311/- (Twenty Eight lakh Thirty Thousand Three Hundred Eleven) NPA (01-12-2019)	Flat No - 71 - A, Ground Floor Pocket-2, Madipur Paschim Plot No. New Delhi-110063, Delhi.
(LC No. 00001227 of New Delhi- West Branch) Sukhvinder Singh (Borrower) Harpreet Kaur (Co Borrower 1)	21-01-2020/ ₹ 15,70,875/- (Fifteen lakh Seventy Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy Five) NPA (01-12-2019)	Plot No. C-1/21-C, Third Floor, Front Portion, With Roof Rights, Kharsa No. 104/11, Rajapuri, Vill Palam, Uttam Nagar, Delhi, New Delhi-110046, Delhi.
(LC No. 000043693 of Delhi- Safdurjung Branch) Neeraj Kumar (Borrower) Suman (Co Borrower 1)	21-01-2020/ ₹ 18,09,321/- (Eighteen lakh Nine Thousand Three Hundred Twenty One) NPA (01-12-2019)	Upper Ground Floor Front Rhs Portion Plot No. D- 406 Indraprastha Colony, Ghaziabad-201010
(LC No. 00000965 of Karkarduma Noida Branch) Shalu Jain (Borrower) Vijay Rana (Co Borrower 1)	21-01-2020/ ₹ 15,82,238/- (Fifteen lakh Eighty Two Thousand Two Hundred Thirty Eight) NPA (01-12-2019)	Flat No- G-7, UGF, Front LHS Plot No. 33, Middlekharsa No. 80min, krishna Vatika Sudamapuri Colony Dunderha Khata No.- 01178 Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh- 201009
(LC No. 00042190 of Delhi- Pitampura Branch) Abhishek Kundra (Borrower) Brij Mohan Kundra (Co Borrower 1) Prem Lata Kundra (Co Borrower 2)	21-01-2020/ ₹ 68,42,912/- (Sixty Eight lakh Forty Two Thousand Nine Hundred Twelve) NPA (01-12-2019)	Plot No. 112 Pocket-12 Sector-20 Rohini New Delhi New Delhi Delhi 110085

If the said Borrowers shall fail to make payment to DHFL, as aforesaid, DHFL shall proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the Act and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks of the said Borrowers as to the costs and consequences. The said Borrowers are prohibited under the Act from transferring the aforesaid assets, whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of DHFL. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the said Act or Rules made there under, shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act.

Date : 18-02-2020
Place: Delhi
Sd/-
(Authorised Officer)
Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited

UK issues severe flood warnings, storm injures 9 in Germany

London: Britain issued five severe flood alerts on Monday, warning of a danger to life after Storm Dennis dumped weeks worth of rain in some places.

It gale-force winds also injured nine people in weather-related car accidents in Germany and caused flooding and power outages elsewhere in northern Europe.

The severe flood warnings were for the central English counties of Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Shropshire. The Met Office, Britain’s meteorological agency, issued another 221 flood warnings for England, along with 24 for

Wales and 12 for Scotland.

The weather system brought winds of more than 145 kph (90 mph) and up to 150 millimeters (6 inches) of rain over the weekend. Forecasters said river levels in parts of northern England had yet to reach their peak. In the northern England city of York, authorities were piling up more than 4,000 sandbags as the Rover Xscape continued to rise. It’s expected to peak on Tuesday.

Other residents in parts of Wales and western England were cleaning up on Monday after the storm flooded roads, railways, homes and disrupted travel across Britain. **AP**

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that an Application Under Section 7 of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 vide CP (IB) No. 59/Chd/Hy/2020 in the matter of Disha Rajeev (Applicant) Vs Accu Metals Private Limited (Respondent) has been filed before the Hon’ble National Company Law Tribunal Chandigarh Bench at Chandigarh. Further, notice is hereby given that next date of hearing in CP (IB) No.59/Chd/Hy/2020 before the Hon’ble National Company Law Tribunal Chandigarh Bench at Chandigarh is 05.03.2020 and all the concerned persons of Accu Metals Private Limited having its registered office at 794, Sector 28 Faridabad Haryana-121003 India, are advised to attend the aforesaid hearing on 05.03.2020 before the Hon’ble National Company Law Tribunal Chandigarh Bench at Chandigarh. That this notice is being issued pursuant to Hon’ble National Company Law Tribunal Chandigarh order dated 29.01.2020. The undersigned can be contacted for any clarification.

Sd/-
Disha Rajeev
Applicant
Mobile : 9873334481
J-147, Cedar Chest, 1st Floor, Nirvana Country
Sector 50, Gurgaon-122018 Haryana

Edelweiss RETAIL FINANCE LIMITED
Registered Office: Edelweiss House, Off CST Road, Kalina, Mumbai 400098

POSSESSION NOTICE CUM PRE SALE NOTICE (for immovable property)
Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ECL Finance Ltd (ECLFL) 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) /Co Borrower(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) /Co Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **PHYSICAL 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 ECLFL for an amount as mentioned herein under with interest thereon.

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ (Loan Number)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Description of Secured Asset (Immovable Property)	Date of Possession
1.	(Loan No. LDELSLE0000049977 Ess Aar Industries (Borrower) Ritesh Garg (Co-Borrower) Aayushie Garg (Co-Borrower) Satya Narain (Co-Borrower)	21-08-2019 and Rs. 1,90,64,597.81/- (Rupees One Crore Ninety Lakh Sixty Four Thousand Five Hundred Ninety Seven and Paise Eighty One Only)	1. All That Part And Parcel Of The Property Bearing Plot No.27, On 2 Nd Floor Of G+2 Storied Building Known As Jaipuria Enclave, Admeasuring About 1062 Sq.ft., Situated At Kaushambi, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh 201010. Bounded As Under: North: Plot No.28; West: Other Property South: Plot No.28; West: Road. 2. A Residential Flat Bearing No. A-104, On 1 St Floor Of Tower A, In The Building Known As Exotica Elegance., Admeasuring 2050 Sq.ft, Situated At Plot No. 9A, Mall Road, Ahimsa Khand-II, Indirapuram, Ghaziabad, On Land Bearing Kharsa No.527/1 ∓ 527/4, Village Mohiuddin Pur Kanawani, Pargana Loni, Tehsil Dabri, Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh 201014. Bounded As Under: North: Road And Park; East: Flat No.101; South: Lift; West : Other Tower.	12-02-2020

The Borrower’s attention is invited to the provisions of Sub Section 8 of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act, 2002 in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets within 30 days of this Publication.

Place: Ghaziabad
Date : 18.02.2020
Sd/-
(Authorised Officer)
ECL Finance Ltd

Trend Blazer

Kangana's first look as pilot released

Actor KANGANA RANAUT's first look as an Air Force pilot in her forthcoming flick *Tejas* has taken the internet by storm.

Ronnie Screwvala's production house RSVP movies shared the look. The tweet reads, "Soaring high into the sky! Presenting the first look of #KanganaRanaut as an Air force Pilot in #Tejas."

Kangana's sister Rangoli Chandel tweeted, "Tejas is not only a fighter jet but also Kangana's name in the film. She always wanted to play a soldier and her dream came true. After *Manikarnika*, another war film but this time action will be in the sky, *Jai Hind*."



It's my dream to become India's pop icon. That dream is going to be fulfilled

through non-film songs. It also gives me a chance to feature in my own videos and the song

is associated to my face and name instead of being a voice for someone else's face. I have never let success get into my head. I think that's how a person can grow.

—Dhvani Bhanushali



A special screening of filmmaker Anubhav Sinha's *Thappad* starring TAAPSEE PANNU will be held today in the capital by director Vishal Bhardwaj.



The makers says that they are very confident about the film and hence, hosting a special screening 10 days before the official release.

Given the industry's competitive environment, for Sinha, it is a breath of fresh air to see other directors come forward to support their contemporaries and back up films with strong social messages.

I smell like a crayon: Robert

Actor ROBERT PATTINSON says he smells like a crayon. Pattinson was then asked, "Like you're made of wax?" To which, he said, "Yes! Like I'm embalmed."

Pattinson was recently described as the "most handsome man" in the world according to science.

Asked what's it like to be superlatively hot, he said, "It's weird. My character in *Harry Potter* was of a good-looking guy. It was quite a shock that it was easy to get. Then *Twilight* happened too."

Pattinson will next be seen playing Bruce Wayne in Matt Reeves' *The Batman*. Last week, the director stared the first image for the film, showing the actor in his Batman mask and suit. The look went viral on the net.



ONE LOVE IS ALL WE NEED

Designer duo ABU JANI SANDEEP KHOSLA's collection at *Blenders Pride Fashion Tour* was a passionate call to action for inclusivity and the celebration of difference. By TEAM VIVA

What was this year's theme for *Blenders Pride Fashion Tour*?

The milestone 15th edition of *Blenders Pride Fashion Tour* unveiled a new face of fashion by bringing the universe of pride to life, with 'My Blend, My Pride' being the theme for the Delhi chapter of the tour. The concept represents our creative and spiritual vision. Blend is an amalgamation of multiple textiles, techniques, embroidery, colours and silhouettes, each one distinct and a reflection of the rich and living cultural, historical, art and craft legacy of India. With India as muse, we have imagined this new collection as an original style standard for now and for the future. Blend is also an ode to the concept of 'One Love'. And it's many, many forms. It is a passionate call to action for inclusivity and the celebration of difference.

How did you blend modern silhouettes and Indian traditions and aesthetics through your designs?

The proof of the pudding is in the tasting. The collection revealed its ability to carry traditions and classical sensibilities in a thoroughly modern avatar. We believe in breaking boundaries, in crossing borders when it comes to creativity.

What inspired the collection?

Our collection is always inspired by multiple influences and is essentially a celebration of the sheer diversity, that is India. We have always worked intensively with Indian textiles, be it block printing, khaki or cotton. Our intention is to elevate these crafts to works of art. Natural fabrics, weaves, dyes were used as a canvas for the finest embroideries and accents. Multiple motifs, too, inspired by flora, fauna and architecture. Every range is distinct and blends multiple elements together in decidedly original silhouettes to create a tribute to crafts-



Every range features signature colours, inspired by the ones found in both nature and in our tradition. From whites, beige and nudes to rust, brown, green and red'

manship and design at their highest level.

Some of your collection seems to be inspired by Indian architecture. How did you weave architecture in your designs?

Architecture has always played an important role as a personal passion and creative inspiration. Be it Mughal monuments or South Indian temples, we have used these extensively as motifs in our collections. We also designed collections of architectural furniture. We incorporated gothic and art deco architecture in our fashion and interior designs.

This has been your signature style. How has it evolved over the years?

One's core sensibilities and aesthetics remain the same. As artists and designers, we have always committed ourselves to creating original, impossibly refined, exceptional and timeless pieces. We believe in constant experimentation and in challenging ourselves to break our own bar. We are always learning, striving to dream and achieve bigger. The circle of creativity must always expand. Each time we fashion a

new dream, with new eyes.

Fabrics, initially seen as hierarchical symbols, have evolved to be accepted and recognised as an art form. What is your take on this? Which fabric did you use?

Our textile legacy is an art form. It is labour and skill-intensive. From weaving to block printing, we are beyond blessed in India to have artisanal quality within our reach. These 33 years have seen us work with myriad fabrics and textiles. Our mission has always been to make these textiles high fashion — the standard of couture. *Bandhani*, *khadi*, *ajrak*, silk, georgette, satin and cotton feature extensively in this collection.

Can you tell us in detail about your colour palette this time?

The colour palette as always is extensive. Every range features signature colours, inspired by the ones found in both nature and in our tradition. From whites, beige and nudes to rust, brown, green, Indigo. The palette included even the jewel hues like fuchsia, orange, emerald and red.

Photo: Pankaj Kumar



The show must go on

Climate change activists brought flares, wore gas masks, stopped traffic with a street protest as they demanded the cancellation of the five-day style extravaganza, London Fashion Week

Climate change activists stole the show on the opening day of London Fashion Week, stopping traffic with a street protest as they demanded the cancellation of the British capital's five-day style extravaganza. Dozens of protesters from the Extinction Rebellion group drew attention — and anger from some drivers — as they fired colorful smoke flares into the air and blocked busy intersections in central London near the fashion events. Some protesters wore gas masks and dresses made from chains, while others carried placards reading "no fashion on a dead planet."

They called on the British Fashion Council to take more action to lobby for environmental policies. It was an eventful day at London Fashion Week, which brings crowds of style editors, photographers, models and celebrities to the city twice a year. Burberry, Victoria Beckham, Tommy Hilfiger, Erdem and Christopher Kane are among the leading fashion houses and designers showcasing their latest fall and winter creations over the next few days.

Organisers of London Fashion Week have said they want to help promote sustainability and create positive change within the industry. This season, the trade show is featuring a "Positive Fashion" exhibition and a "swap shop" where visitors will be able to exchange used clothes for donated items.

Most fashion week attendees, however, will have their eyes firmly trained on new season offerings. On Saturday, Temperley London staged four catwalk shows that were open to the public as part of a wider drive to make the displays — traditionally only accessible to fashion insiders and VIPs — more public-facing and instantly available to the masses.

The brand, adored by fans for its romantic evening and bridal wear, showcased summer dresses



with bold prints and an array of opulent and ultra-feminine evening gowns featuring plenty of ruffles, jeweled embellishments, sheer fabrics and show-stopping sequins.

Gale force winds and a deluge of rain may be causing havoc to much of Britain, but for the fashion crowd the show must go on. Storm Dennis didn't stop models, celebrities and fashion insiders from donning their finest to attend the fashion week. American streetwear designer Tommy Hilfiger also made a guest appearance, showing neon yellow tracksuits and luxury sportswear in a collaboration collection with Formula One racing driver Lewis Hamilton.

Cameras flashed as the Beckham family turned out in style to support Spice Girl-turned-designer Victoria Beckham, who staged her catwalk show at central London's grand Banqueting Hall. Her sons Romeo and Cruz shared the front row with father and former soccer star David Beckham, while 8-year-old Harper got a comfy seat in her father's lap.

On the catwalk, models wore checked shirts, smart tailored coats, culottes and velvet blazers, all paired with skin-tight, thigh-high leather boots in shades from blue to bright red. Beckham said "we're using the boot to throw things off in a little bit of a strange way."

Elsewhere, French designer Roland Mouret turned to 1980s London under Margaret Thatcher for inspiration. There were double-breasted blazers, exaggerated shoulders and androgynous suits; a sugary pink boxy blazer, worn with matching culottes, stood out in a mostly austere palette of greys, khakis and monochrome.

The fashion industry has come under increasing scrutiny from green groups, and Mouret — who counts Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, among his celebrity fans — was keen to respond to calls for more transparent and environmentally-friendly practices. Sustainable fashion "is at the heart of my collection in a time where the process of creating clothes carries with it a personal responsibility," he said, and emphasised that he aimed for the brand to be carbon neutral within the year.

—AP



SOCIAL MEDIA WAR ON FILMFARE

The latest Filmfare Awards have disappointed some netizens. People have taken to social media to express their dissatisfaction with the winners and #BoycottFilmfareAwards has been trending on Twitter since Monday.

Some argue that the earthy song of the pro-Right *Kesari* should have been chosen over *Gully Boy*, which celebrates protest poetry against social inequity, others cried nepotism. Luckily, the war played out in social media that allows a democracy of opinions. Unluckily, it also gave vent to political biases.

While fans tweeted their ire, lyricist Manoj Muntashir declared that he is heartbroken over not winning an award for penning the heart-wrenching track *Teri Mitti* from *Kesari*. He took to Twitter to announce that he would not be attending any award ceremonies for the rest of his life. Manoj penned an emotional note, "Dear Awards, even if I try all my life, I won't be able to write a better line than *Tu Kehti Thee Beta Chaand Hoon Main Aur Chaand Humesha Rahta Hai*. I took to honour the words which made millions of Indians cry and care for their motherland. It would be a great disrespect to my art if I still continue caring for you. So here I bid you a final good bye. I officially announce that I

won't attend any award show till I breathe my last. *Alvida*."

Netizens came up in support of him because *Teri Mitti* is a song that touched hearts of almost all Bollywood buffs, especially due to its lyrics. Commenting on his post, a user wrote, "@filmfare and @jiteshpillai, you literally killed faith of many Indians and lyricist by not giving award to #TeriMitti. This song is best of the decade."

The mood has been similar for many fans. Accusing the awards of propagating nepotism and awarding actors and filmmakers who are star kids, a user wrote, "They have to promote betis some renowned people Akhtar, Bhatt and Pandey. Nepotism rules in Bollywood. It's so sad that quality cinema does not matter. #BoycottFilmfareAwards."

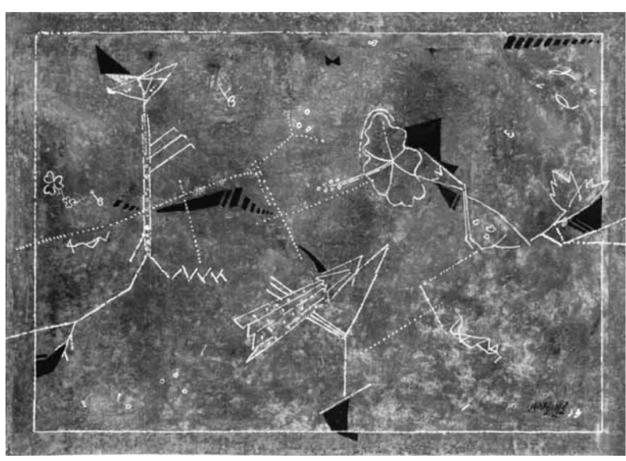
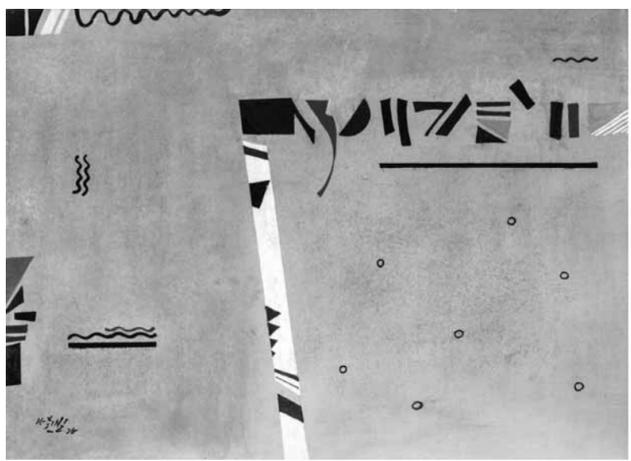
Another user wrote, "Worst filmfare awards. Some splendid films were ignored. It was never expected from such a jury. Was it only to please the boss Karan Johar or Ranveer Singh. *Teri Mitti* song, *Super 30* film ignored. #BoycottFilmfareAwards. Another tweet reads, "#BoycottFilmfareAwards they simply ignored Sushant Singh Rajput who gave two powerful performances in *Sonchiriya* and *Chhichhore*. The songs of these films are far better than *Gully Boy*."

—JANS

Man needs colour to live; it's just as necessary an element as fire and water," said the great Fernand Léger in *The Aesthetics of the Machine, Geometric Order and True* (1923).

The quaint and curious little space at the Akar Prakar Contemporary, showcasing minimal colour field landscapes by the great master from Bengal, Ganesh Haloi, reminds one of this. Haloi has been brought into the limelight by director Reena Lath. His solo will be unveiled at the Asia Art Week, New York in March.

In these landscapes, the modernist you see suffuses fertile pastures tinted by tiny strokes of colour, the splendour of which, all of a sudden, transforms into a bouquet of earth songs. It's one of the reasons why Haloi was handpicked by Documenta 14 curator Adam Szymczyk in 2014.



MEMORIES ON CANVAS

For artist GANESH HALOI, working on a piece is like cultivating crops on a part of land. It's the reason why nature's true essence can be found in his works, says UMA NAIR

Haloi's works. He is a scholar, who is content to create something within the orbit of his own oasis. He is the reflective traveller content within the conventions of time and space and happy to venture into terra incognita. His canvases speak a language, where each portion takes on a novel, fresh and moving meaning.

One morning in 2006, in the silence of his flat and company of artist Sudip Roy, Haloi said, "A work of art is like a land I cultivate. It grows progressively but quietly. Abstraction is neither a technique nor geometry. It is born of one's own residue of memory and experience. The stories, events and spectacles I saw in my childhood come back to me. The sadness of the Bengal famine and the helplessness of people, engulfs me. The sunset at the pond in the village... everything accumulates as associations with the past. When I put paint to paper or canvas, I want to create something that



is fresh and full of the sap of fertility. Like the poet who sits down to write, I gaze at my canvas or paper for some time. Yes, I want the trigger of a vital energy and a zest. The beginning is quiet but once the first swish of the pliant brush or the pen touches the canvas, it flows. Some stimulus must accumulate

within me so that I can create the unexpected symphony. It's like one of the compositions from the *Gitabitan* — moody, rhythmic and full of resonance. That resonance must happen."

When asked if he likes to be alone when he paints, Haloi said his wait in front of his canvas or sheet of Nepali

paper is a combination of silent patience and the gesture of poise. These landscapes are tinged with grace and dreaminess, populated by strokes that resemble the rustling of leaves or just riverine tributaries, bathed in harmonies of green or tan or an indigo. They are rooted in the ethos of his own world.

In the density of depth and the melody of motion, Haloi's exhibition is a paean to poetic patterns, prismatic haikus that lull the senses long after we have gone through an immersive experience of dulcet tunes of the yesteryear. It would be intriguing to know how New York responds to India's resonant master even as he brings alive the words by Aldous Huxley: "There are things known and there are things unknown, and in between are the doors of perception."

(Form & Play will be shown in New York at the Fuller Building from March 12th to 19th.)

Sotheby to unveil private collections

Commemorating the 25th anniversary of Modern and Contemporary South Asian Art sales at Sotheby's, this season features a selection of rare and never-seen-before works emerging from private collections. Led by two 1960s paintings by pioneer Indian abstractionists Nasreen Mohamedi and Vasudeo S Gaitonde, the auction also features an important work by Indian National Treasure artist Raja Ravi Varma; a selection of sculptures led by modernist works by Amarnath Sehgal and Adi Davierwalla; a curated selection on Neo-Trantra, including works by Biren De, GR Santosh and a diverse selection from the Bengal School of Art as well as Modern and Contemporary art from Pakistan.

Anu Ghosh-Mazumdar, head of Sotheby's Indian and Southeast Asian Art Department in New York, commented, "We are thrilled to continue our strength in presenting fresh material to collectors worldwide. Our entire March sale features material that is either newly discovered or has remained in esteemed private collections for decades."

Manjari Sihare-Sutin, head of Sotheby's Modern and Contemporary South Asian Sales in New York, noted, "Twenty-five years ago, Sotheby's held its first dedicated auction of Modern and Contemporary Indian Art, featuring the legendary collection of Chester and Davida Herwitz. I am immensely proud to continue to bring fresh and exciting property to the market. From Gaitonde's works with a connection to Dr Homi Jehangir Bhabha to an alluring Mohamedi work, previously owned by Peggy and Robert Matthews, and a fantastic collection of art acquired by Marcia Gilmartin including rare works by Zarina, this sale offers a variety of riches for the discerning collector."

(The art auction will be held in New York on March 16.)



FRAGMENTED HOMOGENEITY
His tiny strokes look as though light is vibrating and moving along the rhythms of the wind. Musical breadths and deeper understandings of abstract expressionism — all come into play in

In trying to articulate the thoughts about artist Ajit Seal's works, one examines not only them but also the relationship the artist has with the works. It's after all a long process — from their fabrication till the time they get their final shape. The exhibition, *Idioms & Images*, directs the viewers to understand the variety in his artworks by dividing them into different phases. First, the regional periphery, and second, the idioms and images where Ajit's printmaking process has much to say about the route, conceptual diversion and the process of growth an artist undergoes.

The images also usher the audience in three directions — of complex metaphysical ideas, towards the path of simplicity, and towards an artistic quest, where the artist's works represent how man and society can perpetually renew and transcend themselves by the self-transcending meanings, values and purposes in life. Ajit's experiments and display of the different media of printmaking such as lithography, wood engraving, etching, plate lithography and enamel paintings showcase his journey of 40 years of art practices and how he has experienced many transformations in his artistic journey.

His works have gone through many artistic phases and the show portrays the different varieties of the printmaking process. On the face of it, the works show a versatile technique and imagery for which Ajit has been known well. They also seem to have a unique feature in the unceasing reference to the Indian mythology and auspicious symbols which he derived from religious conviction. He had said earlier, "Although there are mythological references in my works, they are predominated from my personal experiences." It is on this wider background that his

The illusion of reality

Through different media of printmaking like lithography, wood engraving, etching and enamel paintings, artist AJIT SEAL showcases his journey of 40 years of art practises and how he has experienced many transformations over time. By TEAM VIVA



works echo at the very heart of contemporary art practices and the issues of self-identity. There are three major objectives that Ajit explores. First, the visual language that he uses. Second, the thought-process he uses to guide the making of his artworks. Third, the wider chronological framework through which he both produces his works as well as thinks the work will occupy a significant place. At the very first sight of Ajit's printmaking works, one becomes aware of his images and they speak volumes about his thoughts and beliefs. With the help of strong narratives, his

works reflect his own musings which keep transforming, sometimes static, veiling, unveiling and changing as he progresses. The images and prints are the silhouettes of his inner self. His works communicate expressions of everyday experiences, along with the belief that its identity is made up of a body, of thoughts, feelings, ambitions, plans, ideas, values, impulses, desires, actions, qualities, and so on. Ajit's works are an approach where he presents a traditional and spiritual morality into visual perspective. His works emerge from a personal quest,



for which the most suitable media and materials that express his 'self' are lithographies, wood engraving as well as etching. His work process goes with the flow of his thoughts. He says, "Sometimes ideas emerge gradually through the everyday things I am engaged in and other times, it takes a long thinking process for days before I start exploring the visual concepts on different printing media." The illusion of reality is one of Ajit's prime objectives and he seems to be moving around the circumference of a time circle for which his art is governed by much aesthetic austerity. He

tries to communicate with the viewers through his private emotions and sensations — not so much as his eyes see, but rather as the effect on his inward being when he looks at particular things. His works forsake representational images but aim to communicate personal sensations. His works certainly need to be looked into deeply because his narratives act as a way for the viewers towards a course of perseverance. He says, "I am inspired by the movements of the flora which surround me and the movements of life, be it of the inner self or the outer world."

The art of fostering relationships

Musicians from Goa have always been at the forefront and now artists from the state are more confidently stepping into new festival spaces

With a view to build upon the community of creative people residing in Goa, the maiden edition of the *Goa Open Arts Festival* aimed to foster collaborations and relationships among participants, who may not have previously known each other but are all living and making work in the state.

Talking about the public festival, Sitara Chowfla, independent curator and spokesperson of the festival recalled that the idea was prompted by the idea that there are a significant number of creative people — artists, writers, designers, poets, musicians, who had come from around the country and the world to make Goa their home.

"The intention was also to encourage and provide a platform for creating new work and for artists to retain control over what and how they show. This is a point of difference from many other festivals that it is organised by artists and the content is driven by the selected artists and not by curators," she said.

Stressing that the underlying thought behind the three-day festival was premised on the idea of "openness", Chowfla elaborated that they have included a diverse range of practices in the arts — music, performance, visual arts, poetry — and also opened up different interpretations of art. "For example, we had chefs who used food to awaken sensory experiences and a mental health initiative that used creative design to reach out to adolescents. There was artists conducting workshops for chil-



Chowfla, Dheer Kaku, Mustafa Khanbai and Rajaram Naik. There were also many interactive projects including the Travelling Library by Bookworm trust, a special exhibit on mental health by Goa-based NGO Sangath in collaboration with Quicksand Design Studio, and a polaroid photo studio set up by photographer Bharat Sikka.

The main stage witnessed acoustic music and poetry acts by the likes of Rochelle D'Silva, Shyamant Behal, Govez, and late-night music ranged from Sufi music by HAWA, jazz and funk by the Coffee Cats, and a Fado concert by Sonia Shirsat. "We also created a lot of opportunities for local schools to interact with our programme — clay-making, theatre and printmaking workshops for students in the area," said Sitara and added, "Our focus was on deepening the engagement with the community with more sustained programmes through the year and through fostering cross-collaboration between our current participating artists."

Talk to her about Goa's growing popularity among artists from across the country, and she said, "The state's inherent natural beauty, culture and people — there is a particular energy here that attracts creativity. It seems to be a natural fit perhaps that's why more and more cultural events are being planned in Goa. Goan musicians have always been at the forefront and now Goan artists are more confidently stepping into these new festival spaces." —JANS

Raza Foundation and Vadehra Art Gallery presents *Known Unknown*, an exhibition of contemporary artists curated by Amitava Das. The show opens with a book launch by Ambassador of France HE Emmanuel Lenain titled, *I Will Bring My Time*, containing English versions of love letters by Raza. **WHEN:** Till February 29 **TIME:** 11 am to 8 pm **WHERE:** Shridharani Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam.

Bruno Art Group presents *Shining Brightly*, a group exhibition by Israeli and international artists, which celebrates 28 years of diplomatic relations between India and Israel. **WHEN:** February 23 to 29 **TIME:** 10 am to 8 pm **WHERE:** Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre.

India International Centre presents *Derakht-e-Doosti, The Shahnameh of Fredowsi & Iranian Identity*, that unveils a new edition of the *Shahnameh*, features miniature paintings, Iranian handicrafts and hosts programmes like live Persian calligraphy. **WHEN:** February 23 to 27 **TIME:** 11 am to 6.30 pm **WHERE:** Art Gallery, IIC Annexe.

Nature Morte presents *Everyday Extraordinary*, a solo exhibition of works by artist Suhasini Kejrival, which features her errands of Chitpur of north Kolkata and Chor Bazaar in central Mumbai. **WHEN:** Till March 14 **TIME:** 10 am to 6 pm **WHERE:** A1, Neeti Bagh, Khel Gaon Marg.

Alturaash Art by Asif and Zoya Kamal, presents *Aarambh*, which will exhibit works by a group of emerging as well as established modern and contemporary artists from India. **WHEN:** Till February 29 **TIME:** 11 am to 7 pm **WHERE:** Alturaash Art Gallery, DLF South Court, Saket.

WATCH OUT

ITALY RECEIVE NEW SMS

Lazio topple Inter 2-1 to go 2nd behind Juventus

AFP ■ ROME

Lazio coach Simone Inzaghi gave warning his side are ready to fight for their first Serie A title since 2000 after moving into second in Serie A on Sunday, just one point off leaders Juventus after a come-from-behind 2-1 win over Inter Milan at Stadio Olimpico.

Juventus reclaimed pole position thanks to Paulo Dybala and Juan Cuadrado's goals as the Turin giants rediscovered their winning form 2-0 at home against Brescia.

Inter Milan dropped from top spot to third — three points behind the eight-time reigning champions — after falling to just their second defeat of the season.

"We need to stay humble and focused but I'm sure we will succeed. We have nothing to lose," said Inzaghi. "We know that Juventus and Inter are two great teams and we will do everything to fight to the end, knowing that it will be very difficult."

In a fiery clash in the Stadio Olimpico defender Ashley Young broke through just before the break with his first Serie A goal for Inter Milan after his move from Manchester United.

The 34-year-old got his foot to tap-in off a rebound after Thomas Strakosha had cleared from former Lazio player Antonio Candreva.



Sergej Milinkovic-Savic celebrates with Lazio teammate Lucas Leiva after scoring his side's second goal. AP



Ciro Immobile scores Lazio's opener against Inter Milan from penalty spot at Stadio Olimpico. AP

A Stefan de Vrij foul on **CIRO IMMOBILE** allowed the Lazio top scorer to slot in his 26th goal in 24 games this season, five minutes after the break.

Sergej Milinkovic-Savic snatched the winner after 69 minutes amid confusion in front of goal. "We gifted Lazio two goals," said Inter coach Antonio Conte as the northerners fell to their second defeat after Juventus in October.

Lazio extended their unbeaten run to 19 games as they target their second Scudetto, with a return to Champions League football on the cards for next season.

MERTENS LIFTS NAPOLI

In Sardinia, Napoli got back to winning ways with a Dries Mertens' 65th-minute goal sealing a 1-0 success over Cagliari.

The Belgian completed a give-and-go with Elseid Hysaj with the ball curling in with a deflection off the post. It was the 32-year-old's 120th goal for Napoli, one short of Marek Hamsik's all-time record, and five ahead of club legend Diego Maradona.

"Dries is a phenomenon, a champion who makes difficult things seem simple," said coach Gennaro Gattuso. Gattuso's side overtake Cagliari, moving up to eighth.

SINGLES

KOHLI SLIPS TO 10TH IN T20 RANKINGS

DUBAI: India skipper Virat Kohli slipped to the 10th position but KL Rahul and Rohit Sharma remained static at the second and 11th place respectively in the latest ICC T20I rankings. Batting mainstay Kohli (673 points) dropped down as England captain Eoin Morgan (687), who scored 136 runs including two fifties against South Africa moved to the ninth place.

CASILLAS TO RUN FOR RFEF PRESIDENCY

MADRID: Spain's World Cup-winning captain Iker Casillas confirmed he will run for the presidency of Spanish Football Federation (RFEF). The date of the election has not yet been decided but Casillas said he has informed his current club Porto of his decision, with the 38-year-old now expected to retire from playing the game. "Yes, I will run for the presidency of the RFEF when the elections are called," Casillas wrote. "Together we will put our federation at the top of the best football in the world, the football of Spain".

HARSIMRAN INVITED TO NBA GLOBAL ACADEMY

NEW DELHI: India's Harsimran Kaur has been invited to participate in a multi-week training camp at The NBA Global Academy at Basketball Australia's Centre of Excellence in Canberra. The training camp started on Monday and will end on March 3. This will be her second stint at the NBA Global Academy after attending a camp from November 7 to 24 last year.

INDIA WILL HOST FIH JR MEN'S WC IN 2021

LAUSANNE: International Hockey Federation (FIH) on Monday announced India as the hosts for next year's junior men's World Cup. This is the second time that India will be hosting the prestigious tournament, having staged it in Lucknow in 2016, where the hosts lifted the coveted trophy. FIH said that the competition will be played towards the end of 2021 but exact venue and dates for the tournament will be announced at a later stage. The junior men's World Cup will see 16 teams compete for the title, out of which six will be from Europe, four from Asia, including hosts India, two from Africa, two from Oceania and two from Pan America.

JR WEIGHTLIFTERS WIN 5 SILVER, 6 BRONZE

NEW DELHI: India claimed five Silver and six Bronze medals at the ongoing 2020 Asian Youth & Junior Weightlifting Championships in Tashkent. KVL Pavani Kumari (45kg) won Silver medals in both youth girls and junior women section, while Sidhanta Gogoi (61kg) claimed Silver in youth boys and junior men events after lifting a total of 145 and 269kgs respectively. Mukund Aher (49kg) then clinched a Silver in youth boys category with a lift of 189kgs. Harshada Goud (45kg) clinched two Bronze medals with a lift of 139kgs in youth girls and junior women events. Other lifters to win Bronze medals are Boni Manghikya (55kg), Ch Nirmla Devi (59kg), S Gurunaidu (49kg) and Golom Tinku (55kg).

TOKYO MARATHON CANCELLED FOR 38K RUNNERS

TOKYO: Organisers said on Monday they are cancelling the amateur portion of the Tokyo marathon, affecting around 38,000 runners, on fears about the spread of the new coronavirus in Japan. "We reached the conclusion that unfortunately it is difficult to organise the event... After several cases (of the virus) were confirmed in Tokyo," the Tokyo Marathon Foundation said. The decision will not affect elite runners, including elite wheelchair participants, the organisers said. But they only account for around 200 of the tens of thousands of people who had registered for the March 1 race.

MAREGA WALKS OFF AFTER MONKEY CHANTS

LISBON: Porto's Mali striker Moussa Marega walked off the pitch in disgust after being subjected to a torrent of monkey chants in a stormy Portuguese league game at Vitoria Guimaraes on Sunday. The 28-year-old had scored a 60th-minute winner for Porto against his former club which sparked the home fans to aim even more vitriol at the France-born player which had started as early as the pre-match warm-up. In the 71st minute, Marega signalled to the bench that he was walking off in protest even though teammates, Porto coach Sergio Conceicao and Vitoria players tried to get him to stay on the pitch. As he walked off, an angry and upset Marega gave a thumbs-down signal with both gloved hands to the home fans. AGENCIES

Dortmund defence key against PSG



Dortmund vs PSG Live from 1:30am IST SONY TEN 1 NETWORK

AFP ■ DORTMUND

Borussia Dortmund coach Lucien Favre says how his team defend against Paris Saint-Germain stars such as Neymar and Kylian Mbappe will be the deciding factor in today's Champions League clash.

Dortmund host PSG in the last 16, first leg at Signal Iduna Park.

"They're a dangerous team," Favre said in Dortmund on Monday. "When you lose the ball, they move very fast up front. The key will be how we defend."

Neymar returns from injury

AFP ■ DORTMUND

Neymar has been named in the Paris Saint-Germain squad for today's Champions League last-16 first leg at Borussia Dortmund, despite missing the French club's last four games through injury.

The world's most expensive player has been struggling with a rib problem, but was expected to be fit in time for the game at Signal Iduna Park. The Brazilian missed last season's surprise last-16 loss to Manchester United with a foot injury, while he also sat out the second leg of the defeat at the same stage of the competition by Real Madrid in 2018.

games and forged a successful partnership with England winger Jadon Sancho, also 19.

The teenagers are set to lead Dortmund's attack with Germany pair Marco Reus and Julian Brandt both out injured.

Dortmund's Belgian midfielder Axel Witsel has positive memories from his last game against Neymar — in the quarter-finals of the

Celta put brake on Real

AFP ■ MADRID

Real Madrid's winning streak ended when they conceded a late goal to draw 2-2 at home to Celta Vigo and finish the weekend with their lead over Barcelona down to one point.

Real manager Zinedine Zidane was philosophical. "There's nothing to explain, it's just the way things are, it's football," he said.

"I'm not worried about it, but I'm disappointed, as always when you drop two points at home."

On Sunday they welcomed back Eden Hazard, who had been out since November. Coach Zinedine Zidane also recalled his other 100 million euro player Gareth Bale to complete an all-star attack with Karim Benzema.

Yet Celta leapt into the lead after seven minutes. A pass from Iago Aspas sent Fedor Smolov galloping clear up the middle and he shot low past Thibaut Courtois.

"There were mistakes, especially for the first goal," said Zidane.

"We were not well positioned, it happens, and it'll happen to us again."

Real levelled the 52nd minute, Marcelo, not for the first time, found space on the left. His low cross deflected to Toni Kroos following the attack. The German drilled in the equaliser. It was the sixth straight season Kroos had scored against Celta.

In the 65th minute, goalkeeper Ruben



Sergio Ramos celebrates after scoring from spot. AP

Blanco pulled down the impressive Hazard. Ramos slammed the penalty into the bottom corner of the net.

However Celta responded by rediscovering their attacking nerve.

With four minutes left, a sharp pass from Denis Suarez, who had come on in the 71st minute, caught the Real back four rigid on the edge of their own area. Santi Mina, who had been on for just two minutes, raced onto the ball and drilled a shot past Courtois.

Boult back for India Tests

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Fit-again senior pacer Trent Boult has been named in the 13-member New Zealand squad for the first Test against India starting at Basin Reserve on February 21.

According to a media release issued by New Zealand Cricket, the 6 feet 8 inch giant pacer Kyle Jamieson, who made his ODI debut against India in the recent series, has also earned his call up in the Test squad, which will have slow left-arm orthodox Ajaz Patel as the only spinner.

Boult's comeback is a big boost for the New Zealand side as he missed the entire limited overs leg due to a fractured right hand.

"It's terrific to have Trent back with us and we're looking forward to the energy and experience he adds to the group alongside his obvious class with the ball in hand," head coach and chief selector Gary Stead said.

Jamieson, on the other hand, has been included in a pre-series Test squad for the first time.

"Kyle will offer us a point of difference with the bounce he could extract on what is traditionally a good surface in Wellington," Stead said.

Mumbai-born Patel was chosen over leg-spinner Ish Sodhi because of his consistency.

"We're excited to welcome back Ajaz (Patel) who has done a great job for us overseas and has a

It's going to be very big if we win T20 WC: Harman

PTI ■ SYDNEY

The void left by legends such as Mithali Raj and Jhulan Goswami is not easy to fill, India captain Harmanpreet Kaur conceded on Monday but also asserted that her young side has grown substantially to be a top contender for this month's women's T20 World Cup.

Mithali retired from T20 cricket last year while Goswami previously played in the format before the 2018 edition. The average age of India's squad in Australia is 22.8 with Harmanpreet being among the seasoned ones.

"We already miss the experience they share with us, but these young girls and showing their talent and ability," said the 29-year-old, while speaking at the captains' media day at



The captains of the 10 countries participating in the Women's T20 World Cup pose for a photo. AP

Taronga Zoo. The ICC Women's T20 World Cup will open with a mouth-watering clash between India and defending champions and hosts Australia in Adelaide on February 21.

"In the last two years...I've gone from being the youngest one to one of the oldest in the team," she said.

"They (her teammates) never show us that they're young, they can always do what we expect of them. The team is looking in really good shape and showing what they can do with extra responsibility," she added.

She is still not over the disappointment of missing the ODI world title in 2017 and Harmanpreet said the T20 World Cup trophy would go a long way in making up for that debacle.

"Our team is growing day by day, everyone is looking so positive," Harmanpreet said.

"It's going to be very big if we win, I was very surprised at all the reaction from 2017. My parents didn't tell me, they didn't want us to feel the pressure. If we win, it's going to be very big for

us. We will try to give our best."

Harmanpreet is well aware of what a long run in an ICC tournament can do for her country.

"Over the last two years, we have already had a few games as part of the Women's T20 Challenge and this year we are looking forward to more," said the aggressive batter, who became the first Indian cricketer to join an overseas league by signing up with Women's Big Bash League side Sydney Thunder in 2016.

"If we win the World Cup, there's no doubt things will change. That tournament would bring a lot of confidence to the girls."

"If we get a women's IPL that will be really good for us. If we win the World Cup, it's going to be very big for us as a team, so we will try to give our best," she said.

New selectors by end of NZ tour

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

BCCI's Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) member Madan Lal says two new selectors will be in office by the time the national team's tour of New Zealand winds up early next month.

"We have received a list of 44 applicants and we should have the two selectors appointed by the end of New Zealand tour," Lal said, referring to the ongoing tour, which will end on March 5 after a two-Test series starting Friday.

The national selection panel also includes Devang Gandhi, Jatin Paranjpe and Sarandeep Singh, all of who have one more year left in their tenure.

"Out of the applications, how many applicants we will call for the interview is not yet decided," he added.

The applicants include former India pacers Ajit Agarkar and Venkatesh Prasad among others. "There are big names in the list but it is not about that. It is about best picking the right man for the job and that will be our focus. Also there is no word yet from BCCI on whether to continue with zonal policy or not," Lal said.

Faf quits as SA captain

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG



Faf du Plessis & Mark Boucher. CSA/Twitter

need to facilitate the emergence of next generation of leaders."

The 35-year-old Du Plessis, who stepped aside from the ODI captaincy to make way for Quinton de Kock during the recent series against England, said he took the decision to help South Africa start a new era.

"In a perfect world I would have loved to lead the team in the Tests for the rest of the season as well as the T20 World Cup," du Plessis said in a statement.

"But sometimes the most important attribute of a leader is to be selfless. I am healthy, fit, energised and motivated and certainly see myself playing an important role in the squad for as long as I continue putting in winning performances for the team," he added.

"As the team heads into a new direction with new leaders and a young crop of players, I feel it will be in the best interests of South African cricket to relinquish the captaincy in

all formats."

Du Plessis termed the decision as one of the toughest but said he remains fully committed to help de Kock in the transition phase.

"This was one of the toughest decisions to make, but I remain fully committed to supporting Quinton, Mark (Boucher) and my teammates as we continue to rebuild and re-align as a group," said the 35-year-old.

RABADA RETURN FOR T20

Faf du Plessis and fast bowler Kagiso Rabada will return to the South African squad for a three-match T20I series against Australia, starting at the Wanderers on Friday.

Fast bowler Werner Nortje, one of South Africa's successes in a losing Test series, has also been included in the squad.

Temba Bavuma's selection is dependent on a scan of his right hamstring after he was injured during final match against England.

AB needs to prove himself for T20 WC place: Boucher

JOHANNESBURG:

Retired AB de Villiers will be considered for a place in the South African T20 World Cup squad only if he shows good form and proves himself to be the "best man for the job," says the team's head coach Mark Boucher.

"He's (de Villiers) a discussion in the media and in the public but he is no discussion for me. I have had chats with him and we will probably know pretty soon what's going to happen with him," Boucher said after team's 1-2 defeat to England in T20 series at home.

"Like I said from day one when I took over, if we are going to have our best players there."

"If AB is in good form and he is raring to go and he makes himself available for the time we have asked him to be available; if he is the best man for the job, then he must go," he added. PTI

PUNIA, VINESH LEAD INDIAN CHALLENGE

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Defending champion Bajrang Punia will look to retain his 65kg freestyle title while six-time medallist (3 Silver and Bronze each) Vinesh Phogat will aim to upgrade the 53kg Bronze she won in the 2019 edition at Xian, China to Gold when the Asian Wrestling Championship begins here at Indira Gandhi Arena today.

The six-day event at the KD Jadhav Wrestling Stadium will act as a platform for the Indian wrestlers to test their skills against the best in Asia ahead of the Tokyo Olympics.

The championship has been classified as a ranking tournament for the Tokyo game by the United World Wrestling.

Besides Punia and Vinesh, the 30-member India squad will also feature Deepak Punia, Ravi Kumar Dahiya and 2016 Rio Olympic Bronze medallist Shakshi Malik.

Anshu Malik, Ashu and Sonam Malik are the three youngsters who would look to make a mark in the tournament.

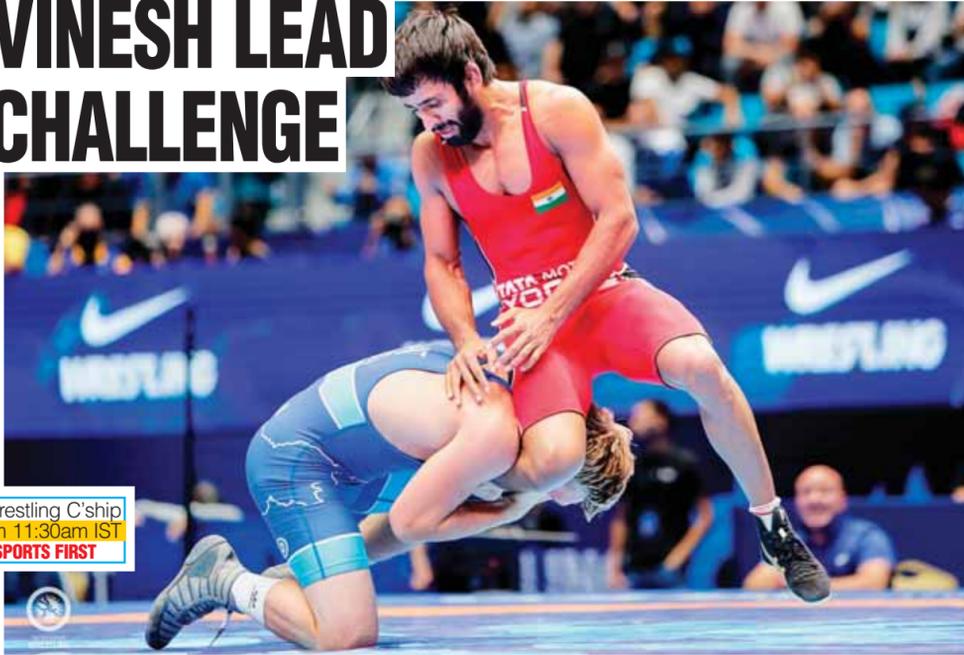
The tournament will be played in three categories — men's freestyle, Greco-Roman and women's wrestling. The first two days will see Greco-Roman competition, followed by women's wrestling (next two days) and men's freestyle (last two days).

There was initially uncertainty over the participation of four Pakistani wrestlers and two officials due to political tension but they have been cleared by the government to take part in the championship.

However, a 40-strong Chinese contingent will not be taking part in the championships as they have not been granted visas by the government due to the novel coronavirus outbreak there.

The Senior Asian Championship is returning to India after a gap of two years. India last hosted the championship in 2017. In the 2019 edition, India had won 16 medals, including the lone Gold from Punia in 65kg category.

World No 2 and India's leading medal hope, Punia said, "It is a great opportunity for all



Indian wrestler Bajrang Punia (red) in action during 2019 World Wrestling Championship match in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

PTI/File Picture

Asian Wrestling C'ship
Live from 11:30am IST
STAR SPORTS FIRST

of us. We will be playing in front of our home fans. Though to many it might seem as pressure, but I believe it will work as an advantage and I am hopeful that large numbers will be coming in to fill the stands and support us." Dahiya, who has already qualified for the Olympics courtesy his Bronze medal-winning performance at the 2019 World Championships, echoed Bajrang's feelings.

"We are excited about the tournament. I am personally looking at ensuring that in my weight category I end up winning Gold. 57 kg is a tough weight category and has probably the stiffest competition but



losing is not an option when you are playing in your home ground," he said.

Fresh from her Gold medal at the Ranking Series in Italy, Vinesh is India's brightest medal prospect in the women's category.

"We have a strong contingent in both men and women's category. Asia has a very good set of wrestlers and being the Olympic year everyone will be looking to get as many wins as possible heading to the Tokyo Games. Personally, I am looking at this competition as a launchpad for my upcoming competitions," said Vinesh.

One of the dark horses of the tournament will be Sakshi (65 kg) who has not done anything of note last year. While she is not competing in her regular weight category, she could utilise the tournament to redeem herself.

Sakshi had won a Bronze in 62kg in the last

edition. Apart from the Indians, there will be a number of top international wrestlers as well, like Kenichiro Fumita, Gold medallist at 2019 World Wrestling Championships, and Nurislam Sanayev from Kazakhstan in freestyle.

In Greco-Roman, wrestlers like South Korea's Ryu Han Su

Coronavirus impact: No entry for Chinese wrestlers in Delhi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chinese wrestlers will not compete in the Asian Championships beginning here today as they have not been granted visas by the government due to the novel coronavirus outbreak there, a top official of the national federation said on Monday.

Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) assistant secretary Vinod Tomar said that the government has denied visas to the 40-strong Chinese contingent.

"We have got to know that the government has not granted visas to the Chinese contingent and so they are not taking part in the Championships," Tomar said.

"The world is grappling with the issue of coronavirus and so health of the athletes is the primary concern now. It is understandable why the government has not given visas to them," he added.

(a two-time world champion) and Uzbekistan's Elmurat Tasmuradov (a five-time Asian Championship Gold medallist) will be in action.

Aisuluu Tynybekova of

Asked what could be United World Wrestling's reaction on the denial of visas to the Chinese wrestlers, Tomar said, "We do not see any issues here, it is not something which happens in normal times. We are dealing with a grave health issue facing the world."

"It is not happening just in this championship, other countries have also done the same to Chinese athletes in other sporting events. Moreover, the UWW has not told us anything or given any direction about the Chinese wrestlers in the past week or so."

Talking about the granting of visas to the Pakistani wrestlers, Tomar said, "There could be issues had we not granted visas to the Pakistani wrestlers. So, we tried hard to get it done. But in case of Chinese wrestlers, it is for the health and safety of the participating athletes."

Kyrgyzstan, Gold medallist at 2019 world championships and a three-time Asian Championship winner, will be headlining the women's wrestling category.

Saina, Srikanth chase Olympic berth

PTI ■ BARCELONA

Seasoned Indian shuttlers Saina Nehwal and Kidambi Srikanth will look to keep their Olympic hopes alive when they compete at the \$170,000 Barcelona Spain Masters starting here today.

The Indian duo has been inconsistent in 2019 and didn't enjoy a good start to the new year.

While Saina has crossed the first round in only one of the three events in 2020, Srikanth has lost in the opening round in all three tournaments that he has played so far this year.

Saina and Srikanth are currently ranked 18th and 15th respectively, while being placed 22nd and 26th in the Race to Tokyo rankings, which takes into consideration only the points accumulated from the tournaments played in the last one year.

According to the BWF Olympic qualification rules, only two players from each singles category can qualify if their ranking is within the



top-16 by April end.

Among the Indians, world champion P V Sindhu and B Sai Praneeth and men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have almost secured their berths for the Tokyo Games.

With the Olympic qualification cut-off date ending in April, there are only seven tournaments, including the Barcelona Spain Masters, left in the calendar and the Indian duo will have to produce consistent performances to earn a ticket to Tokyo.

London Bronze-medallist Saina, who is looking to make her fourth Olympics, will begin her campaign here against Germany's Yvonne Li.

Third seed Srikanth, on the other hand, will face fellow Indian Subhankar Dey, who notched up a morale-boosting win over world No 20 Indonesian Shesar Hiren Rhustavito in the Asia Team C'ships on Saturday.

Srikanth, who was also a part of the team in Manila, won two of his singles matches and lost one last week and he would hope to go deep in the draw in the tournament.

Sania returns to action in Dubai

PTI ■ DUBAI

Indian tennis star Sania Mirza will return to action at the ongoing Dubai Open on Wednesday after recovering from a calf injury which had cut short her campaign at the Australia Open in January.

The 33-year-old Indian will pair up with her French partner Caroline Garcia and they face Russia's Alla Kudryavtseva and Slovenia's Katarina Srebotnik in the opening round of the women's doubles event.

"Quitting off a grand slam tournament due to an injury is a sad experience. Especially, when you are back into the game after a long break. But thanks to my physio for making me fit for the tournament. I have started practicing and look forward to a great tournament," she said.

'United by Emotion': Tokyo 2020 unveils Games motto



AFF ■ TOKYO

Tokyo 2020 organisers on Monday rolled out the motto for this year's Olympics, *United by Emotion*, which they said reflected the "universal values" and "unifying power of sport".

"Crowds of spectators who do not know each other prior to the Games will come together and learn that there is more that unites them than divides them," Tokyo 2020 said as it unveiled the motto.

The official Olympic motto

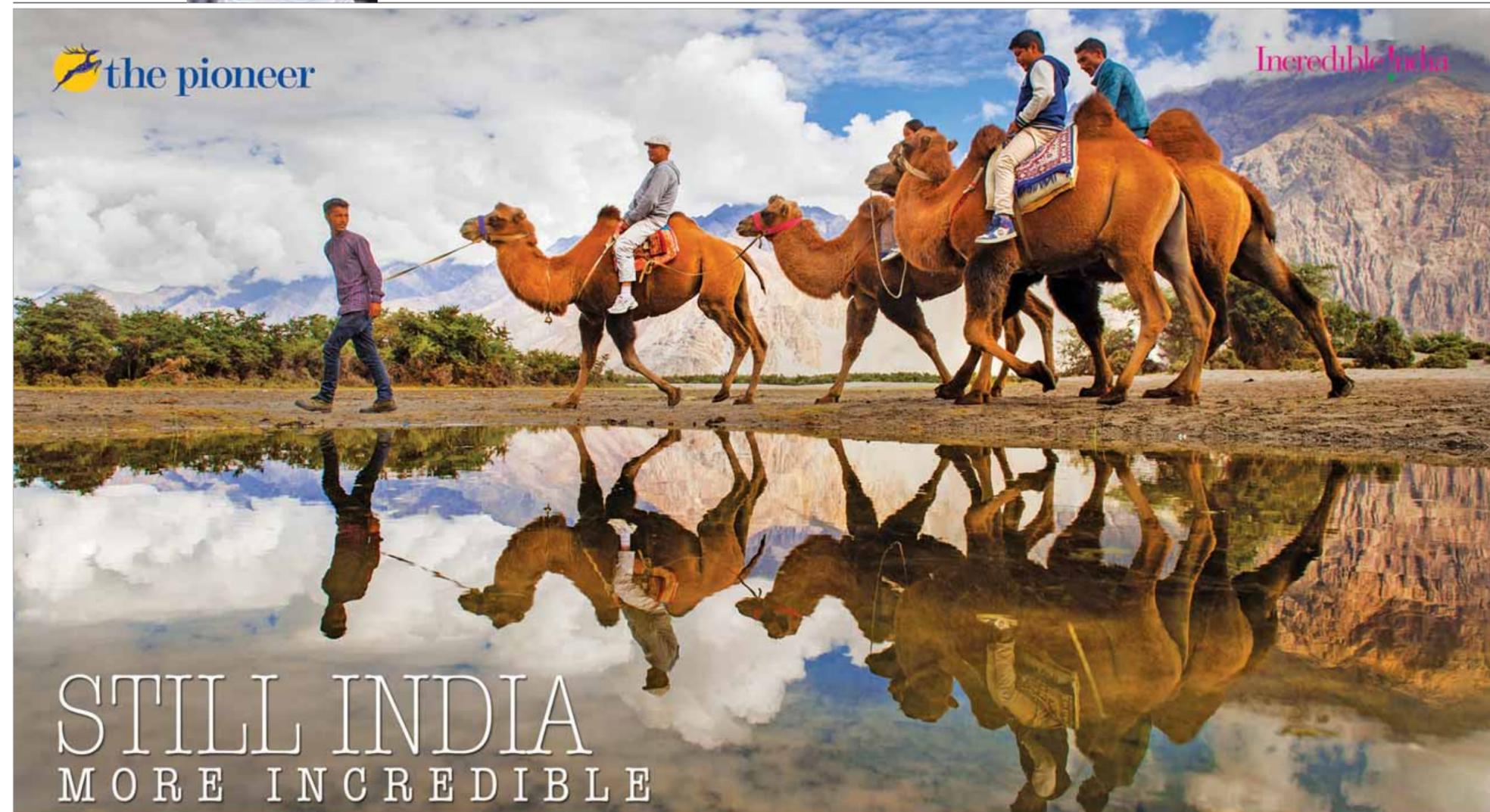
is *Citius, Altius, Fortius* or *Faster, Higher, Stronger*, but each host city chooses its own motto to accompany that edition of the Games.

London's motto in 2012 was *Inspire a Generation*, whereas Athens in 2004 went for *Welcome Home* — a nod to the birthplace of the Games in Olympia.

Less well-received was Sochi, which plumped for *Hot. Yours*, sparking derision in some quarters.

Tokyo said the motto would be beamed onto the Skytree tower in the Japanese capital to raise awareness as it will be seen for miles around.

The opening ceremony will be on July 24 and organisers have stressed there is no discussion about changing this date despite the coronavirus crisis hitting global transport.



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