

OPINION 8
NOW, A
GREEN FUND

WORLD 12
CORONAVIRUS: SENIOR DOCTOR
DIES IN CHINA, TOLL REACHES 1,868

AVENUES 13
MAKE A CAREER
IN DATA SCIENCE

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BEAT CHELSEA
IN PL CLASH
15 SPORT

Bid to paint 26/11 as Hindu terror

Mumbai ex-top cop Rakesh Maria's book makes startling revelations about conspiracy

PNS/AGENCY ■ MUMBAI

Former Mumbai Police Commissioner Rakesh Maria has dropped a bombshell by claiming in his 624-page memoir "Let Me Say It Now" released recently that how there was a bid to dub 26/11 as "Hindu terror", a phrase coined by the then Home Minister.

But it didn't happen so as Pakistani terrorist Mohammed Ajmal Kasab was caught alive. Had Kasab not been caught alive, his body would have been found with an I-card bearing a fictitious Hindu name, writes Maria about the investigation helmed by him in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack.

"If all had gone well, he (Kasab) would have been dead with a red string tied around his wrist like a Hindu. We would have found an identity card on his person with a fictitious name: Samir Dinesh Chaudhari, student of Arunodaya Degree and PG College, Vedre Complex, Dilkhushnagar, Hyderabad, 500060, resident of 254, Teachers Colony, Nagarabhavi, Bengaluru," Maria writes.

Ramesh Mahale, Prashant Marde and Dinesh Kadam



would have been on their way to Hyderabad to find more about him. There would have been screaming headlines in newspapers claiming how Hindu terrorists had attacked Mumbai. Over-the-top TV journalists would have made a beeline for Bengaluru to interview his family and neighbours," he wrote.

Mahale, Marde and Kadam were senior police officers involved in the 26/11 attack investigation. "But alas, it had

not worked that way and here he was, Ajmal Amir Kasab of Faridkot in Pakistan, and I was asking him, *Ki karan aya hai?* (What are you here for?)," the former IPS officer wrote.

Maria's book also mentions that Pakistan's ISI and the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) were bent upon killing Kasab by "hook or by crook" after he was caught alive by ASI Tukaram Omble.

"As the Joint CP incharge of the Crime Branch, Kasab

was now my most esteemed guest. Keeping this enemy alive was my number one priority. Anger and hostility towards Kasab were perceptible. The way the men and officers were reacting to him, I had to personally choose his guards for the entire period he would be with us," Maria writes in the book.

"The ISI and the Lashkar were bent upon eliminating him by hook or by crook to obliterate the only living evi-

dence of their heinous deed... Specific Intelligence inputs had been received from Central Intelligence agencies that Pakistan was intent on killing Kasab and the Dawood gang had been entrusted with the task," Maria wrote.

"He seriously believed that Muslims were not allowed to offer namaaz in India and mosques were locked up by the authorities. He felt that the azaan he heard five times a day in the Crime Branch lock-up was just a figment of his imagination. When we came to know of this, I instructed Mahale to take him to the mosque near the Metro Cinema in a vehicle. When he saw the namaaz in progress with his own eyes, he was bewildered. This was not how it was supposed to be!" Maria writes in the book.

In one of the most horrific terrorist attacks in the country's history, 166 people were killed and over 300 injured as 10 heavily-armed terrorists from Pakistan created mayhem in Mumbai on November 26, 2008.

Kasab, the lone terrorist captured alive, was hanged to death on November 21, 2012.

UK MP's visa revoked for anti-India activities

Singhvi backs Govt's action, slams Debbie as 'Pak proxy'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after British MP Debbie Abrahams was deported from the Indira Gandhi International Airport here, Government sources said on Tuesday her e-Business visa was revoked as she was involved in anti-India activities. They also said revoking or grant of visa is the sovereign right of a country and the cancellation of visa was conveyed to her on February 14.

Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi welcomed the step even though his party colleague Tharoor on Monday had criticised the Government on her deportation. Singhvi said the British MP was a "Pakistan proxy".

Justifying the decision to cancel the visa and deporting the MP, sources said Abrahams was issued an e-Business visa on October 7 last year for attending business meetings. The visa was valid till October 5, 2020.

"Her e-Business visa was revoked on February 14, 2020 on account of her indulging in activities which went against India's national interest. The rejection of the e-Business visa



was intimated to her on February 14," they said. Sources also asserted the grant, rejection or revocation of a visa or electronic travel authorisation is the sovereign right of a country.

Abrahams was not in the possession of a valid visa at the time of her arrival at the IGI Airport here on Monday and she was asked to return, the sources said.

There is no provision of "visa on arrival" for the UK nationals at the airport, sources said, dismissing Abrahams' contention she should have been granted a "visa on arrival".

They said as per the rules previously issued e-Business visa meant for business meetings cannot be used for visiting "family and friends", as stated by the British MP. "This is not permitted as per the rules and a separate visa request has to be made," a source said.

The Labour Party MP had said despite having a valid visa she was denied entry into India after she landed at the airport here about 8.50 am from Dubai. She was among a group of British MPs who issued formal letters expressing concerns over the revocation of Jammu & Kashmir's special status under Article 370 in August last year.

"We are gravely concerned at the announcement by Indian Home Minister, Amit Shah, that Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which grants special status to Jammu & Kashmir, has been removed by Presidential Order," the Opposition MP had noted in her letter to UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab.

Abrahams reacted on Twitter, "Very disappointing that a friend can't respectfully criticise another friend."

CAPSULE

SUNIL WINS GOLD IN ASIAN WRESTLING

New Delhi: Sunil Kumar on Tuesday overpowered Azat Salidinov of Kyrgyzstan 5-0 in the 87 kg summit bout to win India's first Greco-Roman gold medal in Asian Wrestling Championships in 27 years.

PK QUESTIONS NITISH'S DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Patna: Election strategist-turned-politician Prashant Kishor on Tuesday questioned the Nitish Kumar Government's development model, even as he sneered at the chief minister for making ideological compromises to stay in an alliance with the BJP.

BYPOLLS TO PANCHAYATS IN J&K POSTPONED: CEO

Jammu: The bypolls to panchayats scheduled from March 5 in Jammu & Kashmir has been postponed due to security reasons, J&K Chief Electoral Officer Shalendra Kumar said on Tuesday.

COBRA COMMANDO MARTYRED IN ENCOUNTER

Raipur: A CRPF commando was martyred while another injured in a gunfight with Maoists in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh on Tuesday, officials said.

C-17 TO EVACUATE INDIANS FROM WUHAN

New Delhi: India will send a C-17 military aircraft to Wuhan on February 20 to evacuate more Indians from the coronavirus-hit Chinese city and also provide medical supplies to China, military sources said on Tuesday. The C-17 Globemaster, the biggest military aircraft in the Air Force, will carry a large consignment of medical supplies to China and bring back more Indians from Wuhan.

₹1.50L-cr State Budget tabled in Assembly

- ₹3,195 cr set for KALIA
- Loan burden to increase to ₹1,13,237 cr
- Growth expected at 7.5%

PABITRA SENAPATY ■ BHUBANESWAR

Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari on Tuesday presented an Annual Budget of ₹1.50 lakh crore for the 2020-21 fiscal. The outlay includes an Agriculture Budget of Rs 19,408 crore.

The Budget outlay is about 11 per cent more than that of 2019-20. Last year, the State's Budget was ₹1.35 lakh crore.

The total administrative expenditure is estimated at ₹65,655 crore, Programme Expenditure at ₹74,000 crore, Disaster response fund at ₹3,200 crore and Transfer from the State at ₹7,145 crore.

Besides, ₹6,500 crore will be invested from off-budget resources like OMBADC, DMF, State PSUs etc. to supplement the budgetary outlay, the Minister said.

The capital outlay in 2020-21 is ₹26,513 crore, which is about 4.5 per cent of GSDP. Additionally, loans and advances, grants for creation of capital assets and other expenditure for capital formation together account for ₹12,000 crore, which is 2 per cent of GSDP.

Total revenue receipts for the year 2020-21 include State's Own tax for ₹38,250 crore, Own Non-tax revenue of ₹17,650 crore, State's share in Central taxes for ₹36,300 crore and grants from Centre for ₹32,000 crore.

The State estimates to incur a loan of ₹17,878 crore during 2020-21.

The State's loan burden was ₹84,676 crore by December 31, 2019 and the total debt burden is estimated to be ₹1,13,237 by 2020-21 fiscal end, said Finance Secretary Ashok Kumar Meena.

He said the State's growth rate is expected to be 7% to 7.5% in FY20-21. Last fiscal the growth rate was at 6.16%.

The budget focuses on creation of world class infrastructure, transformative healthcare facilities and education services, robust e-system for skills, sports, tourism, culture, industries and MSMEs.

₹3,195 crore has been earmarked for KALIA scheme. A whopping Rs 3,200 crore has been allocated for disaster management while an innovation tower is proposed to be constructed at Bhubaneswar at a cost of ₹59 crore for growth of IT sector.

Similarly, ₹301 crore has been allocated for sports and youth services that include Rs

140 crore for sports infrastructure and ₹91 crore for sports education. The Budget proposes a new directorate Archaeology to take up preservation activities of heritage sites in a professional manner.

An amount of ₹80 crore has been proposed for Bay Area Development in Shamuka Beach in Puri which will have world-class infrastructure. New scheme proposed under works Department for development of heritage sites including Samaleswari temple, Hirakud dam and other potential places and old monuments.

An amount of ₹70 crore has been provided to IPICOL for successful organisation of Make in Odisha Conclave 2020 while ₹284 crore has been proposed for creation of world class industrial infrastructure.

An outlay of ₹33 crore has been made for establishment of 24 fast track courts and for 21 temporary fast track courts. Minister Pujari also allocated ₹400 crore as State share for the Khurda Road-Balangir, Jeypore-Malkangiri and Jeypore-Nabarangpur rail line.

Sharjeel Imam chargesheeted as instigator of Jamia violence

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi court on Tuesday sent Sharjeel Imam, named as an "instigator" by the Delhi Police in its chargesheet for violent protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) at New Friends' Colony here last year, to judicial custody till March 3.

It stated that it had attached CCTV footage, call detail records and statements of over 100 witnesses as evidence in the chargesheet. Imam was arrested on sedition charges last month in a separate case.

Earlier on Monday, the court had sent Imam to one-day custody of the Delhi Police in the case as it wanted to quiz him because an accused — Furkan — in the December 15, 2019 violence case has alleged in his disclosure that he was provoked by Imam's speeches.

The police had earlier told the court that Furkan was arrested on the basis of a CCTV footage which showed him carrying a container allegedly containing petrol. Four people were arrested in the case on December 16 and sent to judicial custody. Furkan was arrested later.

Imam, who came into the limelight during the ongoing protests at Shaheen Bagh against the CAA and the NRC, was arrested from Bihar's separate case for allegedly making inflammatory speeches at Jamia Millia Islamia here and in Aligarh.

IDSA renamed after Manohar Parrikar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Government has renamed Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), a Government think tank, as Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses in order to "honour the commitment and legacy" of the late Defence Minister. The IDSA is a non-partisan, autonomous body dedicated to objective research and policy-relevant studies on all aspects of defence and security.

Parrikar was Defence Minister from November 9, 2014 to March 14, 2017. He died last year due to pancreatic cancer. He steered the Defence Ministry "through the tough challenges of attacks like Pathankot and Uri and responded to these with exemplary boldness," said a Government statement on Tuesday while announcing the decision to rename the IDSA.

"An epitome of integrity and dedication in public life, throughout his career, late Parrikar showed a tremendous fighting spirit, taking on the odds with fearlessness," the statement noted.

When Parrikar was the Defence Minister, India witnessed a series of decisions that



"enhanced its security capacities, boosted indigenous defence production and bettered the lives of ex-servicemen", it said.

His biggest contribution was towards the implementation of long-standing One Rank One Pension (OROP) demand for the Armed forces, the statement said.

The renaming of the IDSA will align the vision and aspiration of the premier defence institute with the contribution of the former Raksha Mantri, said the statement.

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said, "I welcome the decision of Defence Ministry to rename IDSA as 'Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses', honoring Manohar bhai's tremendous contribution as Defence Minister of India."

FATF subgroup wants to keep Pak in Grey List

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A subgroup of the global terror financing watchdog Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on Tuesday recommended continuation of Pakistan in the "Grey List" for its failure to check terror funding and a final decision will be taken on February 21, sources said on Tuesday.

The decision was taken at the meeting of the FATF's International Co-operation Review Group (ICRG), held at the ongoing Paris plenary.

The FATF meeting is being held a week after an anti-terrorism court in Pakistan sentenced Hafiz Saeed, the mastermind of the 2008 Mumbai attack and founder of LeT, to 11 years in two terror financing cases inside Pakistan.

The Pakistani court's judgment came ostensibly to please the FATF and Western countries so that the country can exit the "Grey List".

India has been maintaining that Pakistan extends regular support to terror groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Hizbul Mujahideen, whose prime target is India, and has urged FATF to take action against Islamabad.

Over witchcraft suspicion

Woman thrashed, paraded naked in Puri dist

Hospitalised; police inaction alleged

PNS ■ PURI

A woman suspected to be practising sorcery was thrashed and paraded naked in public by members of a family at Nuasahi under Krushnprasad block of Puri district on Tuesday.

Later, the victim was admitted to the District

Headquarters Hospital and is presently undergoing treatment there.

A case regarding the incident was lodged with the Krushnprasad police but it is alleged that the cops have dragged their feet in taking action against the culprits, who are said to belong to an influential family.

As per reports, daughter of one Hadia Jena of Nuasahi recently become sick. Hadia suspected that the victim had cast some evil spell on his daughter through black magic. Holding her responsible

for his daughter's illness Hadia allegedly thrashed her with iron rod and sticks and paraded her naked while the villagers remained silent spectators.

When the woman and her husband requested the village committee to intervene in the matter, Hadia and his family member threatened to set them afire.

Puri SP Umashankar Das said, "Case has been registered under IPC 452, 341, 323, 325, 354, 379 and 34. All the accused are absconding and we will hopefully be able to nab them soon enough."

'Steps on to avert Golanthara-like mishaps'

BJP, Cong stage walkouts as Energy Min doesn't reply

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Assembly on Tuesday witnessed walkouts by Opposition BJP and Congress members demanding a reply from the Energy Minister to an Adjournment Motion on Ganjam district's Golanthara bus tragedy. The motion was discussed in their absence.

As the motion given by BJP members was "Golanthara Mendrarajpur: Government turns death god; 10 invaluable lives lost" was taken for dis-

cussion, the Speaker called Transport Minister Padmanabha Behera to give a reply. But Congress and BJP members demanded that the Energy Minister give reply as the deaths and injuries occurred due to electrocution.

When Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro said giving a reply to any issue is a collective responsibility of Ministers and any one of them can give a reply, BJP members staged the walkout first and their Congress counterparts moved out of House a few minutes later.

In his reply, Minister Behera expressed grief over the deaths and said the deaths and injuries would not have

occurred if the driver had not driven the vehicle in an area not permissible for such high buses. The driver has been arrested and his licence has been cancelled.

Families of deceased would be given Rs 2 lakh from the CMRF and Rs 4 lakh by the Energy Department. He assured the House that adequate steps would be taken to ensure that no such incidents occur in future.

Energy Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra too expressed grief and told the House that steps have been initiated for lifting up low-hanging electric line wires to avert such mishaps in future.

Exe Engineer's ₹3.9-crore assets found

PNS ■ CUTTACK

Former Bhadrak Rural Works Division-I Executive Engineer Manas Ranjan Mohanty was on Tuesday arrested by the Vigilance police following disproportionate assets worth Rs 3.90 crore were detected in his and family's name, which he could not account for satisfactorily.

The assets include one triple-storied building, one

single-storied building and one 2 BHK flat in Patia in Bhubaneswar, one market complex with resort in Koida of Sundargarh district, two plots in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, one Honda car, deposits in different banks, diamond gold ornaments, cash and household articles.

In course of investigation, Mohanty was arrested and forwarded to the court. He has been remanded to judicial custody till March 2.

Homeless MLAs

BJP's Sethi sings in House, raises plight

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

BJP Legislature Party Deputy Leader Bishnu Charan Sethi took everyone by surprise, pleasantly for many, in the State Assembly on Tuesday as he broke into a song during the Zero Hour to highlight the plight of MLAs who are yet to be allotted Government quarters in the State capital.



Sethi, a good singer said in his verse, "Many MLAs have turned into hermits", staying alone in Bhubaneswar as their families continue to live elsewhere. He pointed out that seven long months have passed since they were elected, but no provisions have been made for their families despite repeated assurances.

"We are unable to bring our family members to Bhubaneswar as we have been

given a 10x12-size rooms to live in," Sethi said, alleging that the people who "appease the third floor of State Secretariat (the Chief Minister's Office) easily get quarters".

Other BJP MLAs, too, stood up from their seats in support of Sethi's grievance and blamed Parliamentary Affairs Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha for not paying heed to their concerns.

Govt seeks compensation for electrocution

Suggestion given to OERC

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Government has recommended to the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission (OERC) to provide compensation in cases of death or injury due to electrocution.

As per the recommendation, Rs 4 lakh would be provided in the case of loss of life due to electrocution, Rs 2 lakh for 60% disability and Rs 59,100 for 40%-60% disability.

Besides, Rs 12,700 would be given to an electrocution victim for more than one week

of hospitalisation and Rs 4,300 for less than one week of hospitalisation.

Also, compensation for incidents of deaths of animals due to electrocution has been recommended. The compensation payable for loss of animal life as a result of an electrical accident shall be payable at the following rates:

Milch animals -- Rs 30,000 buffalo/ cow/ camel/yak/etc; Rs 3,000 sheep/goat/pig/etc.

Draught animals -- Rs 25,000 camel/ horse/ bullock/etc; Rs 16,000 calf/ donkey/ pony/ mule.

Poultry -- Poultry Rs 50 per bird subject to a ceiling of assistance of Rs 5,000 per beneficiary household.

Shreemandir gets ₹187-cr donations

BHUBANESWAR: The Puri Shree Jagannath Temple has received Rs 187.01,85,000 as donation from devotees by the end of January, informed Law Minister Pratap Jena in the State Assembly on Tuesday.

In reply to a query asked by BJD MLA Umakant Samantray, the Minister said the Shreemandir also received 17.756 kg of gold including jewellery and 277.95 kg of silver from devotees during this period. Besides, the temple received 'Paata' clothes, Ghanta and clothes used in covering chariots as donations.

Jena further informed that the cash received as donations is parked in banks and is used to provide salary to servants. The grocery items received from devotees are utilised for preparations of 'Kotha Bhog'.

The Minister also informed that the Government has decided to appoint a fulltime Chief Administrator of the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA). PNS

Six drug peddlers' assets frozen in Angul

₹10L brown sugar seized in B'swar; 3 held

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR/BALESWAR

In a bid to curb narcotics business, the Angul district police have frozen assets of as many as six drug peddlers.

A total of six proposals in this regard, three from the Angul police station and one each from the Nalco, Banarpal and Talcher police stations, had been sent to the competent authority for approval.

Assets of the six drug peddlers and benami properties in the names of their family members were frozen, police sources said on Tuesday.

They have been identified as Krushna Chandra Sahu, Subrat Barik, Sugyani Dehury, Kalandi Charan Sahu, Prakash Seth and Sriram Sahu of the district.

Notably, a decision regard-

ing confiscation of properties of drug peddlers had been taken at a meeting chaired by Director General of Police (DGP) Abhay in Sambalpur recently.

Meanwhile, continuing their crackdown on drug smugglers, the Jaleswar police on Tuesday arrested three persons and seized brown sugar worth Rs 10 lakh from them at Sheikhsarai under Basta block in Baleswar district.

The accused were identified as Sridhar Nayak (30), Debashis Mohanty (30), and Litu Dora (29), residents of Narendrakana village under the Kumbharpada police station in Puri town.

Acting on a tipoff, the police conducted a raid at Sheikhsarai and seized 100 grams of brown sugar, a car, three mobile phones, 12 ATM cards and cash of Rs 3,14,110 from their possession.

The police registered a case against the three accused and began a probe into the case.

STF begins deportation process for 7 girls

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Crime Branch's Special Task Force (STF) has initiated a process for repatriation of seven Bangladeshi girls, who were rescued from a flesh trade racket here in January, to their home country as per the provision and guidelines of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. The process has been laid down in line with the SAARC convention and United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The STF is in touch with Ministry of External Affairs (Consular Division) for early repatriation of the girls. It would move the Bangladesh High Commission for nationality and other verification of the girls.

Once travel permit is obtained and some legal and administrative formalities are

done, the victims would be handed over by the Border Security Force (BSF) to their counterparts Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB). In January, the STF had arrested four accused in a flesh trade racket and rescued eight girls, including seven from Bangladesh. All the accused persons were produced before court and later sent to jail. The rescued girls were produced before court and later lodged at Swadhar Gruh (Shelter House). During course of investigation, it was found that seven out of eight victim girls were illegally trafficked from Bangladesh and forced into flesh trade.

Another girl, who was from Kolkata, has already been handed over to her family as per direction of the Bhubaneswar SDJM.

Congress raises Central apathy for Odia promotion

Min to make statement in House today

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Assembly witnessed adjournments twice as Opposition Congress members demanded a statement from the Government as regards to why the Union Government has not allocated any fund for promotion of Odia language, literature and culture and what steps the State Government has taken in that regard.

Congress member Tara Prasad Bahinipati raised the issue during the Zero Hour and

demanding that the Speaker give a ruling in favour of his demand.

As Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro said that the Chief Minister has taken many steps for promotion of Odia language and culture and the concerned Minister may give a clarification, the Congress members got angered and rushed into the Well of House demanding a specific ruling instructing the Minister for a statement.

Congress Legislature Party Leader Narasingha Mishra too wanted to know why the Centre has not given a single penny for promotion of



Odia out of Rs 300 crore it has allocated for promotion of various languages in the country.

Unable to run the proceedings, the Speaker first adjourned the House for 15 minutes at 12.14 pm and then from 12.29 pm till 12.50 pm.

Later, the Speaker asked the Odia Language, Literature and Culture Minister to give a statement on Opposition members' demand on Wednesday.

Now, Wesco launches power cut drive

Villagers beat Nesco staffs during arrear collection

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR/ BARIPADA/BALESWAR

The Western Electricity Supply Company of Odisha (Wesco) on Tuesday launched a power disconnection drive in western part of the State against the defaulting consumers.

The drive is being carried out in nine districts, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Bargarh, Subarnapur, Balangir, Nuapada and Kalahandi, after completion of the deadline for payment of the arrear dues.

In the first phase, power supply to defaulting business establishments was being dis-

connected.

Notably, Cesu, Southco and Nesco had earlier started similar power disconnection drives in their jurisdictions in a bid to boost revenue collection. Meanwhile, some employees of the North Eastern Electricity Supply Company of Odisha Limited (Nesco) were assaulted by several villagers at Naupada under the Khunta police limits in Mayurbhanj district on Monday. As per a complaint lodged by the victims with the Khunta police, one Santanu Kumar Naik and his parents attacked the Nesco staffs when they were collecting dues in the locality. The accused also obstructed the Nesco employees' vehicle, abused them and threatened to kill them, the

complainants said in the FIR.

Being informed about the attack, senior Nesco officials and the Khunta police reached the village and rescued the victims. The assault scene was recorded by one of the victims on mobile phone and it was submitted to the police.

Police registered a case in this connection and started an investigation.

The Nesco has a target of recovering at least Rs 30 crore by the end of March in its jurisdiction of Baleswar, Bhadrak, Mayurbhanj, Jajpur and Keonjhar districts.

Nesco officials said the arrear amounts total about Rs 1,500 crore, of which about Rs 900 crore relates to domestic consumers and the rest to commercial supply.

20L families live in kutcha houses

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Government on Tuesday informed the Assembly a whopping 20 lakh households live in kutcha (thatched) houses in the State now.

Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Minister Pratap Jena informed this in response to a question of Congress MLA Suresh Routray.

"Twenty lakh households are yet to receive any assistance under any of rural housing schemes," informed the Minister

The Minister further informed that of the 20 lakh households, 1,845 families belong to Jatni.

He said all the households living in kutcha houses would be provided houses under rural housing schemes in a phased manner.

Narasingha opposes court cases transfer

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Congress Legislature Party Leader Narasingha Mishra on Tuesday demanded in the State Assembly that Government withdraw its decision to transfer cases from the courts, which are not operational due to lawyers' strike, to nearby courts.

"The Government has no power to transfer the cases from one court to other. Clients will face a lot of difficulties if their cases are transferred," said Mishra during the Zero Hour.

Wanting to know if the



Government has contacted clients before taking such a decision, Mishra demanded that the Law Minister make a statement in the House in this regard.

To this, Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro asked the Law Minister to make a statement soon.

NTSE: DAV CSpur leads the pack

BHUBANESWAR: In the recently-published National Talent Search Examination (NTSE) State round results, students of the DAV Public School Chandrasekharpur here bagged the lion's share with 32 qualifiers in the merit list, the highest for any individual school of the State.

The successful students would appear at the final national round to be held in the month of May. The State round was conducted by the SCERT while national round would be conducted by the NCERT under the aegis of Ministry of HRD.

The DAV Chandrasekharpur has been taking the lead in both NTSE and KVPY over the years. This time also, the school has proved its mettle in NTSE. School Principal Dr KC Satapathy congratulated the meritorious students along with the in-charge teacher Dr SD Singh for the remarkable results and wished them for the national round. PNS

Regularise pvt college teachers soon: LoP

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Leader of Opposition Pradipta Kumar Naik on Tuesday severely criticised the State Government for not regularising Lecturers of Grant-in-Aid colleges and not paying salaries to them regularly.

"Lecturers of private colleges which have got Grant-in-Aid since 1994, are yet to be regularised. They have not received salaries for the last 21 months. While Government college Lecturers are taking home over Rs 15 lakh as post-retirement benefit, ones retiring from private colleges are only getting about Rs 5 lakh.



When this discrimination will go," wanted to know Naik in the Assembly during the Zero Hour.

He again wanted to know why the 7th Pay Commission recommendations would not be implemented for such Lecturers. He asked the Government to make if clear to the college teachers politely if it is running short of funds. He demanded a ruling from the Speaker.

246 jumbo killed in State in 3 yrs: Minister

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A total of 246 elephants were killed in the State due to various reasons in the last three years, Forest and Environment Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha informed the State Assembly on Tuesday.

Replying to a question, the Minister said 246 elephants died between 2016-17 and 2018-19 due to accidental electrocution, disease, accidents involving trains and other vehicles, natural and other causes.

He said that as per the 2017 elephant census, Odisha had 1,976 jumbos, including Simlipal forest division's highest at 330, Dhenkanal (169), Satakosa (147) and Athagarh

(115).

Arukha said measures have been taken for protection of elephants. Elephant Reserves have been set up in Mayurbhanj, Mahanadi and Sambalpur to conserve their prime habitats. Besides, the Government has launched various management interventions for elephant protection.

In addition, steps are being taken to restore 14 elephant corridors, plant saplings for the consumption of elephants and construction of water bodies in several habitats.

Measures are also being taken to avoid train accidents and electrocution involving elephants, the Minister added.

Ease of Living survey

Residents rate services, amenities in city

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Homework for parents! Sounds strange, but for the Ease of Living Citizens Perception Survey, the city authorities have roped in school kids with the innovative approach so that more and more people would respond. The survey has been launched by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).

The Citizen Perception Survey is an interface through which citizens of 100 Smart Cities of India are getting a chance to rate their own cities on various Ease of Living (EOL) parameters like education, health, cleanliness,

garbage collection, drinking water, water logging, rental housing, commutation, women safety, emergency services, livelihood opportunities, recreational facilities, cost of living, financial services, air quality, green cover and electricity supply, etc.

The survey, which has already started from February 1 will continue till February 29 and a citizen can go and click at the link <http://eol2019.org/Citizenfeedback> to submit his/her ratings. During the process the citizen has to fill his/her name, phone number and click one of the several answers given in the choice to rate their city's facilities and services.

While through the homework for parents the students in various schools are targeted to take the information sheets home so that their fathers and mothers could respond to the survey, other strategies like videos at major LED display boards, briefing sessions at offices of BMC, BDA and BSCL, campaigns through educational institutions, kiosks at the ongoing Park Utsav venues, talk shows organised at city-based FM radio stations, social



media campaigns, SMS campaigns, volunteers carrying placards in order to motivate public in public places, slum dwellers' involvement through Peer Leaders (Pragati Sathis) and hoardings at strategic locations by BMC have been chosen to elicit response.

So far, teams from BMC, BSCL and BDA have visited different colleges such as Swosti School of Hotel Management, Srusti College of Management, and Silicon Engineering College etc. Awareness workshops were organised in these in order to sensitize the students to take part in this survey.

Similarly, under the "Homework for parents" strategy, students of Modern English School were given the "homework" to get the survey filled by their parents. The teams have also organised two radio shows, one each on 104 Radio Chocolate and 93.5 Red FM to create awareness among the youths.

S'pur Varsity Lib Sc Dept holds talk

Eminent professors join

PNS ■ BURLA

The PG Department of Library and Information Science, Sambalpur University, organised a national seminar on "Changing Landscape of Libraries in Digital Age" and a workshop last week at its Jyoti Vihar campus.

Head of the Department Prof Bulu Maharana was the seminar director. 26 research papers on different sub-themes like Change Management, User

Engagement through Mobile Applications, Scholarly Communication and Open Access Publishing, Innovative and Smart Library Services, Reference and Data Management Tools, E-Learning, Trends in Digital Technology, Content Management and Information Discovery Tools and Information Literacy were presented in three technical sessions.

It was followed by a workshop. Sambalpur University VC Prof AK Das Mahapatra graced the event as chief guest. The former Professor and Head

and Dean Faculty of Arts of Sambalpur University Prof KC Panda was the special guest. Professor and Chairperson of DLIS of Bangalore University Prof Ramesha delivered key note address. Prof B Maharana in his welcome address spoke the objectives of the seminar and introduced the guests. Among others environmentalist Prof Sanjay K Sahu and HoD of DLIS of Aligarh Muslim University Dr Sudharma Haridasan spoke. Assistant Professor and seminar coordinator S Majhi offered vote of thanks. Dr BK Beura and Jayanta Sahu coordinated.

Hardcore Maoist surrenders in Kalahandi

Carried bounty of ₹4L on head
Says lost confidence on Maoist ideology

BIKASH KHEMKA ■ BHAWANIPATNA

A 27-year-old Maoist cadre, Kesab Veladi alias Ramdas, who was carrying a reward of Rs 4 lakh on his head, surrendered before the Kalahandi police on Tuesday. He was a member of the Maoists Raul Area Committee (Kalahandi-Kandhmal-Boudh and Nayagarh Division). In 2019, Ramdas was involved in the torching of machineries at two contractor's camps in Kalahandi and Kandhmal district. He had joined the Gangalur Dalam in Chhatisgarh in 2009 and worked for a year. He was

then transferred to Odisha to work under Maoist leader Jampanna. In 2011, he was shifted to Kharang Nadi area committee as Area Committee Manager and worked there till 2018.

Kalahandi SP Batulla Gangadhar said Ramdas was being physically tortured by senior leaders who always were against the development of the interior pockets. "Ramdas wanted to marry a Maoist cadre but was prevented by his leaders," he added.

Ramdas told the reporters that he lost confidence in Maoist ideology when he saw that they were exploiting the women cadre sexually as well as physically.

"I felt that the Maoists have failed to keep their promises on the development of Adivasis and always opposed the road and school construction by threatening the contractors for their own benefits. Finally I thought to come back to the social mainstream," he said.

'Odisha jails' situation 'terrible' as inmates take turns to sleep

Observes Supreme Court

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Supreme Court has termed the situation in jails in Odisha as "terrible" pointing out that inmates have to "take turns" to sleep in the State's prisons.

"Have you ever visited a jail in Odisha. I have learnt from one of my brothers (judges) that they (inmates) take turns to sleep there. There is an international treaty which guarantees that there should be minimum place to sleep in jails. The condition is so terrible there," a member of a Bench of Justices SK Kaul and KM Joseph said on Monday.

The court observed this while it was hearing a petition filed by a man seeking bail in a case lodged under the Scheduled Castes and Tribes

(Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The petitioner's counsel told the court that allegation against the man is that he had slapped his mother. He said the petitioner is 20 years old and has been in jail for over 400 days, due to which his studies have been affected.

The counsel appearing for the State said the lawyers' strike in district courts is over and the petitioner can move there for bail after statement of the complainant is recorded.

He said the Orissa High Court, while refusing to grant bail to the petitioner, had noted that there was a threat perception to the complainant.

The petitioner's counsel countered this and said there is no threat perception to the complainant.

The apex court then posted the matter for next hearing after one month while taking note of the submissions advanced by the State's counsel that the statement of the complainant would be recorded by the concerned trial court within a month.

Movie on Sai's link in double murder soon



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A story of sensational double murder allegedly masterminded by expelled BJD leader and former MLA Anup Sai would soon hit the silver screen.

Odia filmmaker Sridhar Martha would produce the film titled as 'Mayabini' under the banner of Range Royal Cine Lab. The producer made the announcement and released a flick of the movie here on Tuesday. However, he did not divulge further details like the star cast and the director for the project.

The production house had recently made the movie 'Patnagarh' based on the true incident of the Patnagarh wedding gift blast. Martha had debuted in the Odia film industry as a producer with 'Katha Deli Matha Chuini'.

Recently, the Chhattisgarh police arrested ex-Brajrajnagar MLA Anup Sai for murdering a woman and her daughter in 2016. The police claimed that Sai had an illicit relationship with deceased Kalpana Das (32), who was a divorcee and had a 14-year-old daughter, Babli, for quite a long time. Sai had purchased a flat at

Sundarpada in Bhubaneswar and the mother-daughter duo was staying in the flat from 2011 to 2016. When Kalpana started insisting on him to marry her and demanded a share from his property, Sai plotted to kill her.

On the fateful day, Sai took both Kalpana and Babli to a forest on the way to Raigarh in Chhattisgarh. He bludgeoned both of them to death with an iron rod and later ran a vehicle over them several times to mutilate the bodies beyond recognition in an attempt to erase evidence.

Meet on drug abuse prevention for teenagers

CUTTACK: An awareness workshop for college students on drug abuse and its prevention was organised by the Mental Health Institute (MHI) of SCB Medical College in collaboration with the National Institute of Social Defense at the Netaji Subhash Memorial City College here on Tuesday.

MHI Director Nilamadhav Rath spoke at length about the factors influencing drug abuse, effects of the drug abuse on human body, its treatment and how to prevent the menace which is threatening the mankind, particularly to the teenagers. Senior journalist and law faculty Pradip Kumar Das dwelt on the laws in India governing the narcotic drug and psychotropic substances control.

Presided over by college Principal Dr Debashish Jena, the workshop was attended, among others, by students and teachers of the college.

MHI Associate Professor Yashobant Mohapatra and former Director Sarada Prasanna Swain conducted the workshop in which through PowerPoint presentation discussed the various aspects of substance abuse and how one can protect himself against drug and alcohol addiction. **PNS**

N'pada widow regains her illegally transferred land

One arrested

AJIT PANDA ■ NUAPADA

Dhanmati Majhi, a tribal widow of Rohenpadar village under Khariar tehsil in Nuapada district, has got back her 2.16 acres of land, which was illegally transferred and mutated by some land grabbers of the district.

The Khariar Tehsildar issued the document of ROR to Dhanmati in the presence of his brother Premananda Majhi of Dharamsagar village, who worked tirelessly for last one year to force the revenue authority cancel the registration and mutation.

Dhanmati got the hint of the illegal transaction, when a notice was served to her by the Tehsildar, Khariar for a mutation case. "I became astonished when I got the mutation notice, because neither I nor my late husband had sold any land; thus I asked my brother to

inquire about the matter," revealed Dhanmati.

Parmanand after obtaining information from the registering authority could know that 2.16 acres of land belonging to Daitari Majhi, husband of Dhanmati, has been transferred to one Jharbandh Majhi of Sunabeda village under Khariar Tehsil. When he started inquiring the whereabouts of Jharbandh Majhi through RTI, he came to know that, no one in this name existed in Sunabeda.

"We lodged a complaint with the registration authority to stop the mutation, but they didn't," revealed Parmanand.

The matter of illegal transfer of land drew the attention of media when Parmanand and Dhanmati sat in demonstration demanding cancellation of the land transaction and stringent action against the people who twisted the law to benefit the land grabbers. A case was lodged by Dhanmati with Khariar police and as a consequence of investigation by



police, it became clear that it was a fake transaction legalised by the witnesses befooling the registration authority by producing fake identification documents. The main witness in the case named Shyam Agrawal of Khariar was arrested and forwarded to judicial custody under various sections of the IPC.

According to the Khariar police, the second witness named Kaibalya Hans of

Mudkani village under Turekela police station is still at large. Parmanand has revealed that the two witnesses in connivance with some corrupt officials have given effect to the illegal transaction.

Dhanmati has revealed her happiness after getting the land patta. "My worries are finally over, but I am still unable to know why the mutation was done even after I lodged a complaint," she said.

Absconding man nabbed from K'handi

BHUBANESWAR: The Goa police have arrested a Kalahandi native, Rupendra Patnaik, for allegedly raping and killing a 28-year-old woman in Goa, whose decomposed body was found in a forest near Porovrim on February 10.

Later, on February 13, the police took into custody a 16-year-old boy who confessed during interrogation that he along with another person raped the woman and then killed her.

The Porovrim police subsequently launched a manhunt and nabbed Patnaik, from his native place Kalahandi district on Monday, reports said.

The two accused have been booked under Sections 302, 376 of the IPC.

Earlier, following arrest of the minor boy, police had released sketches of the other accused and asked all police stations and railway authorities to be on lookout for him. **PNS**

Meet discusses S'pur varsity students' woes

Medical Physics students to be trained at Cuttack

NIMAI CHARAN SAHU ■ SAMBALPUR

As students of the Medical Physics Department of the Sambalpur University continued their agitation, Sambalpur district Collector on Tuesday held a meet involving the university authorities and students to sort out the problems.

Notably, the students have resorted to a stir in the new department after there was a plan to wind it up. Three years back, the students had taken admission in the 'Medical Physics' course where radiation study is an important component. But the course could not run smoothly due to the negligence of the then VC and

course coordinator.

It was alleged that by just downloading a course from net, Prof CR Tripathy, the then VC and the course coordinator, had opened it hurriedly for the sole intention of taking credit. The preliminary permission from the Atomic Energy Research Centre (AERC) was not taken then. At the same time, there was neither basic infrastructure in the university for the particular course nor teachers.

Hence, the university decided to close the department. They further decided to refund the excess fees taken from the students since it was a self-financing course.

But after the regular VC had gone on leave, the students again reiterated their demand for degree in Medical Physics



and even went to the extent of heckling the in-charge VC Prof AK Dasmahapatra.

However, Collector of Sambalpur Subham Saxena called a meeting where it was decided that the students could get the required practical training in the Acharya Harihar Cancer Research Institute at Cuttack, particularly on the subject of 'Radiation'. A professor from the Physics Department of the university would go soon to Cuttack to explore the possibility, said sources.

2 die, 1 hurt as bike hits truck

BRAHMAPUR: Two persons were killed and another was critically injured when a motorcycle hit a truck near Chati Chhak under the Golanthara police station in Ganjam district late on Monday night.

According to reports, the speeding motorbike by which three persons were travelling rammied into the truck from its rear. While two of them died on the spot under the impact of the collision, another person sustained grievous injuries.

On being informed by locals, police reached the spot, sent the bodies for postmortem and started an investigation. The injured person was shifted to the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack for better treatment. **PNS**

2,735 consumers' connections snapped

Southco drive on day II
₹2.6 cr collected

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

The Southco has collected Rs 2.6 crore on the second day of its electricity disconnection drive on Tuesday. While 2,717 consumers' connections were cut off on the first day for not clearing their dues, power supply was snapped of 2,735 consumers on the second day.

The drive is underway in eight districts under Southco.

278 squads have been formed under its 19 divisions. There are a total of 8,467 consumers who have not cleared their bills. However, 200 consumers were restored with electricity connections after they cleared their dues of Rs 14.56 lakh.

Highest collection of arrear dues of Rs 94.96 lakh came from Ganjam district with 9 divisions. Similarly, the collections from other districts were Phulbani (Rs 6.44 lakh), Boudh (Rs 4.67 lakh), Gajapati (Rs 5.19 lakh), Rayagada (Rs 21.69 lakh), Koraput (Rs 31.6 lakh), Nabarangpur (Rs 20.3 lakh) and Malkangiri (Rs 22.19 lakh), said Southco sources.

Scenic Kapilash hills gear up for Shivaratri

KRUSHNA KUJMAR MISHRA ■ DHENKANAL

The Shiv Temple on the scenic hill ranges of Kapilash in Dhenkanal district has geared up to celebrate the Maha Sivaratri and Jagara Mela on February 21.

While the holy book Ishan Samhita claims the Sivalinga had appeared there before the Vedic Age, a legend has it that Lord Siva appeared at the Kapilash hill after being pleased with the severe penance of King Saudasha. Ever since, Kapilash has been counted as one of the famous Shaivite hubs across the country.

On the Maha Sivaratri, Lord Chandra Sekhar is worshipped with Sodasha Upachara and Rudradrabhiseka. Amidst blowing of conch and Turi

and ululations, the Mahadeepa is raised onto the temple top. Lord Chandrasekhar is awakened from his cosmic sleep.

Being adorned with Nagavarana Vasha, Lord Chandra Sekhar meets Lord Narayana which is called as the Harihara Bheta.

A priest said that apart from being adorned with Banarashi Patta and valuable ornaments, the Linga and Shakti are covered with Bel leaf, Gayasa and Champa flowers made of gold. The entire hill range appears like a galaxy as countless devotees seat the entire night by illuminating their earthen lamps (Deepa).

The temple history reveals that Ganga Vansi King Langula Narasingha Dev had constructed the 60feet high temple of Lord Chandra Sekhar in 1246. Earlier, Ganga Vansi

prince Ananga Bhima Dev had surrendered before the Lord at Kapilash to be released from the sin of Bramhahatya (killing a Brahmin), being directed by Lord Jagannath in a divine dream. But at that time, the prince traced the self emerged Siva Linga being covered with leaves and he named the Lord as Sikhareshwara.

Later, the Kasi Biswanath temple, Narayan temple, Jagamohan, Manikaranika Kunda, Papanasini Kunda, Japa Mandapa and twelve curved roads to the temple were constructed by the royal family of Dhenkanal. Reportedly, the 1,352 steps were constructed with public donation to climb the hill range. The idol of Lord Narayan has been so designed that a perennial spring flows from nail of its right foot.

Besides, Jugabdi Purana

written by Santh Balam Das, describes that Lord Rama during his 14 years of exile had stayed at hills of Saptajaya and Kapilash for a few days along with Laxmana and Sita. The existence of a cave on the hill top named as Sitanka Entudisala, an idol of the monk Balmiki and a pile of stones called as Deba Sabha support the belief.

The absence of crow in the entire hill range is still a mystery. Even though a number of poisonous snakes move in the hill, curiously only two have died so far in Kapilash due to snake bite and that too due to wrath of the Lord. It is said one died in snake bite for allegedly consuming onion with the Lord's prasad and another for an attempt to molest a female devotee.



The State Government has spent Rs 23 lakh during the year 2017-18 for Kapilash to promote tourism potentiality of the place. A zoo at the foot hill has not yet been developed fully. However, a science park attracts the tourists and picnickers.

M'ghanj MP wants banks to boost development

PNS ■ BARIPADA

Mayurbhanj MP Bishweswar Tudu Tuesday stressed the need of implementation of various Union Government schemes in the larger interest of this tribals-dominated, backward district. He was holding discussions with Mayurbhanj Lead District Manager (Bank) Dillip Sahu in this regard.

Tudu emphasised the importance of Prime Minister's Skill Development Programmes. He spoke on Startup, Standup and Mudra Loan, etc. Bankers should see to it that people are not demotivated; rather, they should ensure that the banks are ready to help the needy, he said. He also advised the bankers to help achieve the goal of making the farmers' income two-fold by the year 2022.

Tudu also wanted at least one industrial unit to be set up in each block of the district and sought active bank support for this.

Sahu expressed his desire to cooperate and agreed to hold "Awareness Melas" to achieve the



objectives. Senior BJP leader Chhotelal Mohanta and Marwari Manch leader Hemant Shah were present.

Rare: Agitators buy rail tickets

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

About 500 passengers from Dhenkanal had come to Bhubaneswar on Monday to attend a rally for their cause.

They purchased train tickets to board the Puri-Angul MEMU and set a good example and requested the Bhubaneswar Station authorities to provide more time to board their train at the station.

The rally consisted of mostly tribal groups. They purchased 500 general tickets



from Bhubaneswar to Dhenkanal. This is highlighted by the East Coast Railway (ECoR) as purchase of tickets by activists taking part in rallies is actually very rare. This would set a very good example for the general public, an ECoR release said.

Students sensitised on superstitions



NUAPADA: An awareness camp to sensitise college students against witchcraft and other superstitions was held by the Sinapali police of Nuapada district on Tuesday in collaboration with the Gokulanand Meher College, Hatibandha of Sinapali block. A traffic awareness drive was also held simultaneously.

"Reports of violence among

people on suspicions of witchcraft use to come from different villages. Those who are targeted in such cases are mentally and physically tortured. Students, being educated, can generate awareness amongst the people against such deep-rooted superstitions and sensitise people about the stringent laws of the country for punishing the people practising

and promoting such things," said the organisers.

"The participants were enlightened by police personnel and enlightened speakers on various laws and regulations," added Sinapali PS IIC Jyotiranjana Gouda. Gokulanand Meher College Principal Tiketal Meher and other staffs were also present. **PNS**

Vedanta, GE ink pact for digital smelter

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The GE and Vedanta Limited signed an agreement to implement GE's digital smelter solutions at its largest smelter in India at Jharsuguda to significantly increase its operational efficiency and productivity.

This will be the first such deployment of digital twin technology at any aluminium smelter in India and is part of Vedanta's long-term digital transformation initiatives.



increase smelter pot life, operational efficiency, safety and reduce wastage.

"This partnership with GE will help us enhance sustainability and bring in more predictability to our business as we are constantly looking at innovative digital technologies to

optimize our business performance levels," said CEO Aluminium and Power Business, Vedanta Ltd Ajay Kapur.

President and CEO, GE South Asia Mahesh Palshikar said, "We are proud to support Vedanta's efforts."

222 blood units collected at Red Cross camp



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Indian Red Cross Society, State branch, in association with the Smart City Auto Association here organised a voluntary blood donation camp on Tuesday where 222 units of blood were collected.

Honorary secretary of the State Red Cross CTM Suguna inaugurated the camp and stressed on the need to collect blood on regular basis to meet the demand in the State by 100 per cent. Auto Association members, local residents and students of schools and colleges donated blood. Central Red

Cross Blood Bank and Capital Blood Bank personnel collected the blood. Red Cross State branch joint secretary Durga Sankar Sarangi, treasurer Major Dr Kalpana Das, Youth Red Cross officer Dr Ajaya Kumar Tripathy, Ranjan Kumar Mohanty and Laxman Swain conducted.

INBRIEF

ABDO DIES IN NUAPADA ROAD MISHAP



Nuapada: Balangir district's Belpada Assistant Block Development Officer (ABDO) Ramvilas Mangaraj died when the car by which he was travelling crashed into a roadside tree at Bongamunda in the district on Tuesday. Mangaraj was rescued and rushed to the District Headquarters Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries.

TWO M'GIRI KIDS SUSTAIN 100% BURN INJURIES

Malkangiri: Two kids, including a two-year-old girl, suffered critical burn injuries when their blanket caught fire from a traditional lamp while they were in deep sleep early on Tuesday morning at Goudaguda village in Malkangiri district. Neighbours rushed them to a local hospital before they were shifted to a hospital in Koraput for better treatment. The incident occurred when their parents went out to work in a brick kiln. Doctors said kids' conditions were critical as they sustained 100-per cent burn injuries.

3 HURT IN WILD BOAR ATTACK IN KHORDHA

Khordha: Three persons were critically injured in a wild boar attack in Gudum village under Begunia block of Khordha district on Monday afternoon. The injured were identified as Gourang Behera (44), Bichitra Nanda Maharana and a girl Guni (4). The injured were rushed to the District Headquarters Hospital. Though the wild boars are damaging crops and attacking people frequently, the locals complaints to the Forest Department officials have fallen on deaf ears, some villagers alleged.

SUNDARGARH MEDICAL CLERK IN VIG NET

Sundargarh: A junior clerk of Kinjrikela CHC, Sukanta Tanty, was arrested by the Vigilance while taking bribe Rs 10,000 from complainant Dr Kishore Kumar Sahu, Medical Officer of the CHC, in order to prepare the letter's arrears incentive bill.

B'GARH AMIN HELD TAKING BRIBE

Bargarh: Bheden Tehsildar office Amin Lalita Kumar Meher of Ramanda village under Bheden police station in Bargarh district was arrested by the Vigilance officials on Tuesday while accepting bribe of Rs 2,000. The raid was conducted on complaint of Khirasindhu Dang of Achandapali village, Bheden. Meher demanded the money for demarcation of his land. He was court-forwarded the same day.

IIM, S'PUR STUDENTS VISIT MCL CSR PROJECT



Sambalpur: The MCL hosted an exposure visit of students of the IIM, Sambalpur to its ongoing CSR project site of Comprehensive Community Development Programme "CCDP-Uththan" being implemented by the BAIF Development Research Foundation. The students had opportunities to witness agro-horti work, WADI, and also interacted with the beneficiaries. The project costing Rs 20.29 crore is going to impact the lives of 6,174 families in 40 villages of Angul, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur and Sundargarh districts

JSpur girl rescued from Jharkhand

PNS ■ JAGATSinghpur

A missing minor girl from Kankaradia svillage under Kujanga block was rescued from Jharkhand. Police too arrested the abductor, who is from a minority community and presented him before the JMC Court, Kujang on Monday.

The abductor was identified as Firdus Ansari alias Feroz, a resident of Dumria village under Sahibganj district in Jharkhand. Feroz had love relationship with the minor and had proposed to marry her. On February 1, he had come to Cuttack and managed to lure the minor girl to his village from the Cuttack railway station.

The parents of the girl not finding her had lodged an FIR in Kujanga police station. Meanwhile, abductor Feroz made telephonic conversation with the girl's father and demanded ransom of Rs 10 lakh in lieu of safe return of his daughter.

Police tracking the mobile call of the accused moved Jharkhand and successfully arrested Feroz from his native village, besides rescuing the minor girl.

Sehwag unveils Cohen School at Jatni

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Cohen International School, Bhubaneswar was inaugurated by cricketer Virender Sehwag as chief guest at Jatni on Tuesday.

School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash, Development Commissioner and Additional Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, Regional Officer CBSE T Mate and Prof Ajit Mohan Srivastava from the Institute of Physics attended as guests of honour.

Cohen International



School Chairman Jyoti Ranjan Tripathy and Vice Chairman Vikas Bahinipati among others were present. The inaugural function started with welcome address from senior advisor of

Cohen International School Dr Kamalesh Mishra and ended with vote of thanks proposed by vice chairman of the school s Bahinipati.

Maternity leave to employees going for surrogacy

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Chandigarh Administration has notified that maternity leave will be given to female employees who want to have child through surrogacy as well as to those female employees who would bear the child of another women.

Both the surrogate mother and commissioning mother will be entitled to maternity leave with full pay upto 180 days or 26 weeks.

This has been decided after the neighboring Punjab Government announced similar provision in the state last month.

The Administration has written a letter to all Administrative Secretaries, Head of Departments,



Institutions, Boards or Corporation to ensure compliance of the order and grant maternity leave to commissioning mother and surrogate mother. Alongwith the letter, the Punjab Government's order related to grant of maternity leave to commissioning mother and surrogate mother have been forwarded to officers concerned in UT Administration for compliance.

MLAs want rooms in A Block of Punjab Bhawan

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Taking serious cognizance of the issue raised by some Legislators regarding not providing rooms in the A block of Punjab Bhawan at New Delhi, Punjab Vidhan Sabha Speaker Rana KP Singh has summoned the officials

concerned. The Speaker has issued summons to IAS officer in-charge Alok Shekhar — the principal secretary (general administration), PCS officer Moneesh Kumar — the special secretary (general administration protocol), besides other officials at Punjab Bhawan, Delhi.

PUNJAB CABINET Punjab to create 550 posts for medical colleges at Patiala, Amritsar

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

To further improve and streamline the functioning of State's Government medical colleges, Punjab Cabinet on Tuesday approved the creation of 550 posts in these institutions at Patiala and Amritsar.

The new posts include 66 paramedics of technical nature, 464 critical posts of nurses, technicians and Class IV employees and 20 posts of Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (VDRL)/Multi-disciplinary Research Units (MRU) lab projects, said an official spokesperson after the Cabinet meeting.

The spokesperson said that these posts would be instrumental in putting into use the medical machinery, equipment and infrastructure, lying idle due to paucity of staff, thus providing better healthcare services to the people.

In addition, the Cabinet gave nod for creation and filling up of five new posts in the Directorate of Medical Education and Research, along with revival of the already sanctioned nine posts under its restructuring plan.

Spokesperson said that this initiative would help provide the latest laboratory tests to the general public, and also meet the minimum requisite conditions, in conformity with the guidelines of the Medical Council of India, so as to make these institutions research-oriented.

It may be noted that a high power committee, under the chairmanship of the Advisor (Health and Medical Education) Dr KK Talwar, which was constituted for restructuring and revamping the medical colleges, had recommended the creation or revival of these posts in order to put into use the existing working machinery and equip-



ment or infrastructure, and also to upgrade the facilities available in the Government Medical Colleges at Patiala and Amritsar.

GMC MOHALI TO BE NAMED AS DR B R AMBEDKAR STATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES

As a tribute to legendary statesman and father of the Indian Constitution Dr B R Ambedkar, the Cabinet okayed the renaming of Government Medical College, SAS Nagar Mohali, as Dr B R Ambedkar State Institute of Medical Sciences.

The upcoming medical college would be instrumental in serving the Government's purpose of providing affordable healthcare to the public, as well as giving students the opportunity to pursue a career in medical education, said the spokesperson.

Notably, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare had conveyed its decision to establish a medical college in SAS Nagar district (Mohali) with enabling provisions for 100 MBBS seats under the centrally sponsored scheme of 'Establishment of New Medical College attached with the existing District or Referral Hospitals' having more than 200 beds strength.

₹ 650 CR FOR REJUVENAT-

₹3,184 crore for power sector in Himachal, CM expresses gratitude

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Government of India on Tuesday recommended a financing facility of Rs 3184 crore through World Bank for Himachal Hydro Power and Renewable Power Sector Development Project. The program was accepted by Department of Economic Affairs, (DEA), Ministry of Finance, GoI in 104th meeting of its Screening Committee on Tuesday and recommended to World Bank for financing. This financing would come in the pattern of 90 percent grant and 10 percent loan to Government of Himachal Pradesh. Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur Tuesday expressed his gratitude towards government of India for this.

Additional Chief Secretary MPP & Power Ram Subhag Singh led the team comprising of MD HPPTCL R.K. Sharma, Special Secretary Power Hem Raj Bairwa and other officers from energy sector utilities in presenting the proposal to DEA.

The project aims at holistic development of power sector of the state through investment in all three segments of power sector i.e. Generation, Transmission and Distribution. On generation part a funding of Rs 1600 crore will come to the ongoing Shongtong Karchham HEP 450 MW. Project once commissioned would earn revenue of Rs 500 crore per annum to the state exchequer. This is by far the biggest project taken up by state government without the participation of any Central Public Sector undertaking and was facing financial hardships due to non availability of adequate funds. Distribution system will get a funding of Rs 937 crore and would be used towards automation and strengthening of distribution network in 13 different towns of Himachal namely Solan, Baddi, Nalagarh, Nahana, Poanta Sahib, Mandi, Sundernagar, Bilaspur, Kullu, Manali, Una, Parwanoo and Hamirpur. In total 2.60 lakh consumers will be benefitted.

A capacity building component amounting to Rs 112 crore would flow to all power utilities and Directorate of Energy for establishment of facilities and development of capacities for efficient management of complex power system by all the utilities together.

Educational institutions should commemorate anniversaries of great personalities: Haryana CM

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Tuesday said that anniversaries of great personalities should be commemorated by organising programmes based on their life and teachings in educational and other institutions so that youths could draw inspiration. "This way we can pay them tribute in a real manner," he said at

a programme organised to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Dayanand Saraswati in Panchkula.

He said that Swami Dayanand was a multifaceted personality and had taken initiatives in the fields of religion, education, spirituality and women empowerment. "He had played a vital role in the freedom struggle of the country.

Government of Odisha "e" procurement Notice.
Bid Identification No. - 26 of 2019-2020

7-729

- Name of the work : Road Works - 5 Nos
- Estimate cost : Rs. 57,61,109.00 to Rs. 87,56,883.00
- Period of completion : 01 (One) & 4 (Four) Calendar Months
- Date & time of availability of the Bid documents in the portal : 10.00 AM of 22.02.2020 to 5.00 PM of 07.03.2020
- Last date / Time of receipt of the bid in Portal : 07.03.2020 up to 5.00 PM.
- Date of Opening : 11.03.2020 at 11.00 AM.
- Name and Address of the Office : Office of the Executive Engineer
Dhenkanal (R&B) Division, Dhenkanal.

Further details can be seen from the e - procurement Portal "https://tendersorissa.gov.in"

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Dhenkanal (R&B) Division
OIPR-34016/11/0014/1920

GOVT. OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE NO. PID-07 OF 2019-20
Bid Identification No. PID 186 to PID 198 of 2019-20

1.	Name of the work	:-	River
2.	Total No of package	:-	13 Nos.
3.	Tender Cost	:-	10.00 Lakhs to 14.00 lakhs
4.	Bid security	:-	Rs. 10,000/- to 14,000/- (Online payment mode)
5.	Class of contractor	:-	"C" To "D" Class
6.	Cost of tender paper	:-	Rs. 6,000/- (Online payment mode)
7.	Period of completion	:-	Two calendar months

Procurement officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender for on-line for bidding		Last date and time of seeking tender clarification	Date & time of opening of Tender
		From	To		
Executive Engineer, Puri Irrigation Division, Puri	PID 186 to PID 198 of 2019-20	From 20.02.2020 12.00 Noon	Upto 29.02.2020 5.30 PM	25.02.2020 upto 5.30 PM	02.03.2020 at 11.00 AM (In the Office of the Executive Engineer, Puri Irrigation Division, Puri)

* Note:- If required the transparent lottery will be on 07.03.2020 at 11.30 AM onwards.
Further detail conditions can be seen from the Govt. website <http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in>

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Puri Irrigation Division, Puri
OIPR-32011/11/0009/1920

No more PGDM, MBA courses at one go

Universities will have to choose either one of them, says AICTE

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) — the technical and management education regulator — on Tuesday said the Government or private universities will no longer be able to offer both PGDM and MBA courses simultaneously and will have to choose either of the two.

The AICTE, under the HRD Ministry, said Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) courses can be run by standalone institutions, which are neither universities nor affiliated to any university, similar to the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs).

“Over a period of time, deemed to be universities have

added PGDM course under the banner of ‘Management Programme’ in contravention of norms. According to the AICTE Regulations, 2020, conducting PGDM and MBA courses in the same institution is not permissible,” a senior AICTE official said.

“Central, State and private universities and institutions deemed to be universities, which are running PGDM and MBA courses under the banner of management programme, are requested to convert all courses into MBA completely and comply with the AICTE norms,” he added.

According to the regulations, institutions affiliated to universities have the option of either converting all PGDM courses into corresponding

□ The AICTE, under the HRD Ministry, said Post Graduate Diploma in Management courses can be run by standalone institutions, which are neither universities nor affiliated to any university, similar to the Indian Institutes of Management

□ The new Government rule is aimed at protecting students from misleading claims

□ There are a total of 3,000 institutes offering MBA programmes through universities, or deemed to universities or autonomous institutions and a total of about 350 of them are offering PGDM course with most of them having a combined offer for both the courses simultaneously

MBA courses with respective university affiliation or vice-versa and run those under a separate standalone institute. The new Government rule is aimed at protecting students

total of about 350 of them are offering PGDM course with most of them having a combined offer for both the courses simultaneously.

“Conducting PGDM and MBA courses in the same institution is not permissible... central/state/private universities and institutions deemed to be universities which are running PGDM programme concurrently with MBA under the banner of management programme are requested to convert PGDM courses as MBA completely and comply with the AICTE norms forthwith,” says the AICTE circular following a Council meet last week.

“An institute cannot run both PGDM & MBA programmes simultaneously,” the circular added. As senior

AICTE officials said the move is also aimed at eliminating the confusion caused by institutes running Master’s as well as diploma programmes.

According to AICTE chairman Anil Sahasrabudde, the institutes offering a good MBA would at times also introduce a diploma course in management and that the diploma course was often inferior in quality.

“In that case students would sign up under the impression that an institute offering a good MBA course would excel at PGDM as well. A lot of confusion was caused by institutes running both programmes simultaneously and thus we are now doing a course correction which benefits the Business programmes,” Sahasrabudde added.

EC makes fresh push for electoral reforms with Law Ministry

Issues like linking voter ID with Aadhaar, allowing multiple registration windows to a new voter and ensuring gender neutral rights for ‘service voter’, paid news and false affidavit as electoral offence/corrupt practice; print media and social media intermediaries to be covered under Section 126 of the RP Act 1951 were discussed in the meet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a fresh bid to push the electoral reforms pending with the Centre, the Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday met the Legislative Department of Ministry of Law and Justice officials.

In a meeting with Legislative Secretary G Narayan Raju, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora and Election Commissioners Ashok Lavasa and Sushil Chandra discussed the pending issues, including linking voter ID with Aadhaar, allowing multiple registration windows to a new voter and ensuring gender neutral rights for ‘service voter’, paid news and false affidavit as electoral offence/corrupt practice; print media and social media intermediaries to be covered under Section 126 of the RP Act 1951. As many as over 40 recommendations for electoral reforms are pending with the Centre.

Sources said linking voter ID with Aadhaar to weed out duplications and misrepresentations from the electoral rolls. Aadhaar linkage and voter authentication are also considered critical to the commission’s plans to work towards electronic, internet-based voting and for giving ‘remote’ voting rights to domestic migrant workers



long and Commission is at present discussing some of these proposals. “Commission would like to have such meetings with Legislative Department at regular intervals to pursue all such pending proposals” he said. According to EC, the Legislative Secretary assured that the ministry is already examining these proposals.

According to EC, another pending issue is to amend Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951. In discussions held until December 2019, the EC had assured that privacy and data safety-related concerns will be addressed. It is now waiting for the government to move the amendment to the Cabinet for approval.

One of these is a proposed amendment to Section 14(b) of the RPA, 1951, which looks at registration for first-time voters as they turn 18 years of age. Currently, only those who turn 18 by January 1 of that year are registered as voters.

EC had recommended, way back in 2013, that to ensure that no 18-year-old is denied voting rights, registration should be permitted any day of the year. The law ministry had then suggested only two dates: January 1 and July 1. The poll panel is expected to seek multiple registration dates now.

Another recommendation involves amendments to Section 20(6) of the Act to allow the husband of a female officer to be registered as a service voter where she holds office. The EC has also asked the Government to make bribery during poll period a cognisable offence.

Cong slams Govt for hiding data

□ Congress charged the BJP Govt as it is concealing data pertaining to GDP numbers, inflation, unemployment and “now lowest ever consumption”

□ Govt has ‘launched a war’ against all sections of society, including women, students and farmers, claims Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Accusing the BJP Government in Gujarat of trying to “hide poverty” by constructing a wall in Ahmedabad ahead of US President Donald Trump’s visit there later this month, the Congress on Tuesday charged the Government with hiding data, including that of “lowest” consumption levels in 40 years, and asked it to make it public in order to find solutions to problems plaguing the economy.

Congress spokesperson Gourav Vallabh said playing ‘hide and seek’ has become the favourite game of the BJP Government as it is concealing data pertaining to GDP numbers, inflation, unemployment and “now lowest ever consumption”.

“Favourite game of the BJP Government is hide and seek. Hide farmer suicide statistics. Hide unemployment figures. Hide the truth of demonetisation. Hide real GDP figures. Hide poverty behind the ‘wall’. And now hide the lowest consumption in 40 years,” he said, adding the Government has “launched a war” against all sections of society, including women, students and farmers.

Vallabh alleged that 16 out of 23 sectors in manufacturing are in poor condition, but the Government continues to be in a denial mode. “We ask the Government that data should not be hidden, but made public so it can be discussed as India is capable of battling all odds,” he said.

“Those talking about the Gujarat



model are now building walls to hide the poverty there. If a disease is to be treated, you have to accept that it is there in the first place. But BJP does not accept its failures,” he said while taking a dig at the BJP Government over reports of construction of a wall in Ahmedabad to allegedly hide a slum in Ahmedabad.

The Congress leader said the country has had the lowest growth in last nine years and this will definitely reduce savings as well, because inflation is 7.95 per cent. “BJP’s favourite rating agency Moody’s has projected India’s growth estimate for 2020 to be 5.4 per cent, against the Government’s claim of showing 6 to 6.5 per cent growth in the year,” he said.

Vallabh said poverty increases when consumption is low and claimed that UNDP data for 2005-2015 shows that during this period the highest eradication of poverty (271 million people) has taken place in the country and the credit for this goes to MNREGA.

AICC chief spokesman Randeep Surjewala said country live in times where GDP is measured in tons, Citizen rights in volts, Nationalism in decibels, Poverty in height and length of the wall. “This is BJP’s ‘New India!’,” Surjewala said on Twitter.

100 people quarantined in ITBP facility discharged

CORONAVIRUS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Another batch of about 100 people, who were among the over 400 quarantined at an Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) facility in Delhi after being evacuated earlier this month from coronavirus-hit Wuhan, were discharged on Tuesday.

This comes a day after a batch of about 200 people were discharged from the ITBP facility, which housed a total of 406 people, including seven Maldivians.

So far, 302 people out of total 406, have left the ITBP centre after being declared free of novel coronavirus by the doctors.

The rest of the inmates will be released by Wednesday morning, ITBP spokesperson Vivek Kumar Pandey said. All those who were discharged have been provided with conveyance till airport, railway stations, or bus stands.

Among those who will leave the facility on Wednesday include a few families. All released persons were advised to remain self isolated for the next 14 days at their respective places, Pandey said.

They were also advised the dos and don’ts during the period. A team of doctors and other staff are taking care of the smooth departure of the remaining people with



People stand in a queue to collect release certificates before leaving from the ITBP quarantine facility, at Chihawia, in New Delhi, on Tuesday

due procedures and protocols.

A total of 650 people were brought back from Wuhan in China on February 1 and 2 in two 747 Boeing Air India aircraft after the outbreak of the novel coronavirus in China. While 406 of these were sent to the ITBP facility, the rest were quarantined at an Army centre in Haryana’s Manesar.

Meanwhile, Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong on Tuesday asserted that China has put in place multi-level control and prevention mechanisms and will win the battle against coronavirus.

He added that the outbreak has not been able to impact the strong fundamentals of China’s economy.

The envoy said China has allocated RMB 80 billion to contain the disease and the

SC comes to rescue of Indian bustard, lesser florican

Top Court asks Rajasthan Govt to consider laying underground cables to save endangered species

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Coming to the rescue of endangered birds — the great Indian bustard and the lesser florican, which are dying in large numbers due to collisions with high-voltage power lines, the Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Rajasthan Government to consider laying underground cables.

The top court said they are large birds and it is difficult for them to maneuver due to the high-tension power lines which obstruct their flight paths.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) shared the concern of the court and said there is no other option but to lay power cables underground to protect the great Indian bustard (GIB) and lesser florican (LF).

A Bench of Chief Justice SA Bobde and Justices BR Gavai and Surya Kant asked senior advocate Manish Singhvi, appearing for the Rajasthan Government, to take instructions from the competent authority for laying of cables underground.

“It appears that one of the dangers is the presence of power lines, which obstruct the flight path of the GIB. It is well known that the GIB is a larger bird and it is difficult for it to maneuver easily in its flight. One of the solutions suggested to avoid any collision in its flight path is that the over-head wires be laid down underground.”

It asked Singhvi to take

instructions within two weeks and apprise the court about the manner in which the power lines could be laid down underground.

At the outset, the top court said the State Government can look into modifying the contract of private companies for laying down the cables underground.

“This is a larger bird which fly in a particular direction. To avoid power lines coming in the direction of flight path of the bird, it would be appropriate if they are laid down underground. Necessary changes can be made in the contract with the private companies for laying down underground cables,” the bench said.

With regard to LF, the top court said it is not disputed that the bird is also endangered and disturbed largely by the power generation plants.

The top court said if the Rajasthan Government faces any problem, then the court can pass necessary directions.

Additional Solicitor General ANS Nadkarni, appearing for MoEF said a team of the ministry and other wildlife experts have visited Jaisalmer in Rajasthan and it is evident from their findings that underground cable is the only solution.

Advocates Sugandha Yadav, Shatadru Chakraborty and Sonia Dube, appearing for Petitioner MK Ranjitsinh — a retired IAS officer, said that they have prepared terms of reference for the top court appointed panel, which could be looked into for conservation for GIB and LF.

BJP observers to select House leaders in Delhi, Jharkhand Assemblies

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi: The BJP has appointed its national general secretary Saroj Pandey and P Muralidhar Rao as observers for selecting the leaders of its legislative party in the Delhi and Jharkhand Assemblies. The appointments were made with the approval of the party president JP Nadda, an official statement said.

The AAP bagged 62 of the 70 Assembly seats in the just concluded polls in Delhi. In Jharkhand’s 81 seats, JMM who is leading the coalition government in the State won 30 seats, Congress-led-UPA 25 and BJP collected 25 in December 2019 poll. Raghubar Das, the ousted BJP CM who was the first non-tribal to head the State, also lost his Assembly seats. Elections are due in Bihar and West Bengal in about year’s time.

Mahadeshwara sanctuary to be tiger reserve

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Once the hideout of notorious wildlife smuggler Veerappan and seen as an important tiger corridor, the Male Mahadeshwara (MM) Hills Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka’s Chamaraanjagara district is all set to become the official home of the royal big cats. The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has given in-principle nod for upgrading the sanctuary to the tiger reserve.

The State Government has already given approval for its upgradation and now it will have to notify the area to make the region inviolate for the endangered big cats.

As the adjoining tiger habitats — Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple (BRT) in Karnataka and Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (STR) in Tamil Nadu

has been acting as an effective source sink landscape, increasing the density of big cats and their prey in MM Hills, which itself has a resident tigers, the NTCA approval plugs the patch and forms a contiguous landscape of 3,000 sq km of wildlife habitat.

In addition to connecting BRT, through the Edyallal-Doddasampige elephant corridor, MM Hills also spread over 906 sq km area connects the Bannerghatta National Park.

This is one of the largest landscapes in the country for the conservation of tigers, elephants and other large and wide-ranging mammalian species. The move will go a long way in ensuring protection to the endangered species.



MM Hills will be the sixth tiger reserve in the state and the 51st in the country.

“Based on the confluence of the Eastern and Western ghats, the sanctuary is contiguous with both BRT Tiger Reserve on the western side and Satyamangalam Reserve in Tamil

Nagarhole, it is extremely diverse. Biologically, it is an important repository for the future, what with the herbivorous population increasing. There is scope for the expansion of tiger population, added forest officials. Besides being home to tigers, leopards, sloth bears and elephants, the sanctuary also has dholes, antelopes, grizzled giant squirrels and honey badgers.

As per the recent tiger census, Karnataka has 524 big cats. Declaring the MM Hills as tiger reserve will ensure young big cats to have their new territory.

However, the Government has tough task ahead given that there are about 49 forest villages and 94 revenue villages on the peripheries of the sanctuary which will have to be relocated by the officials to make the area inviolate for the big cats.

Severe summer in store this yr: IMD

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Get ready for a severe summer this year, indication of which is already being seen in Mumbai which on Tuesday recorded 39 degree Celsius temperature, the third highest in February since 1966.

In February 1966, Mumbai recorded 39.6 degree C and in 2012 it was 39.1 degree Celsius. In 2017 and 2015, the highest temperature was 38.8 degree Celsius in the commercial capital of India.

As the temperature started increasing in coastal areas across the country, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday issued an advisory on heatwave, suggesting dos and don’ts.

Heatwave is considered when maximum temperature of a station is 40 degree Celsius or more for plains and 30 degree

Celsius or less for Hilly regions.

According to IMD, maximum temperature in Mumbai is expected around 38 or 39 degree Celsius in the next two days.

Besides, Palakkad topped the temperature charts in Kerala with a maximum of 37.1 degrees Celsius in February. Kerala, once known for its moderate and comfortable climate where people never had to bother about the extreme weather conditions occurring in other parts of the country, is now bearing the brunt of climate change.

This temperature rise is in line with a trend emerging over the last few years when the south-western-most State, and the gateway of the monsoon, heats up well before others and even setting up heatwaves. February has already seen maximum temperatures going well past the 30 degrees Celsius mark

● Mumbai recorded 39 degree Celsius temperature, the third highest in February since 1966

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● According to IMD, maximum temperature in Mumbai is expected around 38 or 39 degree Celsius in the next two days

at many places in coastal areas.

According to Dr Kuldeep Srivastava, scientist of IMD, a fresh Western Disturbance expected in the hills around February 19 due to which there

may be clouding in Delhi for the next three days. Due to this, temperature in Hilly areas and plain are expected to lower for two-three days. This will also lead to rainfalls in isolated places in Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Eastern UP, Eastern Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab is expected to get rainfalls from February 20-22. The wind is also going to change during this period from cool northwesterly to warm southwesterly. At times one does feel the heat as the day temperature during this period tends to rise by 2-4 degrees Celsius due to warm southwesterly winds taking over cool Northwesterly winds. It usually happens when a Cyclonic Circulation forms in the hot and dry Rajasthan region,” Srivastava added.

As per the advisory issued

by the IMD, heat wave occurs mostly over an interior plain area when dry and warmer air is transported in a region with clear skies and hence maximum isolation during the summer season.

“Heatwave impacts rural and urban areas, natural habitats like forests, water resources, poultry and a range of sectors like agriculture, health, power etc. Though there is no universally acceptable or uniform definition for a heatwave, they are understood to be periods of abnormally high temperatures, more than the normal maximum temperature that occurs during the pre-monsoon (April to June) summer season. In India heatwaves typically occur between March to June, and in some rare cases even extend till July. Heatwaves are more frequent over the Indo-Gangetic plains of India,” the IMD said.

INSHORT

FADNAVIS REQUESTS SC TO RECONSIDER HIS TRIAL

New Delhi: Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday requested the Supreme Court to reconsider its verdict asking him to face trial for allegedly failing to furnish details of two pending criminal cases against him in his 2014 poll affidavit saying it will have “far reaching consequences” for candidates. The SC reserved its verdict.

AMIT SHAH WILL VISIT ARUNACHAL TOMORROW

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah will visit Arunachal Pradesh on Thursday to attend the 34th Statehood Day function and launch a number of projects related to industry and roads. He will also lay the foundation stone of the new headquarters of the Arunachal Pradesh police.



Budget historic, to help make UP \$1 trillion economy: Yogi

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath here on Tuesday termed the Uttar Pradesh Budget for 2020-21 "historic" and said it will play a big role in making the State a trillion dollar economy.



The Chief Minister said though it focused on the overall development of the State, special attention has been paid to the growth of the youth and boost employment.

"The Budget will play a major role in achieving the goal of one trillion dollar economy for the State and meet the target of making India a dollar five trillion economy," the CM said, adding that it was a "historic" Budget.

"The Budget is focused on the development of the youth. Though a number of programmes are already in place for them, the Government has started a scheme for every educated unemployed individual. A provision has been made to boost employment in every district," he added.

The BJP Government on Tuesday presented a ₹ 5,12,860.72 crore Budget,

which was its fourth under the leadership of Adityanath.

"Our first budget was based on farmers, the second was on industrial development and the third for women empowerment. Today's fourth budget is for the development of youth," the Chief Minister said.

The CM also claimed that provisions have been made to improve education in Uttar Pradesh.

This budget focused on higher education as the State government is setting up new universities in Saharanpur, Azamgarh and Aligarh, he said.

Setting up of Atal Medical University in Lucknow has also been included in the bud-

get, he said, adding that the government has proposed national law and ayush universities.

An apprenticeship scheme for every educated unemployed youth who wants to become self-reliant has also been started, the CM said, adding that every youth will be connected to an enterprise and till the completion of the apprenticeship, the government will provide a cash support of Rs 2,500 per month.

By next year, the government will be able to carry forward the work of establishing a medical college in all 75 districts of the state, the CM said.

"These colleges will be built either by the government

or on PPP mode," he said, stressing that from 1947 to 2016, only 12 medical colleges were in set up in the state.

The chief minister also exuded confidence that investors from all over the world wanted to invest in Uttar Pradesh.

The state had received investment proposals worth Rs 50,000 crore in the Defence Expo-2020, he said.

About road projects, Adityanath said the Purvanchal Expressway would be opened to the public by the year-end.

In addition, the foundation stone of the Bundelkhand Expressway will be laid this month, he said, adding that funds had been allocated for the Ganga Expressway and efforts would be made to lay its foundation by year-end.

Speaking on the farming sector, Adityanath said insurance has been provided for sharecroppers and an arrangement has been made for modernisation.

A provision had been made to get rid of potable water problems in Bundelkhand and Vindhya regions, he said.

Akhilesh dares BJP to take back his security cover

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party supremo Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday said he does not need any security cover and dared the BJP to take it back.

He said this when asked about the security risk to him as the leader had claimed that he had received a threat call from a ruling party leader.

He made the allegations recently after a youth disrupted a meeting addressed by him, shouting a religious slogan.

"I don't need security. I want to live free. This is not a matter of security, I want to ask how can a local intelligence inspector come to my press conference. How can someone come in a pro-

gramme in the party office," Akhilesh said. "Why my NSG was removed? They (BJP) have taken back my house and vehicle. They are free to take back my security also. I love to cycle alone. Now the time is coming when cycle is going to run fast," he said.

'Cycle' is the party symbol of the Samajwadi Party.

Leader of the Opposition Ram Govind Chaudhary of Samajwadi Party had raised the issue of security threat to Akhilesh in State Assembly on Monday. Yadav had recently claimed that he had received a threat call and a message from a BJP leader after a youth shouted 'Jai Shri Ram' at one of the gatherings he was addressing.

Total debt likely to 28.8 per cent of SGDP in 2020-21

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The debt burden on the State Government is mounting and the total debt on it from different sources is likely to be over ₹5.16 lakh crore by the end of next fiscal 2020-21.

The budget size of 2020-21 at ₹5.12 lakh crore is a little less than the debt burden. The total debt of the state, however, came down from 29.6 per cent of State Gross Domestic Product (SGDP) in 2017-18 and is estimated to be 28.8 per cent in 2020-21.

With a debt burden of over ₹5.16 lakh crore, every resident of UP has a debt of ₹22,442 on their head.

"The debt per person in the state during the 2019-20 fiscal is estimated to be ₹20,702 as the total debt burden would be little over ₹ 4.76

lakh crores," Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna said while tabling the budget for 2020-21 in the Assembly on Tuesday.

The total debt burden does not include borrowings from banks and financial institutions by PSUs like UP Power Corporation, UP Housing and Development Board and Urban Development authorities. The State Government is the guarantor against the borrowings by the PSUs.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, in his post-budget press, said that the Government has strictly adhered to financial discipline and norms under FRBM (Financial Responsibility and Budget Management Act) and kept fiscal deficit under 3 per cent of SGDP.

Madras HC restrains Muslim body from organising Assembly siege

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The Madras High Court on Tuesday restrained a body of Muslim outfits from going ahead with its proposed agitation to lay siege to the Tamil Nadu Assembly pressing their demand for a House resolution against CAA, NRC and NPR.

A bench of justices M Sathyanaraya and R Hemalatha granted the interim injunction till March 11, restraining the Federation of Tamil Nadu Islamic and Political Organisations and its allied associations from holding the agitation, proposed for Wednesday.

Passing the interim order on a PIL which sought to forebar the police from granting permission to the agitation, the

bench posted the matter to March 12 for further hearing.

The court made it clear that it was not expressing any opinion on the Citizenship Amendment Act, or the National Register of Citizens or the National Population Register.

The siege protest has been called to bring pressure on the AIADMK Govt to adopt a resolution in the assembly opposing the CAA as had been done by several non-BJP ruled states.

An attempt by opposition DMK to move an anti-CAA resolution in the assembly during the session has failed with Speaker P Dhanapal disallowing a notice for it, saying the matter was sub-judice, apparent reference to petitions challenging the amended act in the

Supreme Court.

The first phase of the budget session of the state assembly is on till February 20. Earlier, state Additional Advocate General SR Rajagopal told the court that any application seeking police permission for protest should be made five days prior, but in this case, the federation had moved the police only on Monday for the agitation proposed on Wednesday.

He also submitted that prohibitory orders under Section 41 of the Madras City Police Act have been imposed banning any kind of agitation or demonstration in the city for a period of 15 days commencing from February 13.

Petitioner Varaki, a journalist, contended if the assembly siege was allowed and a large number of protesters permitted to gather near the Secretariat, there would be complete collapse of the normal functioning of the state government.

A Bench of justices M Sathyanaraya and R Hemalatha granted the interim injunction till March 11

PTI ■ CHENNAI

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Mizoram Govt yet to notify new prohibition rules: Minister

PTI ■ AIZAWL

The Mizoram Government is yet to notify the new prohibition rules, Excise and Narcotics Minister Dr K Beichhua told the State Assembly on Tuesday.

In reply to a question from Congress member KT Rokhwa, Beichhua said the Govt has cancelled the notification issued in connection with the new liquor law on Dec 19 last year. He said that there is no prohibition rules in the state as of now. According to the Min, the Government has closed all liquor shops, bonded warehouses and brewery after "The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition) Act, 2019" came into force in the state.

Death of six kids of couple in 9 years triggers police probe

PTI ■ MALAPPURAM (KERALA)

The death of six children of a couple in a span of nine years has raised suspicion among police personnel here who have registered a case following a complaint after a three-month-old child of the family died on Tuesday and was buried. Police exhumed the body, which was buried in the morning, and took it to the district hospital at Tirur for post-mortem. The infant was the sixth child of the couple, police said.

"A case has been registered (for unnatural death) in the matter to verify the death beyond any suspicion raised by locals since five other children of the couple had died in the past nine years," a senior police

According to the locals, couple had claimed that the children have died due to epilepsy

official said.

The couple had three boys and three girls of which the third girl child lived till the age of four and the rest died before turning one.

"The post-mortem will take place today itself. We are collecting the medical records of the children who had passed away earlier.

We will identify the cause of death after analysing the records and discuss the matter with forensic doctors," Tirur

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) said.

However, relatives claimed that there was nothing suspicious in the death of the children and that doctors have said it was due to some genetic disease.

"The post-mortem of the third child was conducted and the doctors said the death was due to some genetic problems. They said they were helpless," a relative said, adding that the family was ready to face any probe.

According to the locals, the couple had claimed that the children have died due to epilepsy.

Sources said the baby was taken to a hospital but was dead prior to reaching the hospital early this morning.

GRSE delivers 4th anti-submarine warfare corvette to Navy

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Defence PSU Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE) on Tuesday delivered its fourth anti-submarine warfare stealth corvette to the Indian Navy, an official said.

Kavaratti was the last in the series of four anti-Submarine Warfare Corvettes (ASWC) built by Kolkata-based GRSE under Project 28, he said.

The first three ships of the series - INS Kamorta, INS Kadmat and INS Kiltan - were delivered earlier, and form an integral part of Eastern Fleet of the Indian Navy, the GRSE official said.

They have been engaged in several overseas operations and international maritime exhibitions in Malaysia, Singapore and other countries, the official said.

Project 28, approved in 2003, is a class of anti-submarine warfare corvettes currently in service with the Indian Navy. The corvettes are named after islands in the Lakshadweep archipelago.

INS Kiltan recently participated in the prestigious Exercise Malabar 2019, an endeavour to strengthen India-Japan-US naval cooperation and enhance interoperability, the official said.

With 90 per cent indigenous content, the P-28 class ships are equipped to fight in nuclear, biological and chemical warfare conditions and featured the integration of a host of weapons and sensors.

These ASW corvettes have catapulted the Indian Navy into the elite club of countries that have built stealth ships, the GRSE official said, adding that the stealth features make the

ships almost invisible to the enemy, both above and below the sea surface.

The corvettes - designed as an extremely versatile ASW platform capable of neutralising enemy submarines with indigenous weapons like torpedoes and rocket launchers - are equally effective in the littorals and deep oceans, the official said.

Capable of attaining a maximum speed of 25 knots, the ship has a length of 109 metres and width of 12.8 metres, he said, adding that it has an endurance of over 3400 nautical miles (NM) at 18-knot speed, and can accommodate 17 officers and 106 sailors.

Kavaratti and INS Kiltan are the first two major warships in the country to have the unique feature of superstructure made of carbon fibre composite material.

Mizoram tops in HIV/AIDS cases

GOVT TAKING STEPS TO TACKLE MENACE: MIN

PTI ■ AIZAWL

Mizoram has earned the dubious distinction of being the state with highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the country, but the Government was making all efforts to tackle the menace, health minister R Lalthangliana told the Assembly on Tuesday.

A total of 21,538 cases have been registered in the State since October 1990, when the first patient was identified, he stated.

Lalthangliana, while replying to starred questions by MNF leader Vanlaltanpuia and Independent MLA Lalduhoma, also said that HIV

prevalence was highest among youth in the age group of 25-34 years, accounting for 42.38 per cent of the total number of cases.

Expressing concern over the matter, the Minister insisted that the Government had been taking all measures to combat the disease.

Lalthangliana also said that he recently met leaders of NGOs, students' bodies and churches and sought their help to control the spread of the disease, while efforts were also being made to seek technical assistance from UNAIDS.

According to Dr Lalthangliana, the project director of Mizoram State AIDS Control Society (MSACS), at least 2,416 people have died of the disease between January 2006 and September 2019.

Maha: Ex-MLA, others booked for ₹512 crore bank irregularity

PTI ■ THANE

A case was registered against 76 Persons, including a former MLA, for alleged irregularities to the tune of ₹512.54 crore in the Karnala Nagari Sahakari Bank headquartered in Panvel in neighbouring Raigad district, Navi Mumbai police said on Tuesday.

Former PWP MLA from Panvel Vivekanand Shankar Patil is the chairman of the cooperative bank and he has been named as an accused along with the vice-chairman, chief executive officer and several others who had obtained loans from the institution, an official said. A press release from Navi Mumbai police said a case was registered for criminal breach of trust.

'Which side are you, on Godse or Gandhi?' Kishor asks Nitish

PTI ■ PATNA

Poll strategist-turned-politician Prashant Kishor on Tuesday mocked Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for aligning with the BJP in his quest for power, and said the JD(U) leader cannot be wedded to Gandhian ideals and stand with those who support Godse at the same time.

Addressing a crowded press conference here, the first since his expulsion from the JD(U), which Kumar heads, Kishor asserted that the Chief Minister has been a "father figure" to him even before he formally joined the party and so he wished to speak no ill of him.

Kishor, however, acknowledged that he had differences with Kumar over the contra-

dition in his avowed commitment to the principles of Gandhi and his tie-up with the BJP, the party the poll strategist sought to identify with the Mahatma's assassin Nathuram Godse.

"Nitish ji has always said that he cannot leave the ideals of Gandhi, JP and Lohia... At the same time, how can he be with the people who support the ideology of Godse? Both cannot go together. If you want to stay with the BJP, I don't have any problem with it but you cannot be on both sides," Kishore said.

There have been differences between him and me that the ideologies of Godse and Gandhi cannot stand together. As the leader of the party you have to say which side you are on," he added.

Industrialist VL Dutt is dead

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Dr VL Dutt, leading industrialist and executive chairman of KCP Ltd, the Chennai headquartered conglomerate with major interests in heavy engineering, cement, sugar and heavy machinery, passed away on Tuesday.

Dr Dutt was the president of the Federation of Indian

Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) during 1991-92 and was a widely respected industrialist.

"We condole the untimely passing away of Dr VL Dutt. FICCI will always remember his contribution to the industry and the country, especially as the President of the chamber at a time when the economy was passing through a critical phase.

Survived by his wife and daughter Pal was Trinamool MP from Krishnagar for two successive terms from 2009 to 2019. Before this he was Member of Bengal Legislative Assembly for two terms.

Notwithstanding his cinematic exploits that has given the Bengali movie world some memorable films like Saheb, G u r u d a k s h i n a , Anurag, Anurager Chohan, Pal got embroiled in controversies in the closing years of his

Bangla star, ex-TMC MP Tapas Pal dead

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengali superstar and former Trinamool Congress MP Tapas Pal passed away in the small hours of Tuesday, family sources said adding he was 61 and suffering from nerve and heart ailments for which he had admitted to a Mumbai hospital.

Survived by his wife and daughter Pal was Trinamool MP from Krishnagar for two successive terms from 2009 to 2019. Before this he was Member of Bengal Legislative Assembly for two terms.

Notwithstanding his cinematic exploits that has given the Bengali movie world some memorable films like Saheb, G u r u d a k s h i n a , Anurag, Anurager Chohan, Pal got embroiled in controversies in the closing years of his



political career and was arrested by the CBI for his alleged involvement in the multi-crore Rose Valley chit fund case.

Both Pal and Bollywood actress Madhuri Dixit acted in one of their initial films Abodh. In fact Dixit acted with senior Tollywood actors like Soumitra Chatterjee and Madhabi Mukherjee deeply condoled his untimely death.

During his incarceration he had to be hospitalised in Bhubaneswar where after he was released on bail. Subsequently he was afflicted by nerve disease.

In an emotionally laden message Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wrote in twitter that she was in a state of shock and that Pal would be badly missed.

"Saddened and shocked to hear about the demise of Tapas Pal. He was superstar of Bengali cinema who was a member of the Trinamool family. Tapas served the people as a two-term MP and MLA. We will miss him dearly. My condolences to his wife Nandini, daughter Sohini and his many fans," the Chief Minister wrote even as a mild war of words between the BJP and the TMC around his death.

Mani, former chief editor of Kerala Kaumudi is no more

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

MS Mani, former editor-in-chief of Kerala Kaumudi, a popular Malayalam daily published from Kerala and founder editor of Kala Kaumudi, the first Malayalam newspaper to be published outside Kerala, breathed his last early Tuesday morning at his residence in Thiruvananthapuram. He was 79 and is survived by wife Dr Kasturi, daughter Valsa Mani and son Mani Sukumaran.

Born as the eldest son of M Sukumaran, the founder editor of Kerala Kaumudi, Mani started his journalistic career at the young age of 20 as a parliament reporter and rose to new heights in journalism through sheer hard work. Mani is credited as the first investigative journalist in Kerala who

brought to light the massive deforestation happening in the Western Ghats under political patronage.

Mani's reports angered the then home minister of Kerala, K Karunakaran who initiated a series of legal actions against him and Kerala Kaumudi. True to the prophecy made by Mani and Kerala Kaumudi, the deforestation and chopping of trees from reserve forests in the State brought down the forest cover of the State from 35 per cent to 13 per cent.

A Left fel-

low traveller, Mani was in the forefront against the appeasement politics pursued by both the Cong and the Communists in Kerala. The editorials that appeared in Kaumudi during his tenure as editor-in-chief are still rated as the benchmarks of quality journalism.

NOTICE FOR CANCELLATION OF TENDER
 No. SSA/MIS/Support-materials/OD/336/2006/842 Date: 18.02.2020
 The tender invited vide No. SSA/MIS/Support-materials/OD/336/2006/488 dated 03.02.2020 for supply and installation of Laptop, Desktop Computer, UPS, Scanner and Printer is hereby cancelled due to administrative reasons.

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

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, RUDRAPRAYAG
TENDER NOTICE
 For and on behalf of the District Administration, Rudraprayag, Uttarakhand sealed tenders on the prescribed format affixed with Revenue Stamps worth Rs. 10/- are invited from reputed professional firms/companies dealing in Disposal of Mule Excreta for-
"Collection, Segregation and Composting of Mule Excreta
ALONG SHRI KEDARNATH CHARDHAM YATRA ROUTE"
 Further details can be downloaded from our website <https://rudraprayag.gov.in/>. The duly sealed offer/tender addressed to the, District Magistrate, Rudraprayag must reach this office before at Rudraprayag on or before **11 March 2020** on to 12 noon.
 No.-1793 Dated:-18.02.2020 District Magistrate Rudraprayag

Shettar's meeting with upset BJP MLAs sparks speculation

PTI ■ BENGALURU

As his meeting with senior legislators, reportedly upset over not being inducted into the Cabinet, sparked speculation, Minister Jagdish Shettar on Tuesday termed reports about "revolt" as "far from truth".

The meeting late last evening at Shettar's residence by legislators mostly from north Karnataka in the midst of the ongoing Assembly session had raised eyebrows within the ruling BJP circles.

Shettar said a few legislators had met him regarding their constituency-related work.

"I'm a Minister, daily several legislators come and go, it is a routine process, so yesterday four to five legislators had come for their work. I spoke to them, after which they left," Shettar, a former Chief Minister and now holding Industries portfolio, said.

Speaking to reporters here,

Few legislators had met him regarding their constituency-related work - Shettar

he said, any "such meeting as being reported" is "far from truth."

"There was no such meeting, legislators had come for their work, there is no need to have any misunderstanding about it," he said, adding that he was not answerable to media reports and owes no explanation.

According to some media reports, eight-time BJP MLA Umesh Katti (Hukkeri), who had openly expressed his displeasure over not being inducted into the ministry, and Shankar Patil Munenakoppa (Navalagund) were among those who had met at Shettar's

residence.

They reportedly discussed about "most loyal senior party legislators not getting minister post", and the Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa's son Vijayendra's alleged "high-handedness" in the government.

Shettar is also said to have met Chief Minister Yediyurappa this morning and explained to him about the meeting.

Ahead of the Assembly session, Yediyurappa was seen speaking to Shettar, Katti and others in the House on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, an unsigned and anonymous letter, calling for a change in leadership citing Yediyurappa's age and health as the reason, is widely in circulation in the social media. It calls for Yediyurappa's retirement from electoral politics and suggests that he turn "margdarshak" for the party. Yediyurappa will turn 77 on February 27.

Cong stages walkout, accuses Govt of turning Karnataka into a police State

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Accusing the ruling BJP of turning Karnataka into a 'police State' by filing false cases against political opponents and those opposing its "divisive politics", the Opposition Congress on Tuesday walked out of the Assembly as the Speaker did not accept their demand for an immediate discussion on the issue.

Making a preliminary submission to the Chair to allow his adjournment motion on the "collapse" of law and order in the state, Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Siddaramaiah charged the Government with having a "demon instinct" in suppressing

opponents.

After hearing his preliminary submission, Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri ruled that a discussion will be held on the topic at 3 PM on Wednesday, but under a different rule.

However, Congress legislators insisted that the discussion be allowed immediately as otherwise it would dilute the issue. As the Chair did not concede their demand, they staged a walk out, threatening to boycott proceedings.

During his preliminary submission, Siddaramaiah alleged that the law and order in the state had completely collapsed as the government has failed to manage it.

Siddaramaiah pointed out that the Governor's address to the joint sitting of the state legislature on Monday did not mention the state-wide anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protests and the one in which two people died in Mangaluru in December. By discussing the issue, "it is our duty to instill confidence among the affected people as we have come here with their mandate, representing them", he said.

Stating that anti CAA and NRC protests have been taking place across the country, Siddaramaiah said opposing and expressing opinion against government policies and laws is the "essence of democracy".

BJP, Cong spar over 'tukde, tukde gang', 'Bharat Mata'

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Karnataka Assembly saw the ruling BJP and the Opposition Congress sparring over 'tukde tukde gang' and 'Bharat Mata'.

While hitting out at ruling party legislators, Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Siddaramaiah said that "Bharat Mata is not the property of BJP" Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai, slamming the Congress, called them the "owners" of the "tukde tukde gang", Siddaramaiah, while making a preliminary submission seeking to move an adjournment motion on the law and order situation in the state, attacked ruling BJP both

in the state and Centre for an "undeclared emergency" in the country. He also accused the BJP of undermining the Constitution and democracy, to which Minister KS Eshwarappa referred to the Emergency declared by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and reminded the former Chief Minister that he had opposed it while in the Janata Dal. "We (BJP/RSS workers then) were put behind bars for hailing Bharat Mata and calling ourselves as her sons", Eshwarappa said.

Reacting to this Siddaramaiah said, "Bharat Mata is not your property. You have not taken on lease. All 135 crore Indians are her children."

No let-up in Elgaar rift, Cong vents out anti-CAA, NPR, NRC stand

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

With no let-up in the ongoing tug of war between the ruling Shiv Sena and its allies over Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's decision to let NIA investigate the Bhima Koregaon-Elgaar Parishad case, the Congress on Tuesday opened a new front by coming out openly against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), National Register of Citizens (NRC) and National Population Register (NPR).

On a day when Uddhav Thackeray of the Shiv Sena came out in support of the CAA, extended conditional support to the NPR and voiced his opposition to the NRC, Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) president and party minister in the MVA Cabinet Bal Saheb Thorat formally opposed CAA, NRC and NPR. "The Congress party's stand regarding #CAA #NRC

#NPR is very clear and we are opposed to it. The Congress party is opposed to anything that causes discrimination in the society. We will convince our alliance partners on the same," he tweeted.

For the first time, Uddhav spelt out the Shiv Sena's stand on CAA, NRC and NPR. "CAA and NRC are two different subjects. NPR is a third subject. There is nothing to worry about in CAA. NRC has not come and it will not be implemented. If it (NRC) is implemented, it will not affect just Muslims, but it will also affect Hindus, Adivasis and other deprived sections of the society," Uddhav tweeted.

In another tweet on NPR, Uddhav said: "NPR is more of a census. But, still I will have a look at the questions in the data collection form. But, I do not see impediment in NPR. Because, the census takes place once in ten years".

The NCP has also serious

reservations about NPR. After a meeting of NCP ministers convened by party chief Sharad Pawar, the party spokesperson and minister Nawab Malik had said on Monday: "Before devising the strategy on NPR, we - MVA partners - will jointly study the questions in the NPR and views of the non-BJP governments. Because some irrelevant and un-called for information is being sought by the Centre as part of the data collection. The NCP is opposed to the date of birth and place of birth of parents and grandparents," Malik said.

Both the NCP and Congress have urged the chief minister to convene a meeting of the leaders of the parties to devise a common strategy on NPR, CAA and NRC.

In a related development, the chief minister's decision to let the NIA to investigate the Elgaar Parishad case continued to be a bone of the contention between the ruling Shiv Sena

MVA GOVT BLUES

and its allies in the MVA government.

Uddhav, who has come in for a flak from both the NCP and Congress for his ad hoc decision to let the NIA to investigate Bhima Koregaon-Elgaar Parishad case, sought to clarify his position. "Elgaar Parishad conspiracy and Bhima-Koregaon violence are two different cases. As far as the Bhima-Koregaon case is concerned, it concerns Dalits. I have not given this case to the NIA. I would like to clarify that I will not let injustice to happen to the Dalits".

However, there was some ambiguity in the NCP's stand on Bhima Koregaon-Elgaar Parishad case. On one hand, like Uddhav, Pawar also said that Elgaar Parishad and Bhima-Koregaon were two different cases. "The CM has powers to hand over the case to the NIA. There was no alternative but to hand over the case to the NIA," Pawar said.

Pawar dares Modi Govt to hold mid-term LS polls

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

As the BJP predicted the collapse of the MVA Government and consequent mid-term polls in the State, NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Tuesday turned the table on the principal Opposition party in the State by saying that it was for the latter, which rules the country, to hold mid-term polls in the country.

Reacting to a BJP leader's comment that the MVA Government would soon collapse and there would be mid-term polls in the state, NCP chief said: "The mid-term polls are normally held in the country. It is in the hands of the BJP to hold mid-term polls in the country."

Let the Union Cabinet and decide on holding the mid-term polls in the country."

Former Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnis had on Sunday dared the Shiv Sena to hold mid-term polls in the state. He had predicted that if the mid-term polls were held in the state, the BJP would defeat the Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress squarely and return to power in the state.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday, former chief minister Narayan Rane predicted that since chief minister Uddhav Thackeray was not capable of running the government,

There would be mid-term polls in the state. "I need not tell you that there is already considerable resentment within the Shiv Sena.

Uddhav Thackeray will not continue in his post for long," Rane said.

Infrastructure is a catalyst for development: Guv

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Governor Jagdish Mukhi on Tuesday asserted that infrastructure is a catalyst for development. He said the government is committed to the development of the state by strengthening infrastructure.

The Centre is very liberal in investing in infrastructure to eliminate service backlogs of northeast with special emphasis on rural areas, Mukhi said at the inaugural session of North East Infrastructure Development Conclave, organised by the CII-North East, here.

A well-planned infrastructure enables established businesses to expand their production levels and encourage small businesses to enter the market and as such, both Central and state governments are making concerted efforts to put in place a robust infrastructure for physical connectivity in the areas of air, water, internet and land transport, he said.

He said the Union budget has allocated funds for laying new tracks and doubling of railway lines in the northeast region, the governor said.

Electrification of railway lines under the Northeast Frontier Railways was also going on and by 2022 the three states of Mizoram, Manipur and Sikkim will be connected by railways, he added.

The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has also conceived of extensive national highway projects to give a boost to the region's physical connectivity.

The governor also highlighted the measures being

Union Budget has allocated funds for laying new tracks and doubling of railway lines in the North-East region: Assam Guv

undertaken in northeast for bringing the region closer to the rest of the country with 12 airports in the region being operative and the Guwahati Airport being revamped with a new state of the art terminus. Moreover, a seamless digital connectivity has been in use in the region by liberalising its cyber space with India and Bangladesh signing an agreement for using unspent bandwidth available at Bangladesh's Cox Bazar in Chittagong to bring in a revolution not only in the northeast but also in some mainland states, he said.

Assam is nurtured by two great rivers--the Brahmaputra and Barak and both along with their many tributaries have huge potential for river transport, tourism and industry.

He also said that inland waterways in Assam received a boost during the last five years.

There was an urgent need for strengthening the physical infrastructure of Assam as it was the largest among the eight northeastern states, with a population of 33 million and area of 78 thousand square kilometre, the governor said.

In the face of growing urban population and rising urban infrastructural needs, solutions like planning newer modes of transportation systems especially for congested areas has become the need of the hour, he added.

Diamond merchant jumps from 15-storey terrace, ends life

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A leading diamond merchant on Tuesday allegedly committed suicide by jumping down from the terrace of 15th floor of a commercial building at Zaveri Bazar in south Mumbai.

Dhiren Chandrakant Shah, who owned a diamond polishing and export company, on the top floor of the "Prasad Chambers", died instantly after his fall from the 15-storey building, which houses the offices of prominent diamond merchants.

Shah, who lived with his family at upmarket Napean Sea Road, was 61 and survived by his wife and two children. While a son lives in the United States, his daughter stays in Dubai.

Quoting his staffer, the police said that Shah reached the office at around 9.45 am on Tuesday.

He told some of his employees that he was going to the terrace of the building for a walk. Within next few minutes he jumped from the terrace and allegedly committed suicide.

Shah was rushed to the nearby hospital where he was declared dead on admission. His body has been sent for a post mortem.

"We have found a two-line suicide note on the desk of the deceased. In the note, he has stated that it was his decision to take the extreme step and no one should be blamed for it."

We have registered an accidental death case and are investigating the matter," a senior police inspector attached to the D B Nagar police station said.

Shah's death came as a big shock to the city's diamond and jewellery industry. The police are trying to ascertain the reasons for Shah's alleged suicide.

PM thinks Ahmedabad only choice for foreign dignitaries: Pawar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

As India prepares to welcome US President Donald Trump, NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Tuesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state Gujarat has become the preferred destination for key foreign dignitaries visiting India.

Before Modi became the PM, top foreign dignitaries visiting India also used to go to places like Hyderabad and Bengaluru, Pawar told reporters here.

"Earlier, they (foreign dignitaries) used to go to places like Agra, Delhi, Hyderabad and Bengaluru. It is good that in the last five years, all these people chose Ahmedabad. It is

a good thing," Pawar said, when asked why is Maharashtra missing from Trump's itinerary.

"We are happy that the country's prime minister thinks Ahmedabad is the best place to show in India to any visiting foreign dignitary," Pawar said.

Important global leaders who visited Gujarat after Modi became the

PM in 2014 include Chinese President Xi Jinping and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

NCP MLA and Pawar's grand nephew Rohit Pawar had last week asked the Centre that apart from Delhi and Ahmedabad, Trump should also visit the country's financial capital, Mumbai.

Trump to be gifted Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography, portrait

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

US President Donald Trump will be gifted a spinning wheel, two books on the life and times of Mahatma Gandhi and a portrait of the Father of the Nation during his visit to the Sabarmati Ashram here on February 24.

Trump will be accompanied by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to the ashram located on the banks of the river Sabarmati.

Trump will be the first US president to visit the ashram, a place closely associated with India's freedom struggle.

The ashram, also known as Gandhi Ashram, was home to the independence movement leader and peace icon from 1917 to 1930. It is now managed by the Sabarmati Ashram

Preservation and Memorial Trust.

Ashram trustees Kartikeya Sarabhai and Amrut Modi said the American president, US First Lady Melania Trump and Prime Minister Modi would spend around 30 minutes at the ashram.

Sources said Trump and Melania may try their hands on the spinning wheel (charkha) kept near 'Hriday Kunj', a cottage inside the ashram where Gandhiji and his wife Kasturba once lived.

"We will gift Trump a spinning wheel, Gandhiji's autobiography and a book named 'My Life My Message'. This book is based on an exhibition depicting Gandhiji's entire life.

"The ashram would also gift Gandhiji's portrait to Trump. Along with the

charkha, we will give him a note describing its importance in the country's freedom struggle," said Amrut Modi. He said the dignitaries will be welcomed with garlands made of 'khadi' (hand-woven fabric).

Trump and the Prime Minister will also take part in a roadshow that will start from the Ahmedabad airport and end at the cricket stadium in Motera after passing along the ashram. On the backside of the ashram, a platform is being built so that PM Modi can show the entire Sabarmati riverfront to the visiting

dignitaries from one place, officials had said. The Gujarat government has announced that Trump and the First Lady would arrive at the Ahmedabad international airport directly from Washington.

TENDER NOTICE						
SR. NO.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK/NOTICE/TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT/EMD (APPROX.) in Rupees	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER
1	HARYANA VIDYUT PRASARAN NIGAM LIMITED	CONSTRUCTION OF 132 KV TRANSMISSION LINES IN KURUKSHETRA AND PANIPAT AREA.	CLOSING DATE 13.03.2020	2.16 LACS	https://www.hvnpn.org.in.	0172-2583789 pro@hvnpn.org.in
2	THE AMBALA DISTT. COOP. MILK PRODUCERS UNION LTD	HDDCF GROUP PERSONAL INSURANCE POLICY TO COVER "NATURAL DEATH" FOR THE PERIOD 01.04.2020 TO 31.03.2021 FOR HDDCF MILK SUPPLIERS NUMBERING ABOUT 50000 (APPROX).	22.02.2020 05.03.2020	---	http://vitaindia.etenders.hry.nic.in www.vitaindia.org.in	0171-2540614, 9996648121 mlkplant@vitaambala.com
3	THE AMBALA DISTT. COOP. MILK PRODUCERS UNION LTD	HDDCF GROUP PERSONAL INSURANCE POLICY TO COVER "ACCIDENTAL DEATH, PERMANENT/PARTIAL DISABILITY" FOR THE PERIOD 01.04.2020 TO 31.03.2021 FOR HDDCF MILK SUPPLIERS NUMBERING ABOUT 50000 (APPROX).	22.02.2020 05.03.2020	---	http://vitaindia.etenders.hry.nic.in www.vitaindia.org.in	0171-2540614, 9996648121 mlkplant@vitaambala.com
4	H.S.A.M. BOARD, JIND.	CONST. OF BLOCK AGRICULTURE OFFICE (BAO) ALEWA + 2 OTHER WORKS	CLOSING DATE 16.03.2020	144.75 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	01681-252003 etenders.gov.in
5	ADDITIONAL DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, BHIWANI	SUPPLY, INSTALLATION/CONS. & COMMISSIONING OF THREE NO. OF 85 CUM CAPACITY BIOGAS PLANT AT GPS SUI, KHARAK KALAN, MANDHOLI KALAN & ONE 35 CUM CAPACITY BIOGAS PLANT AT GP BIDHWAN AS PER KV/C/MNRE MODEL	18.02.2020 24.02.2020	42.57 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	01864-254070, 242893 bwhhssbm@gmail.com
6	UHBVN, KURUKSHETRA	HIRING OF 1 NO. JEEP (BOLERO) FOR SDO CONST. DIVISION, UHBVN, AMBALA	CLOSING DATE 06.03.2020	RS. 6000/- PER VEHICLE	www.uhbvn.org.in	XEN Const. Division, UHBVN, Kurukshetra
7	UHBVN, KARNAL	HIRING OF 1 NO. JEEP/MAHINDRA BALERO FOR THE USE OF SDO(CP) SUB-DIVN. UHBVN, GARHIBIRBAL	CLOSING DATE 27.02.2020	7000/-	www.uhbvn.org.in	0184-2268525 xenopubhvn@karnal@gmail.com
8	MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BHIWANI	PROVIDING AND FIXING (AS PER ATTACHED SPECIFICATION) OF RCC BENCH IN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BHIWANI. (RETENDER)	CLOSING DATE 25.02.2020	50000	http://etenders.hry.nic.in TENDER NO 2020_HRY_118859_1	9810880504 me.mcbhiwani@gmail.com
9	MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BHIWANI	CAPTURING OF MONKEY IN MC BHIWANI (RETENDER)	CLOSING DATE 25.02.2020	25000	http://etenders.hry.nic.in TENDER NO 2020_HRY_118858_1	9810880504 me.mcbhiwani@gmail.com
10	MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE, NISSING	RE. CONSTRUCTION OF STREET AND DRAIN FROM H/O GEETA RAM TO MANGA RAM WARD NO. 1 + 10 OTHER WORKS	CLOSING DATE 26.02.2020	149.62 LACS	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	01745-271608
11	MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BHIWANI	CONST. AND LAYING OF STREET FROM MITTAL TIMBER STORE TO KRISHAN JHAPARIYA AARA MACHINE, KATH MANDIR WNO 17. + 8 WORKS	CLOSING DATE 28.02.2020	105770	http://etenders.hry.nic.in 2019_HRY_118836_1 to 2019_HRY_114018_9	9810880504 me.mcbhiwani@gmail.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in RO 79936

PARADIP PORT TRUST
PARADIP PORT - 754 142, ODISHA (INDIA) SAGARMALA
(An autonomous body under Ministry of Shipping, Govt. of India)

No. AD/RSC-1-21-66/2011/617 Dt. 17 Feb, 2020

Walk-In-Interview

Applications are invited from Indian Nationals for filling up following **two Medical Officers on Contractual** basis in the Paradip Port Trust. For further details, refer to our website www.paradipport.gov.in. Last date is **24.02.2020, 10.00 hours.**

PPT/PR/675/19-20, Dt. 18/02/2020

Sr. Dy. Secretary for Secretary

Notice Inviting Re-e-Tender
No. SSA/MIS/Support-materials/OD/336/2006/843 Date : 18.02.2020
Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites re-tender through e-Tendering process from Reputed Organization for supply and installation of Laptop, Desktop Computer, UPS, Scanner and Printer.

To participate in the tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of class-1 (minimum) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable tender fee of Rs. 1,000/- (Rupees one thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

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

Message of Shaheen Bagh

SC appoints mediators for shifting women-led protests on the CAA. Should the Govt not have done this instead?



In the end, the executive abdicated its responsibility and left it to the judiciary to tackle civil unrest in the country that has risen in opposition to its new profile-linked citizenship law. And the highest court of the land, the Supreme Court, had to intervene to settle the issue of moving protesters at Shaheen Bagh, the epicentre of a relentless people's struggle against a law that violates the Constitutional spirit of equality of all religions. Addressing a clutch of petitions against the protesters that were pushed in a surrogate manner, the court

did not denounce their stance and upheld what it has before, that citizens have a democratic right to disagree and be heard. But considering the sit-in on a public road had stretched to over two months and was obstructing traffic and public convenience, the court said that the protest site should be relocated to avert a crisis. Yet it did not pare the protesters down with dictated choices of sites but sent in mediators to work out a deal. The Shaheen Bagh women, who have never refused a dialogue, had gone public with their desire to meet the Home Minister and Prime Minister, but it was the Government which did not honour the rules of civil engagement and instead demonised them as enemies of the State. Had it indeed mastered statecraft, it could have made a virtue of the negotiations, used them for explanatory propaganda on the new law and avoided a conflagration that ultimately burnt it badly. Now as many Shaheen Baghs and dissent movements have erupted across the country, will the Government squander away its political mandate as an administrator or create new binaries for electoral politics? Will it be a reconciler of diversity or just the interpreter of societal maladies?

There is nothing wrong with the BJP Government justifying its ideological pitch but when in governance, it cannot be seen as abetting a civil war. Particularly when the women-led protest at Shaheen Bagh swiftly turned into civil society's spontaneous combustion and powered the Opposition. Primarily because the women of Shaheen Bagh had taken a high moral ground when they started out, reading the Preamble and positing themselves as citizens who shouldn't be defined by exclusion as opposed to the establishment's determination to brand them anti-Hindu. As all religions made common cause with them, the BJP turned them into a test case of nationalism, lionising them with its intolerance. So what began as an anti-establishment forum was needlessly elevated to a referendum on whether minority intrusion can disrupt a majority lives — in this case, blockade-hit Delhiites — on whether there was a mini-Pakistan that needs to be surgically cut out from the heart of the city. Clearly, the BJP is solely responsible for terming every democratic disagreement as a treacherous feat, even making its core voter deeply uncomfortable. Yes, the women blocked traffic because that's the only way they could make people sit up but it was the BJP which gave shelf life to the sit-in, prolonging it for intended political gains, adamant in rejecting overtures and scoring a self-goal by weaponising it for the Delhi Assembly elections. Even the women pointed out that their protest was not a civic issue but a national one and, therefore, were unconcerned about the buzz around them. The Delhi voter, in the end, chose a "doing" Government rather than a "blaming" one. Had the BJP been smart, it could have attempted reconciliation talks. Considering the city-state's law and order is a Central subject, it could have worked around the traffic mess. By engaging with the women, it would have not only demonstrated seriousness of intent, it could have been seen as an expert negotiator, one who attempted to clear misconceptions around the CAA. Clearly, the Government's mishandling of Shaheen Bagh has blown up in its face and compelled it to eat humble pie. The Prime Minister had to clarify that CAA "does not affect Indian Muslims" and that there was no talk of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) yet. Home Minister Amit Shah had to simmer down on NRC after declaring in Parliament that every infiltrator would be thrown out and even admit that aggressive and polarising rhetoric had cost the BJP the Delhi election. It's a different matter though that the National Population Register (NPR) can be used to harvest profile-based data still, something that the civil protest movements are now questioning, too. This has forced the Government to concede that respondents wouldn't be needed to show any papers. It is in this sense that the Shaheen Bagh protests have been successful compared to other protests before; they have forced a systemic reaction. And with mini protests acquiring gale force, the Modi Government can no longer afford to be in a victim or petitioner mode. It cannot be a denier anymore, it has to seize the discourse. Or be horribly out of sync with what India wants.

Too little to charge

Let's not get excited by the discovery of lithium reserves. They are not enough to fuel India's electric ambitions



The discovery of an estimated reserve of 14,000 tonnes of lithium ore in Mandya, 100 km from Bengaluru, has gotten several people excited. Rightly so, because this metal is one of the key components for Lithium-ion batteries and is a crucial building block for electric vehicles, which many believe, will be the future of India, indeed for global mobility. But there's no need to get overly excited about this. In terms of reserves, it is less than half a per cent of the total deposits found in Chile, which along with Bolivia, holds some of the world's largest stocks of this key material. By some estimates, India will need over a million tonnes of lithium ore in the next two decades to ensure half its vehicle fleet is able to drive on electric vehicle battery. So, 14,000 tonnes of lithium ore cannot even power the electric vehicles that will be needed in Bengaluru and its suburbs alone. This discovery should, however, be used as an opportunity to further mineral exploration. Low on reserves, we have to import minerals and metals worth billions of dollars — crude oil to gold — from nations across the world. We have to become more pro-active in tapping deposits and maximising their potential. This small finding should spur Indian companies and the Government to look for other key resources for the future like rare-earth metals — a sector where China commands a near-global monopoly.

India should also carefully evaluate technologies that can be used to power the future. In mobility, this could involve discussions around hydrogen-based fuel-cell technologies that are less dependent on lithium resources. While hydrogen extraction technologies are currently expensive and energy negative, the dramatic lowering of unit costs of solar and wind energy can allow for sufficient hydrogen generation, which can also use the existing fuel-retail system. India should not become beholden to another set of resource-rich countries. Policy-makers have to be extremely careful about which path the country will take. They must not give in to half-baked ideas by motivated parties. Our bureaucrats and politicians must be very careful and make serious considerations about India's future because their decisions will decide which path the country will take and the impact it will have in the next five or six decades. We cannot afford to lose more decades as we have already wasted the first two this millennium.

Now, a green fund

The Finance Commission must be lauded for including forest cover in the mix for allocation of tax resources. States must respect this and do their bit in conserving it



VK BAHUGUNA

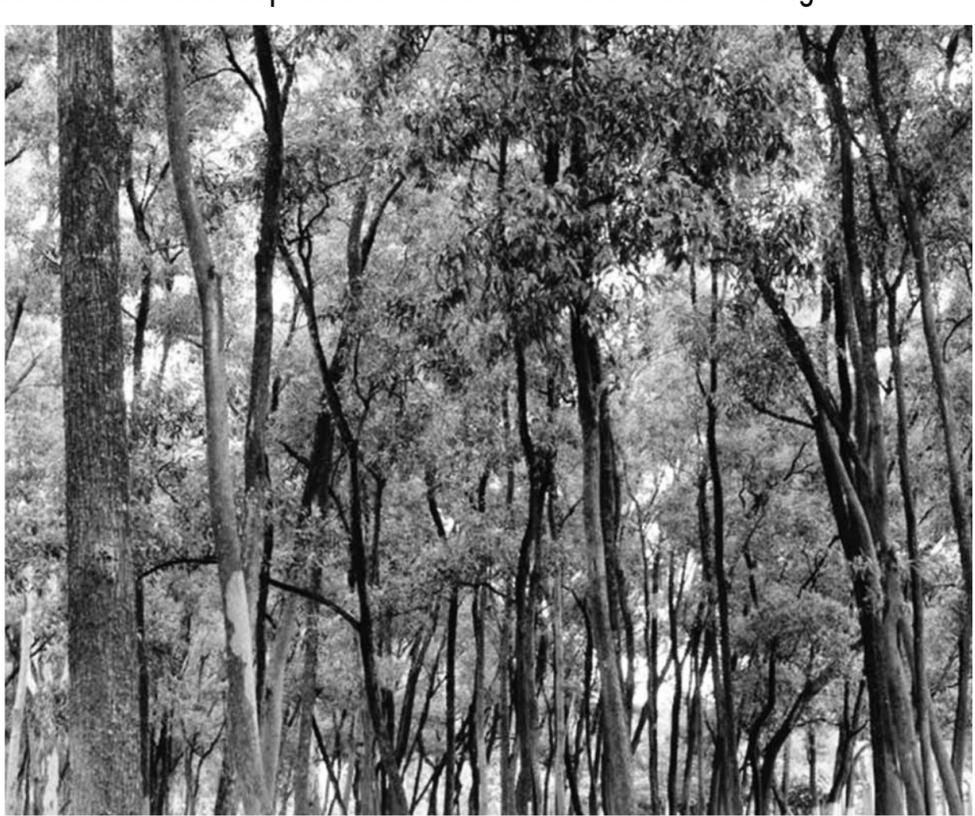
One of the keys to improving Centre-State relations and ensuring development is even-handed and judicious distribution of tax revenue and other forms of earning between the federal and State Governments. The Finance Commission of India is a unique constitutional body that is periodically set up under Article 280 of the Constitution to define financial relations between the Central and State Governments. It lays down a set of principles that determines the method and formula for the distribution of tax proceeds between both Governments.

A majority of the taxes such as Customs duty, income tax, service tax and Central excise are collected by the Centre. States were given the mandate to provide economic and social services to the people. They are empowered to levy income tax on agricultural earnings, professional tax, value added tax (VAT), State excise duty, land revenue and stamp duty. Hence, the Finance Commission was created to address issues of vertical and horizontal imbalances of federal finances in India.

The 15th Finance Commission, which was established to decide on the devolution of taxes and other receipts to the Centre and States for the next five years beginning April 2020, submitted its recommendations before the Central Government last December. The Commission used the population data of 2011 while making its recommendations and for the first time, in addition to income distance, population and area and forest cover, it used two additional factors — demographic performance and tax effort — to determine the tax pool of States.

The Commission's usage of the 2011 population figures gave rise to considerable controversies. While the 14th Finance Commission had taken the 1971 census as the base with a weightage of 17.5 per cent and assigned a weightage of 10 per cent to the 2011 population figures, the present one has kept the weightage of 2011 population at 15 per cent and has given additional 12.5 per cent to demographic performance. The use of 2011 data has benefitted some States like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar while others have been disadvantaged.

Most States in southern India, except Tamil Nadu, feel that they are suffering because of their policy of population control. They believe they will get a smaller share of the pie if the population dispensation is applied. However, according to the Economic Survey, 2016, inter-State labour mobility averaged 5-6.5 million people between 2001 and 2011, yielding an inter-State migrant population of about 60 million and an inter-district migration as high as 80 million. Apart from the southern States, Assam, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab and West Bengal, too, saw



a dip in population compared to the 1971 census. The 15th Finance Commission was critical of the Union and State Governments' tendency to finance spending through off-budget borrowings, too. On this front, it called upon both to phase out off-budget liabilities.

Irrespective of the surrounding controversies, the Commission made it clear that it wants to play a key role in fostering sustainable development. It must be noted that the 14th Commission had accepted it as a criterion to determine the share of taxes to various States. This is why "forest cover" was assigned 7.5 per cent weightage. The 15th Finance Commission sought to raise the area cover to 10 per cent in order to reward States that have "provided ecological services" to the country.

However, it is distressing that none of the States has been liberal in granting funds to the forest department commensurate to the contribution the forests have made in getting funds. The enhancement of funds to States — from 7.5 per cent to 10 per cent — if implemented, can go a long way in protecting the country's ecological frontiers. This can also lead

to the economic well-being of the people and the country and help consolidate forest resources as well.

The importance of the maintenance of forest-like buildings and roads was first recognised by the 13th Finance Commission, which earmarked ₹1,000 crore and called upon the States to manage ecology, environment and climate change, consistent with sustainable development. This fund was kept at the disposal of the Government of India and was released to States on a project basis. This helped a great deal in maintaining forests across the country.

However, the actual spending on forests by States, after the 14th Finance Commission grants, has not been very encouraging when compared to the intention of the criterion to strengthen forest cover base. The State of Forest Report 2019 released by the Forest Survey of India recorded a marginal increase of 5,188 sq km in total forest and tree cover in the country. However, it gave a dismal picture in tribal areas (where the forest cover has gone down by 741 sq km). With regard to the disappearance of higher girth class trees in

forests due to poor regeneration and protection, the report, if examined critically, indicates the urgent need to spend money on natural forests. Yet another important issue that needs to be dealt with is to address the concern of States, which have less forest cover. We need to step up efforts to cover more areas through agroforestry, farm forestry, block plantations, urban and peri-urban forestry among other efforts.

Efficient fiscal management goals of the Commission cannot be achieved unless we have an effective monitoring system in place. The 15th Finance Commission should follow the pattern of the 13th Finance Commission, which recommend *inter alia* that a portion of the divisible pool of tax within the forest criterion should be retained with the Government of India to be sanctioned by the Ministry of Finance and Environment, Forest and Climate Change, for the maintenance of forests.

It would be appropriate to ensure third-party monitoring of the use of the grant to States so that misuse or arbitrary or unauthorised use of the funds can be checked. Further, for monitoring and

evaluation of the works undertaken through the Finance Commission Awards, States should opt for certification of forests. This can help promote sustainable forest management and at the same time provide space for international markets for procurement of forest products.

Further, the Commission should put a complete ban on the freebie culture of politicians, who are more interested in votebank politics. If need be, it must ask the Government to amend the Constitution. The Prime Minister must think about curbing the freebie culture sooner than later. At the same time, the Election Commission must ensure political consensus on this. A group of retired forest officers had sought time from the Chairman of the Finance Commission to submit a memorandum on these issues so that the Commission's own recommendations lead to desired effects on the country's economy and on conservation of forests, water and bio-diversity. A forest governance policy must pay attention to the multiple ways in which our green cover is valuable.

(The writer is a retired civil servant)

SOUNDBITE

Nitish/ji has always said that he cannot leave the ideals of Gandhi, JP and Lohia... At the same time, how can he be with the people who support the ideology of Godse?

Political strategist
—Prashant Kishor

I was also a newcomer at one point of time, I'm only four years old here. I am no veteran. Every film is a new film. I am as new as the director for that film and story.

Actor
—Vicky Kaushal

Using funds of peacekeeping operations for other requirements, while payments for peacekeeping remain, is not only bad accounting practice but also tends to be interpreted as bad faith.

Indian Envoy
—Syed Akbaruddin

If NRC is implemented, it will affect not only Hindus or Muslims but also Adivasis. NPR is a census, and I don't find anyone will be affected as it happens every 10 years.

Maharashtra CM
—Uddhav Thackeray

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Together, we can

Sir — The forthcoming visit of Donald Trump to India is unique not only because this will be his first since he became the US President but also because it comes soon after his acquittal in the impeachment trial by the US Senate. Besides, he is also one of the frontrunners for the US elections later this year and enjoys record-high popularity back home.

Relations between the US and India have seen an upswing in recent years. The US considers India a key player in the Indo-Pacific region. Bilateral trade, both goods and services, touched \$142 billion in 2018. But there's a lot that is left to be desired and worked on.

Importantly, Trump considers India to be among those nations taking trade advantage of the US. Since long, America has been averse to India's intellectual policy legal framework and some investment restrictions. India, on the other hand, believes that under Trump's presidency, the US has taken a more rigid stance; new tariffs have been introduced for new products. But both nations have a com-

Wall to hide misdeeds and guilt

The construction of a wall in front of a slum along the road connecting Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport to the Indira Bridge in Ahmedabad ahead of US President Donald Trump's state visit has rightly drawn a lot of flak. This illustrates that BJP-led Governments at the Centre and in Gujarat refuse to accept the nation as it is. This act is clearly at odds with their claims of "patriotism" and "commitment" towards the impoverished sections of the country. The Government is clearly not above conjuring a false narrative to provide an impression of "national glory." It seems that the wall is being constructed to prevent Trump's convoy from viewing the slums, which the American visitors would presumably consider "eyesores." But they should remember that slum dwellers are victims of an unjust and inequitable social order. Apart from the deprivation they already have to live with, it is inhuman to render them "invisible" in this humiliating manner.

It would be reasonable to ask why money was spent on a "beautification drive" rather than on improving the living conditions of the slum dwellers. The veneer of prosperity created to impress a world-



leader dehumanises millions of poverty-stricken Indians, who are unlikely to be represented at the "Namaste, President Trump" event in Ahmedabad. One is reminded of Rabindranath Tagore's words, "Give me the strength never to disown the poor or bend my knees before the insolent might." Those in power would do well to live by them.

G David Milton
Maruthancode

permanent commission besides making them eligible for command posting at par with male officers, is historic.

It's shocking that despite the Army facing shortage of officers in support services, it let go of trained women officers. Time and again women have proved their mettle in all spheres. They are not in any way inferior to male counterparts. It's about time that we realise and acknowledge their contribution wholeheartedly and give them their due respect.

Bal Govind
Noida

Shameful incident

Sir — It is shameful that more than 60 girl students were forced to strip in an administrative check about whether they were menstruating or not at a college in Gujarat's Bhuj. The Government needs to keep a check on the norms laid down and take action against them. There should be uniformity in policy and rules.

Shashi
Via email

Better late than never

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Lead from the front" (February 18). The Supreme Court's ruling, asking the Government to ensure that all women officers are given

mon agenda too: To challenge a rising and aggressive China and create a new rules-based order in East Asia. Challenges faced by both are entirely different in nature and it's difficult to find common ground. Yet, both nations must unite and plan the way forward strategically. A "mini trade" deal may not help iron out differences but is of utmost importance for India, given its economy is in the midst of a slowdown at the moment.

Ganapathi Bhat
Akola

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

What lies ahead for social sector

As India will be home to the largest working population in the world by 2030, health and education are key areas it must focus on



URVASHI PRASAD



SARAH IYPE

At the start of the new decade, the much-awaited Budget 2020-21 set the tone for the year ahead. With the core themes of "Aspirational India", "Economic Development" and "Caring Society", health and education feature as cross-cutting elements, critical for driving inclusive growth. As a prelude to the New Education Policy, the Budget had some key announcements on higher education, in particular. First, leveraging the triple helix model of innovation and ensuring greater university-Government-industry linkage, 150 institutes will initiate apprenticeship-embedded courses by next year. As India stands at the threshold of the fourth Industrial Revolution, this move will facilitate the generation of a skilled workforce, ready to be absorbed by the industry.

Second, in a novel step to promote greater access, the Budget also announced that the top 100 institutes in the National Institute Ranking Framework will launch exclusive online education programmes. Third, diversifying the options for further study, it proposes the establishment of a National Forensic University, offering courses on niche aspects such as cyber-forensics. While these are steps in the right direction, we must be cognisant of the sheer scale of the education ecosystem. India has around 25 crore children in over 15 lakh schools, while at the higher education level there are about 3.7 crore students in 41,000 institutes. To ensure the delivery of quality education across this landscape, an emphasis on early childhood education and foundational learning is critical. Beyond the Budget, we need a nationwide call to action for a sustained effort on knowledge enhancement to enable foundational learning for all. Further, while the financial allocation to education has increased by 4.7 per cent, it falls short of the recommended level of investment at six per cent of the GDP. Opening up the sector to External Commercial Borrowings and Foreign Direct Investment may serve as an avenue for increased spending in it. Any enhancement in expenditure, of course, must be targeted at driving improvements in quality education, in sync with the need to shift the policy focus away from input and access metrics.

On health, the Budget provides an additional ₹69,000 crore. However, there is still some way to go before the 2017 National Health Policy's (NHP's) goal of raising public health spending to 2.5 per cent of the GDP by 2024-25, is achieved. Of course States, too, need to ramp up spending on health as they account for 64.4 per cent of the total Government health expenditure.

A key Budget announcement was setting up of hospitals in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode to boost the supply of health services under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, through a viability gap funding mechanism. The scheme has been fairly successful since its launch in September 2018, reaching out to over 80 lakh patients across more than 20,000 hospitals. Although the budgetary allocation for Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs), the second pillar of Ayushman Bharat, has not been enhanced, it is crucial that these Centres are operationalised in a timely manner, providing screening for non-communicable diseases in addition to reproductive, maternal and child health interventions.

Focussing on human resources is critical, not just for the health sector but also for the broader economy, given the sector's significant job-creation potential. Recognising the shortfall of medical personnel, the Budget emphasises the need for attaching medical colleges to district hospitals in PPP mode.

Furthermore, a push was made on integrating Machine Learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) with Ayushman Bharat. AI can offer an unbiased second opinion on diagnosis, treatment modalities, potential risks and predicted outcomes as well as enable health personnel to identify dormant signs of diseases. The announcement of a national-level scheme to map India's genetic landscape is another crucial move given that the answer to many diseases and their treatment, at least partly, lies in our genes. On social determinants of health, the Budget increased the allocation for nutrition-related programmes by 25 per cent and also committed to implementing the necessary steps for sustaining behaviour change in sanitation and focussing on waste management.

Overall, Budget 2020-21 included some noteworthy announcements for social sectors. However, there is much more that needs to be done if India is to truly harness the potential of its human capital for boosting economic growth. As India will be home to the largest working population in the world by 2030, health and education are key for reaping the benefits of the much talked about demographic dividend. Of course, the Union Budget is only one instrument for achieving this and much of the action, in terms of increased spending on social sectors as well as quality implementation at scale, lies in States, thus necessitating ongoing coordination between the Centre and States.

(Prasad is a public policy specialist and Iype is an education specialist. Both are with the NITI Aayog and the views expressed are personal)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE CONGRESS PARTY ALWAYS CHOOSES TO STAND WITH THOSE WHO ARE INIMICAL TO THE COUNTRY AND RILE UP SECURITY FORCES.

—BJP SPOKESPERSON
 GVL NARASIMHA RAO



WHEN POLICEMEN HIDE THE TRUTH, THERE'S NO DIALOGUE WITH THE YOUTH AND GOVT BECOMES A SLEUTH, DEMOCRACY WILL WEAKEN AT ITS ROOTS.

—CONGRESS LEADER
 KAPIL SIBAL

Use AI to fight pandemics

The Coronavirus outbreak has called into question the ability of governments in predicting, containing and even preventing epidemics. AI and big data can be the answer



ABHINAV VERMA



YUKTI SHARMA

In 2019, the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board said that the world was not prepared for the next big pandemic, which could potentially spread between continents in 36 hours and kill up to 80 million people. It pointed out that the climate crisis, global migration and humanitarian conflicts were all breeding grounds for newer outbreaks. The Coronavirus took us by surprise, simultaneously pointing out that systems of the past decade might not be effective in tackling challenges that are taking novel shapes and forms. With one of the largest populations and widening socio-economic divides, India is vulnerable to contagions. Experts claim that this susceptibility hasn't changed much in the last 100 years, when India was one of the countries worst hit by the Spanish Influenza in 1918. We have been struggling to contain influenza and encephalitis outbreaks for the last four decades. There is a pressing need to overhaul how we respond to outbreaks, both globally and in India, keeping technology at the centre. Coronavirus' example itself shows that it was two Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enabled enterprises, BlueDot and Metabota, that provided the key and life-saving insights into the containment of this viral eruption. By using Natural Language Processing (NLP), BlueDot sifts through and analyses over 10,000 articles in 65 languages, including foreign news reports, plants and animal disease networks and official proclamations, to issue warnings. It was able to catch and warn about the impending outbreak days before the official announcement was made. Similarly, Metabota applied AI to the used travel itineraries and flight patterns to determine the likely spread of the disease. It was accurate insofar as it predicted that South Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Thailand had the highest risk of the viral outbreak.

AI for comprehensive disease surveillance: As epidemics spread in phases from introduction to amplification and finally contained transmission, the response and sequence of interventions flow accordingly. Even before diseases erupt, a public health system attempts to anticipate new and re-emerging disease through early detection. Thereafter, the response strategy changes to containment, control and mitigation, followed by re-focus on eradication. Creating a technology-based intervention into pandemic management also needs to consider the response strategies commensurate with the stage of epidemical evolution.

However, technologies have a critical and more successful role to play in some phases of the response cycle as opposed to others. One such is prediction and early warnings, for which integrated disease surveillance programmes exist both in the public and private sectors. These surveillance strategies include Event-Based Surveillance (EBS) and Risk Modelling. EBS systems use unstructured data from multiple sources like internet, official reports, social media and so on, to detect and trace the evidence of an emerging threat and overlay it with traditional surveillance systems to issue public health warnings and formulate mitigation strategies. The Global Public Health Intelligence Network (GPHIN), and HealthMap, an automated electronic information system, are EBS tools that use NLP, text processing algorithms and Machine Learning (ML). These can increase the speed of identifying signs, filtering information, enhance capacity for consuming information and increase accuracy manifold.

The Program for Monitoring Emerging Diseases (ProMED), Medical Information System (MedSys) and Pattern-based Understanding and Learning System (PULS) are similar EBS tools. These systems are proving absolutely essential in disseminating information at breakneck speed, characterising transmissibility patterns, contagiousness, illnesses and

“ IN THE FIGHT AGAINST OUTBREAKS — ONE THAT THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY IS NOT WINNING — CHANNELLING THE POWER OF DATA THROUGH AI CAN BE THE PERFECT WEAPON. CORONAVIRUS AND THE SWIFTESS THAT AI-ENABLED SOLUTIONS SHOWED HERE WERE NECESSARY PROOF OF THE CONCEPT TO INCENTIVISE GREATER RESOURCES AND COLLABORATIONS IN AI-ASSISTED OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT. NOW IT IS UPON GOVERNMENTS AND MULTILATERALS TO LEAD THE WAY IN MOBILISING AI AGAINST THE NEXT VIRUS ”



deaths caused by the pathogen, aiding quicker emergency response. Risk modelling uses statistical tools to characterise and identify factors in populations or individuals that enhance their vulnerabilities to contracting a particular disease. Overlaying this data with open source internet data and climate data accounting for presence, distribution and movement of pathogens can help identify correlations that were invisible to us before. For example, in China, the cases of hand, foot and mouth disease in children were best predicted by AI models that utilised data on weekly temperature and precipitation as well as data on disease-related queries from the Chinese Baidu search engine.

Compared to these, India's Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) uses manual surveillance, where data on some 24 epidemic-prone diseases is collected on a weekly basis at the primary health centre level and reported upwards. Whenever there is a rising trend of illnesses in any area, it is investigated by the Rapid Response Teams (RRT) to diagnose and control the outbreak. This system is slow and doesn't use any risk modelling for predictions. A study by the Indian Institute of Public Health, Hyderabad in 2016 pointed out that this procedure suffered a time lag from anything between three to 64 days.

The Media Scanning and Verification Cell of the IDSP was established in 2008 for early warning signals through media reports. However, this activity is limited to manually scanning newspapers/electronic media. Some technologically-adept States use Google alerts to automate the process. Needless to say, State media verification cells are unable to exhaustively scan all media sources with the swiftness that's needed to respond to outbreaks. The Health Ministry is piloting an Integrated Health Information Platform (IHIP) that can enable near real-time data reporting and hopes to apply modelling and GIS tools to enhance the IDSP. There exists immense scope for integrating emerging technologies within the IHIP platform. But

at present these discussions are nascent.

Focussing on holistic pandemic management: While most technology applications in pandemic response are limited to surveillance, there is a dire need to identify intervention areas in overall pandemic management. AI can not only help us predict where the disease might be travelling to, but it can also offer insights into how people take up health services during emergencies. Accounting for health-seeking behaviours in designing response strategies can substantially boost effectiveness and success of responses.

Learning from behavioural data, ML models can identify less obvious patterns in human behaviour and disease transmission, which could enable a targeted response. This is called infodemiology, where you can integrate internet data into public health informatics to examine individual health-seeking patterns during emergencies. Google Trends Data as well as more-specific Google Dengue Trends have also been used by researchers to develop a holistic understanding of behavioural aspects of citizen response to pandemics. Such insights can be used to determine where health services are imperative to be delivered in times of shortages that mandate trade-offs. In a more mature system, one would also be able to determine if an individual or a group of people is likely to change its location, go out and seek formal assistance, or if they will adhere to treatment routines — all insights that can help authorities make better decisions.

AI-assisted genomics research is slowly emerging to be a game changer in the rapid development of treatments and vaccines for contemporary infections. Baidu has developed an algorithm that can significantly speed up RNA structure prediction and subsequently unlock the key to the virus. Developing models that can match patterns embedded in the viral genomes to their animal host and vectors that carry the virus can be a breakthrough in narrowing the search for diseases. This can lead to early interventions in controlling disease upsurge or preventing their

emergence altogether.

Building blocks for AI in pandemic response: Building a comprehensive and accurate surveillance system requires massive amounts of quality data from different sources. Meteorological data, for instance, needs to be overlaid with vector-movements and population mobility data to accurately identify hotspots for outbreaks. This requires Government departments coming together in mission-mode and pooling their data into one consolidated programme. It also requires AI-enabled technologies to be integrated into existing workflows for pandemic management and creation of new protocols with adequate capacity-building, so its benefits can flow to all levels.

As pandemics are not constrained by national boundaries, a global surveillance system is imperative, something where multilaterals like the WHO and international foundations can play a catalytic role. Nations need to be propelled to make disease information public and if possible move towards interoperable surveillance networks that can communicate with their global counterparts.

Can AI fight the next Coronavirus is a question up for debate. But it can bolster our capacity to respond substantially, especially in disease pre-emption, design of accurate interventions and in some cases with more research investment, even prevention of outbreaks.

Therefore, in a fight against outbreaks — one that the global community is not winning — channelling the power of data through AI can be the perfect weapon. Coronavirus and the swiftness that AI-enabled solutions showed here were necessary proof of the concept to incentivise greater resources and collaborations in AI-assisted outbreak management. Now it is upon governments and multilaterals to lead the way in mobilising AI against the next virus.

(Verma is a lawyer and public policy consultant and Sharma is a software engineer. Both work with the International Innovation Corps, University of Chicago.)

Don't write the Congress off yet

It was an umbrella party at one time giving space to all shades of opinions and ideologies – the Right, Left and the Centre – and despite many splits it has survived so far. So there is no reason why it cannot do so in the future



KALYANI SHANKAR

Many people are writing off the 135-year-old Congress Party after its dismal performance in the just-concluded Delhi Assembly elections. This is because the grand old party has suffered one setback after the other since 2014, though there were some good patches in between. Now, critical questions are being raised over its survival that need to be answered by Congressmen. This is not the first time that the party is facing such a crisis. In its long history, the

Congress has been written off many times by its opponents. However, every time it rose like a phoenix from the ashes and came back to power.

The slide began in 1967 when the party lost many States. After the 1969 split, Indira Gandhi emerged successful in the 1971 mid-term poll. However, after the defeat of Indira in 1977, the party was written off. But it rallied again in 1980 and continued to rule till 1989. After VP Singh challenged Rajiv Gandhi in 1989, there were apprehensions about the Congress' survival but in 1991 the party came back to power at the head of a coalition, though it could not retain power for long.

In 1998, Sonia Gandhi took over the Congress amid panic in the party that it would perish. When no one expected the Sonia-led Congress to succeed, she formed the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and cap-

tured power in 2004. After 10 years of the UPAs rule, the party faced its worst-ever humiliation when it got just 44 seats in 2014 and 52 seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Now, once again, the Congress is being written off. No doubt the party is going through one of its worst existential and leadership crises right now. Thankfully, the Congress has always performed well in States where regional strongmen were given the job of handling the elections. The Maharashtra and Haryana polls proved this fact in recent times. That said, is that enough for the party to remain relevant? From ruling the Centre and a majority of States in the '60s and '70s, the Congress has now been pushed into a corner with its governments in a measly five States. When the Narendra Modi Government stormed to power in 2014, many thought that the Congress would eventually recov-

er but it has only declined further as it had failed to gauge the mood of the public and turn it into electoral success. Last year's electoral victories in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh apart, the Congress has witnessed gradual decay in its State units in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh (UP), Bihar, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Delhi. Today, the Congress is ruthlessly criticised and mocked because of its determination to cling to the Nehru-Gandhi family.

The BJP has vowed to create a "Congress-mukt Bharat" but an Opposition is not bad, even for the ruling party in a democracy, as the late Atal Bihari Vajpayee used to say. One party rule is not what our founding fathers visualised. Some analysts argue that the collapse of the Congress as a national alternative to the BJP creates a political vacuum. It is not as if there

is no base for the Congress despite the slide, as it is the only party, apart from the BJP, with a national presence. Even in its worst defeat the Congress managed to get 19.6 per cent of the national vote; about 117 million people voted for it in 2019. It must build on this base.

The decline of the Congress is of its own making. Its dependence on one family, its high command and coterie culture, loss of connect with grassroots workers, lack of an organisational structure, poor communication skills, and living in its past glory, have all led to its downfall. Moreover, the BJP has emerged as an alternative to the Congress at the national level, while in some States the regional satraps have usurped the Congress' space. Since the party refuses to move out from under the shadow of the Gandhis, it is for the family to fill the leadership vacuum

and fight to get back its political space. They must find the right formula to do this, fast.

It is too soon to write an obituary of the Congress. The grand old party is like an ancient banyan tree. Its roots are deep and in many States. All that the Congress needs is a charismatic leader and a vote catcher who could reinvent and revive the party. Did not the then UK Prime Minister Tony Blair reinvent the Labour party and called it the New Labour?

It is time the Congress wakes up, defines its ideology, strengthens State units, faces the challenge of regionalism and reclaims its lost space. It was an umbrella party at one time giving space to all shades of opinions and ideologies — the Right, Left and the Centre — and despite many splits it has survived so far. So there is no reason why it cannot do so in the future.

(The writer is a senior journalist)



FOREIGN EYE
INVEST IN POOR NATIONS

It is no accident that the most worrying recent pandemics to afflict the planet have emerged from Asia and Africa, in poor countries that have inadequate health services. Hospitals, laboratories and research centres there need bolstering rapidly and should be the focus of major investment by the West.

(The Guardian editorial)

Sensex, Nifty clock 4th successive loss

PTI ■ MUMBAI
Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty settled with losses for the fourth straight session on Tuesday as the ongoing AGR issue weighed on telecom and financial stocks.
After trading in the deep red for a better part of the session, the BSE gauge Sensex reclaimed most of its lost ground towards the day-end. At the closing bell, the index was down 161.31 points or 0.39 per cent at 40,894.38.
Intra-day, the Sensex fell over 444 points and touched the day's low of 40,610.95.

The NSE barometer Nifty too staged a late recovery from the day's low and settled at 11,992.50, showing a fall of 53.30 points or 0.44 per cent.
On the Sensex chart, Bharti Airtel was the biggest loser with nearly 3 per cent drop in its share price. It was followed by IndusInd Bank, Maruti Suzuki, HeroMoto Corp and Tata Steel.
The Supreme Court on Monday refused to stop the telecom department from taking any coercive steps for recovery of dues from Vodafone Idea.
Shares of Vodafone Idea on Tuesday tanked more than 16 per cent in intra-day trade due

to rating downgrade on AGR dues and other issues of the company.
Reliance Industries declined nearly 1 per cent after it announced consolidation of all its media and distribution businesses under flagship 'Network18'.
The three group entities namely Hathway Cable & Datacom, Den Networks and TV18 Broadcast — which would be merged into Network18 — rose by 20 per cent, 9.98 per cent and 14.7 per cent, respectively.
"Market sentiment continued to be hit by Covid-19 after the issue of warning note from

a key global MNC regarding the sales impact. Global weakness is expected to hurt domestic market as high valuation and low economic growth is not supportive," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services commented.
Also, the huge government dues to be paid by telecom sector will keep banking stocks

volatile impacting the market performance, Nair added.
In contrast, SBI, Infosys, PowerGrid, Tech Mahindra and TCS featured among major gainers.
Sectorally, BSE telecom index suffered the most by shedding over 4 per cent. Other top laggards included metal, auto and realty indices.

Birla meets Telecom Secy as Voda Idea stares at over ₹53K cr AGR dues
PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Amid talks of the Government mulling encashing of bank guarantee over default in payment of dues, Vodafone Idea Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla on Tuesday met Telecom Secretary Anshu Prakash as he looked for options to keep the company afloat.
After the meeting, Birla said he "cannot say anything at the moment."
Birla, who met the telecom secretary for over an hour, was accompanied by Ravinder Takkar, MD & CEO of Vodafone Idea.
He refused to respond to queries on whether or not Vodafone Idea Ltd (VIL) would default on payment of AGR dues or if the company could head towards insolvency.
Vodafone Idea on Monday paid Rs 2,500 crore to DoT and promised to pay another Rs 1,000 crore before the end of the week.
But the amount paid for now is less than 5 per cent of the dues that the DoT estimates the company owes to the government following a Supreme Court ruling that asked for including non-telecom revenues of telcos in computing statutory payments such as licence fee and spectrum charges. The Supreme Court on Monday refused to stop DoT from taking any coercive steps for recovery of dues from Vodafone Idea.

Voda Idea stock falls over 11% amid AGR woes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Shares of Vodafone Idea on Tuesday settled over 11 per cent down in the wake of continuing business uncertainty over payment of statutory dues.
The scrip has been closing in the red for the past seven consecutive sessions. The company's credit rating has also been downgraded by two rating agencies. On the BSE, the stock plunged 17.25 per cent to trade at a low of ₹2.83. It settled with a loss of 11.40 per cent at ₹3.03.
The scrip plummeted 17.64 per cent to ₹2.80 on the National Stock Exchange (NSE). It closed 10.29 per cent lower at ₹3.05.
In terms of traded volume, more than 64 crore shares of the company were traded on the NSE and over 15 crore units exchanged hands on the BSE.
During the day, spurt in volume was more than 3.11 times on the BSE.
The stock has been on a losing spree for the past seven trading sessions on the BSE. It has plunged 43.9 per cent since February 7.

Since then, the company has lost more than Rs 5,800 crore in market capitalisation.
The company on Tuesday said India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has downgraded its rating on non-convertible debentures (NCDs) of ₹3,500 crore.
"The downgrade is on account of severe stress on the company's near-term liquidity after the Supreme Court's ruling on February 14, 2020, which directed the telecom companies to pay the adjusted gross revenue (AGR) related liabilities to the government of India by March 17, 2020," Vodafone Idea said in a BSE filing.
Care Ratings on Monday downgraded the company's rating on its long-term bank facilities and non-convertible debentures.
The downgrade is on account of "significant erosion" in the overall risk profile of the company in the wake of absence of relief on modification plea relating to AGR dues on February 14. It also takes cognisance of recent losses suffered by the company in the quarter ended December 2019.

Hero MotoCorp unveils new products, announces ₹10,000 crore investments

KUSHAN MITRA ■ KUKAS, RAJASTHAN
Later this year, Hero MotoCorp will unveil the 100 millionth motorcycle to leave one of their production lines. In the 35 years since the Munjal-promoted group has been producing two-wheelers, first in collaboration with Japanese major Honda and then by themselves since 2011, they will become the fastest manufacturer to reach this milestone.
But as questions hover around the future viability of the company as it finds itself with a global technology partner unlike their Indian rivals, Bajaj and TVS, the Chairman and promoter of the company, Pawan Munjal wanted to showcase the future with a display of Hero's technological and product development competence at their Centre for Innovation and Technology (CIT) established at Kukas, outside Jaipur.
Hero, which skipped the Auto Expo earlier this month also used the opportunity to launch their latest products that all adhere to the upcoming BS-6 emission norms. As the company has seen increased competition over the years and declining sales of their bestsellers, they also launched the new Glamour 125 and Passion Pro as well as showcasing the Xtreme 160R road racer in the fast growing 150-200cc category.
The company wants to regain their leadership position in these segments where Bajaj, TVS and their erstwhile partner Honda dominates. Speaking to The Pioneer, Munjal also mentioned that Hero could look at potential partnerships with either Indian or global 'frenemy' companies going forward, and that he was not terribly concerned about the move to electric vehicles, "we are a large investor in Ather Energy, India's leading electric two-wheeler company with a 31 per cent stake in the company, and we have been



Hero MotoCorp Chairman and Managing Director, Pawan Munjal, unveils the all-new Hero Xtreme 160R bike during Hero World 2020 in Jaipur on Tuesday **PTI**

OUTLINES STRATEGY FOR NEXT 5-7 YEARS, PLANS GLOBAL EXPANSION AND BELIEVES SECOND-HALF OF 2020 WILL SEE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY REVIVE

helping the company grow. The scooters might not have a 'Hero' but that does not mean that Hero is not seriously looking at this area. Our major issue with the Government's initial plan to move to all-electric vehicles by 2025, which it wisely reconsidered was that the entire infrastructure would be disrupted, from sales channels to mechanics.
The industry could have shifted, but the government has to remember the contribution the automotive industry makes to the Indian economy and think accordingly." He added that Hero was looking at electric and hybrid technologies for two-wheelers as early as 2012 even before the modern shift to such technologies, "we are a leader in this space in India, just because we do not have a product right now should not be something to be worried

about." Munjal also said that Hero would invest over ₹10,000 crore in new plants, research and development and market development over the next five to seven years in order to maintain its leadership. "When we started our solo journey in 2011 we had just 100 engineers doing basic product development in Dharuhera, three plants and exported products to just four countries. Today, we have one of the most advanced R&D centres in the two-wheeler world in Kukas with over 1,000 engineers, products have just started rolling out of our eighth plant in Andhra Pradesh and we have two global factories in Bangladesh and Colombia and we are present in over 40 countries globally. I'm sure our next 100 million will happen a lot faster than our first 100 million."

Panama back on EU tax-haven blacklist

AFP ■ BRUSSELS
The EU on Tuesday put Panama back on its blacklist of tax havens after deciding the country had not done enough to meet global transparency standards.
Panama, along with the Cayman Islands, Seychelles and Palau were added to eight other territories already deemed to be "non-cooperative tax jurisdictions," the Council of the EU said in a statement following a meeting of the bloc's finance ministers.
They join American Samoa, Fiji, Guam, Oman, Samoa, Trinidad and Tobago, the US Virgin Islands and Vanuatu on the list.
The addition of the Cayman Islands represented the first time an overseas British territory was placed on the EU's blacklist.

Rupee slides 22 paise to nearly 3-week low of 71.54 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI
The rupee tumbled by 22 paise to settle at a nearly three-week low of 71.54 against the US dollar on Tuesday as concerns over the economic fallout from coronavirus outbreak continued to roil forex market sentiment.
Besides, sustained foreign fund outflows and subdued equities also put pressure on the rupee.
Starting off the session on a weaker note, the rupee weakened further to hit the day's low of 71.56 against the American currency. The domestic unit finally settled down by 22 paise at 71.54, a level not seen since January 30.
The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose by 0.15 per cent to 99.15.

The 10-year government bond yield was at 6.39 per cent. Global crude oil benchmark Brent futures dropped 1.89 per cent to trade at USD 56.58 per barrel.
"Rupee started the day on a weak note crossing beyond 71.50, majorly on back of selling from institution in risky assets as FIIs (are) likely to be pulling out money from equities as the global market weighs slowdown effects of rising Coronavirus threat in China," LKP Securities Senior Research Analyst (Commodity & Currency) Jateen Trivedi said.
The Financial Benchmark India Private Ltd (FBIL) set the reference rate for the rupee/dollar at 71.4259 and for rupee/euro at 77.4162. The reference rate for rupee/British pound was fixed at 93.1737 and for rupee/100 Japanese yen at 65.02.

BUSINESS CORNER

IIoT CONFERENCE IN SRM DRAWS CROWD

Kattankulathu: Second edition of International Conference on Internet of Things (IIoT) was held at SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur from 17 to 21 February 2020. The event was organised by Department of Computer Science and Engineering.
The chief guests for the event were Vidhyacharan Bhaskar, Professor at the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, San Francisco State University, USA and Raghavendra Belur Jana, Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology Skoltech, Department of Civil Engineering, Moscow, Russia. The conference proceedings, printed in the form of a book of abstracts, were released on the inauguration. Registrar of SRMIST, N Sethuraman, said that this conference will help to discuss various issues related to the Computer Science Department and other Department, making it interdisciplinary. He then urged students to explore other avenues for further research. "There are several challenges and this conference can help you find solutions for the same. It will be a win-win situation where, participants and speakers will get benefited," he said and added, "By understanding the need of IIoT, progress can be achieved. But you will face challenges. Any invention that is not useful for the society will lose its charm and this conference will throw light on the prevailing challenges."



GRSE DELIVERS YARD 3020 KAVARATTI TO NAVY

Kolkata: Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd., (GRSE), a leading Warship builder and Miniratna Category 1 Company under the administrative control of the Ministry of Defence delivered Yard 3020 (Kavaratti), to the Indian Navy on 18 Feb 20. The ship is the 104th Warship built and delivered by GRSE since its inception in 1960 and is the Last in the Series of 04 Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvettes (ASWC) under the Project 28. "Kavaratti" was handed over by Rear Admiral VK Saxena, IN (Retd.), Chairman & Managing Director, GRSE to Cdr. Sandeep Singh, Commanding Officer (Desig) of the ship, in the presence of Cmde. DK Goswami, CEO, Chairman, D448 Eastern Naval Command, Shri S S Dogra, Director (Finance), Cmde. Sanjeev Nayyar, IN (Retd), Director (Shipbuilding) and Cmde. P R Hari, IN (Retd), Director (Personnel) and other Senior Officials of Indian Navy and GRSE. The first three ships of the series, INS Kamorta, INS Kadmat & INS Kiltan were delivered earlier and now form an integral part of Eastern Fleet of the Indian Navy. The P 28 Class of ships strengthens the Indian Defence System and is the shining Armor in the "Make in India" programme.



RBI Governor says no reason to doubt Govt will meet fiscal deficit targets

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Throwing his weight behind Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's budget numbers, Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das has said that there is no reason to doubt that the government will be able to cut fiscal deficit to 3.5 per cent of the GDP in the fiscal beginning April 1.
In an interview with PTI, Das said the government has remained within the limits set by the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Committee for the budget deficit.
The government missed deficit target for the third year in a row, pushing shortfall to 3.8 per cent of the GDP in the current fiscal as compared to 3.3 per cent previously planned. The fiscal deficit target for the coming fiscal year starting April 1, has been fixed at 3.5 per cent.
The fiscal deficit is the shortfall in a government's income compared with its spending. It essentially means that the government is spending beyond its means.
"With regard to the fiscal

management of the government, the government has remained within the recommendations FRBM committee," Das said. "So, therefore, the excess fiscal deficit has been restricted to 0.5 per cent. The government has adhered to that and a large part of the financing of fiscal deficit next year will come from small savings."
The FRBM committee headed by N K Singh had recommended fiscal deficit to be cut to 2.8 per cent in 2020-21 fiscal and to 2.5 per cent by FY2023.
The panel had suggested an "escape clause" in case of overriding consideration of national security, acts of war, calamities of national proportion and collapse of agriculture severely affecting farm output and incomes. Under this, a deviation from the stipulated fiscal deficit target can be taken but not in excess of 0.5 percentage points in a year.
Das said there is no reason to doubt that the fiscal deficit for the next year would be met.
"There is no reason for anyone to doubt that number. The Budget has been presented just about a fortnight ago,"

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that two girls namely (1) Komal, D/o: Ram Gopal, R/o: D-12, Vijay Vihar, Phase-II, Delhi, (2) Reshma, D/o: Babulal, R/o: D-63, Vijay Vihar, Phase-II, New Delhi has been reported missing/kidnapped since 21.01.2020 from the area of P.S. Vijay Vihar, New Delhi. In this regard FIR No. 51/2020, dated 22.01.2020 has been registered at P.S. Vijay Vihar, New Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing/kidnapped girls but no clue has come to light so far. The description of missing/kidnapped girls is as under:
(1) Name: Komal, Age: 16 Years, Height: 5'5", Face: Round, Complexion: Fair, Wearing: Green colour suit, golden colour salwar, black - white colour coat and Blue colour jutti in feet.
(2) Name: Reshma, Age: 15 Years, Height: 5'1", Face: Long, Complexion: Fair, Wearing: Red colour suit, golden colour salwar, red colour jacket and white colour jutti in feet.
If anyone have any information about these missing/kidnapped girls please inform P.S. Vijay Vihar, New Delhi
Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639 **SHO**
Police Station, Vijay Vihar, New Delhi
Ph: 011-27282350, 27280435
DP/3716/RD/2020

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person 45 years of age whose name, residence and family is unknown had been found dead at Safdarjung Hospital Campus, New Delhi. In this regard a vide has been registered with DD No. 09A, dated 14.01.2020 at P.S. S J Enclave, New Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to identify the deceased person but no clue has come to light so far.
The description of the UIDB is as under:
Sex: Male, **Age:** 45 years, **Height:** 170 cm, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Forehead - Narrow, **Hair:** Black, **Wearing:** Black colour jacket and blue colour t-shirt.
If anyone has any information about his relatives, kindly inform the SHO/S J Enclave, New Delhi.
E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641 **SHO**
Fax : 011-24368639 **SHO**
P.S. S J Enclave, New Delhi
Ph. No. 011-24106345, 24106346
DP/7219/SW/2020

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that a boy (depicted in the photo), **Name:** Ravi Panday S/o Satya Prakash Pandey R/o H.No. 28-A, Ph-3, Jai Vihar, Baprola, Ranhola, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped since 04.02.2020 from the area of P.S. Ranhola, Delhi. In this regard a case vide FIR No. 92/20 u/s 363 IPC dated 05.02.2020 has been registered at Police Station Ranhola, Delhi. His physical description is as under:-
Age : 17 Years, **Height:** 5'5", **Complexion :** Shallow, **Face :** Long, **Wearing :** Black Colour Jacket and Sky Blue Colour Jeans & Black and White shoes in feet.
Any person having any information/Clue about this missing/kidnapped boy, may inform SHO, Ranhola, Delhi at E-mail id - cic@cbi.gov.in or Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> **SHO**
Phone: **011-24368638, 24368641** **P.S. Ranhola, Delhi**
011-24368639 **Outer Distt., Delhi**
DP/3144/OD/2020 **Ph. No. 011-28363001, 28363002, 28363003**

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

See Section U/S 82 Cr. P.C.
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Bhagwan Shahai @ Raju S/o Sh. Narayan Meena R/o V.P.O. Kota-Pattli, P.S. Lawan District Dausa, Rajasthan** has Committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence **FIR No. 89/11 u/s 379 IPC** has been registered at **P.S. Delhi Cantt, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Bhagwan Shahai @ Raju** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Bhagwan Shahai @ Raju** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).
Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Bhagwan Shahai @ Raju** of **FIR No. 89/11 u/s 379 IPC** has been registered at **P.S. Delhi Cantt, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **24.03.2020**
By order
Ms. Ankita Lal, Ld. MM,
Patiala House Court, New Delhi
DP/7206/SW/20

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused female namely **Smt. Maya, W/o: Sh. Vinod, R/o: Jhuggi Bakkarwala & Jhuggi Raghurib Nagar, New Delhi**, has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 958/15 dated 19.09.2015 U/s 379/411/34 IPC** registered at P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued (unexecuted), stating that the said **Smt. Maya** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Smt. Maya** has absconded (or is concealing her self to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proceeding u/s 82 Cr.P.C. has been initiated in this case. Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Smt. Maya** accused of **FIR No. 958/15 dated 19.09.2015 U/s 379/411/34 IPC** P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer said complaint on or before **24.03.2020**.
By Order
Mr. Anuj Kumar Singh
Metropolitan Magistrate 03,
Court No. 212,
Saket Courts, New Delhi
DP/7210/SW/2020

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Share Certificate No(s) 00045198 & 00045199 for 200 Equity share(s) having distinctive nos. 9912501 to 9912600 & 9912601 to 9912700 respectively of Merino Industries Ltd., having its registered Office at 5, Alexander Court 60/1, Chowringhee Road Kolkata - 700020, registered in the name of Mr. Narendra Garg, Folio No. 001915, have been lost. I, now has applied to the Company for issue of duplicate share certificates in lieu of above. Any person having any objection to the issue of duplicate Share certificate(s) as aforesaid is requested to lodge objection thereto with the Company at their above address, or to its Registrars C B Management Services (P) Ltd., P-22, Bondel Road, Kolkata-700019 in writing within 15 days from the date of publication.
Sd/-
Narendra Prakash Garg,
House No. 433, Maheshwari Mandir Wali
Gali, W-33, Arya Nagar, Hapur (UP) - 245101
Date :
Place : Hapur

To present first UK Budget on March 11: Rishi Sunak

PTI ■ LONDON
The UK Government will present the Budget on March 11 as previously announced, the new Indian-origin Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said on Tuesday as he vowed to unleash the country's potential and deliver the promises made to the voters.
There had been much speculation that the Budget could be delayed after the 39-year-old son-in-law of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy replaced Pakistani-origin Sajid Javid following his shock resignation on February 13.
Now it will be presented as previously scheduled on March 11, he said on his maiden Budget. Sunak tweeted that he was "cracking on" with preparations "and would deliver the promises made to voters ahead of December's General Election won by the Conservative Party led by Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

China to waive tariffs on US medical imports amid virus outbreak

AFP ■ BEIJING
China will waive trade-tariffs on imports of selected US medical equipment from March 2, the Government said Tuesday, as the country battles to contain the new coronavirus epidemic. The move comes as doctors and nurses treating virus patients in China's overstretched hospitals struggle to deal with the health crisis amid a shortage of basic medical items.
More than 72,000 people have been infected by the outbreak of the new COVID-19 strain in China, which has claimed the lives of over 1,800 people.
Patient monitors, blood transfusion equipment and instruments to measure blood pressure are among the products that qualify for the exemptions, according to a list released by the Tariff Commission of the State Council. They are among 696 US products that now qualify for waivers, including key agricultural and energy items such as frozen pork and beef, soybeans and liquified natural gas.

India Inc to dole out 9.1% salary hike in 2020: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Companies in India are projected to dole out an average salary hike of 9.1 per cent this year, the highest level in the Asia Pacific region, as they look for key talent and niche skills, says a report.

However, the quantum is lower than 9.3 per cent increase seen in 2019 and also the lowest in a decade.

Leading HR consultancy Aon's annual salary hike survey released on Tuesday also showed that around 39 per cent of the companies surveyed are expected to give as much as 10 per cent increase in pay.

The results are based on responses from over 1,000 organisations spread across more than 20 countries.

In the Asia-Pacific region, India is expected to dole out the highest salary hike at 9.1 per cent, followed by China at 6.3 per cent this year. For India, the previous lowest quantum of hike was 6.6 per cent in 2009, as per Aon. As per the survey, Philippines is anticipated to see a salary rise of 5.8 per cent, followed by Malaysia (5.3 per cent), Singapore (3.8 per cent) and Australia (3.1 per cent) in 2020.

"Despite economic chal-



lenges in 2019, organisations in India are taking a positive view. Pay increases in India continue to be the highest in the region," Tzeitel Fernandes, Partner (Rewards Solutions) at Aon told reporters here.

A big reason for India's higher salary increase, as compared to other growing economies, is the high inflation rate and the war for key talent and niche skills, Fernandes noted.

In 2019, companies in India gave an average pay increase of 9.3 per cent, reflecting a slowdown in the econ-

omy compared to 2018, the survey said.

According to the survey, 39 per cent firms are expected to raise the salary over 10 per cent while 42 per cent would go for an increase between 8-10 per cent.

In the manufacturing segment, pharmaceuticals is expected to give the highest salary hike followed by FMCG and chemicals, among others.

E-commerce and professional services businesses are expected to give double-digit salary increase this year in the business sector.

IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION, INDIA IS EXPECTED TO DOLE OUT THE HIGHEST SALARY HIKE AT 9.1 PER CENT, FOLLOWED BY CHINA AT 6.3 PER CENT THIS YEAR. FOR INDIA, THE PREVIOUS LOWEST QUANTUM OF HIKE WAS 6.6 PER CENT IN 2009, AS PER AON

"We see a reduction in the differences between pay increases across industries, with 85 per cent of the organisations projecting between 7-11 per cent, a sign of maturing business ecosystems.

"However, the premium for high performance and new age skills continues to rise," Navneet Rattan, Director (Organisation, Performance and Rewards) at Aon India, said. About business outlook, 92 per cent of the firms surveyed expect their business improving or stabilising in 2020 while the rest 8 per cent felt there would be a decline in business.

Irdai says 'yet to get' proposal from LIC on IPO

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Insurance watchdog Irdai is yet to get any proposal from life insurance behemoth LIC on an initial public offering but feels a listing is better from a governance perspective, chairman SC Khuntia said on Tuesday. He also said that there is nothing for the life insurance industry to worry for the time being with regard to government's move on certain income tax exemptions as the alternative to invest still exists.

Khuntia also asked insurance companies to "weed out" loss-making products and concentrate only on the better paying ones. On the IPO of Life Insurance Corporation of India, announced in the budget, he said, "LIC proposal has not yet come".

"Any company which goes public there will be better corporate governance and better disclosure," he told reporters on the sidelines of an event of actuaries here.

On being asked if LIC's business will need any restructuring before IPO, Khuntia said that work on the same is being carried out by the government. He said it is a good idea for every insurance company to list and the Insurance Regulation and Development Authority of India (Irdai) will nudge entities to go for the same. It is, however, not making it mandatory to list

because smaller companies are yet to achieve the scale for going public, Khuntia said, adding that ideally a company should achieve sufficient scale to list within ten years of its existence.

He said the practice of annual product review needs to be carried out in full seriousness by the players and pitched for a weeding out of the loss making ones.

"I would like to encourage companies to weed out products which are not selling and simply adding to the number, then they will be able to manage those products well," he said, adding that the plea was made at a meeting with chief executives recently.

When pointed out about practices where industry players are compromising on financials in the health insurance segment while signing on to group schemes, Khuntia said the Irdai wants players to be sustainable, where they don't create losses nor do they earn excess profits.

He, however, said that Irdai will not intervene on the pricing front but will limit itself to pointing out concerns to the players and issue notices if necessary. Khuntia went public with his disappointment at the low growth levels of the life and general insurance segments despite the under penetration in India. General

insurance grew at 14 per cent last year as against its potential to grow at 17-18 per cent, while the life insurance segment grew only at 10 per cent as against the 12-13 per cent potential, he said.

Termining the actuaries as the conscience keepers of the insurance industry, Khuntia asked the Institute of Actuaries of India to take more efforts to increase the number, adding that inherent skill sets in mathematics and software make Indians very amenable to the stream. He said India has only 460 actuaries for a population of 1.3 billion, while the US has 37,000 actuaries despite having less than a third of Indian population.

Khuntia said only LIC has undertaken efforts on micro-insurance and exhorted others to fasten up on the same given the needs in India.

Changing dynamics, including climate change and also aspects like the corona virus outbreak, present newer challenges before the industry and the actuaries will rise up to the same. Khuntia said he is also trying to revive the loss prevention efforts like the now defunct loss prevention society for general insurance, explaining that a reduction in losses can bring down premium costs for policyholders and also make more people embrace insurance.

Moody's lowers Apac growth forecast for 2020 to 5.2% due to coronavirus

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Moody's on Tuesday lowered growth forecast for the Asia-Pacific (Apac) region to 5.2 per cent for 2020 citing the lingering impact of the coronavirus outbreak in China, the impact of which will be more pronounced on China and India.

The coronavirus that emerged in China early January has killed over 1,860 people and infected more than 72,000 so far and there is no end in sight yet. The epidemic has forced China to shutter over a dozen of its teeming cities, locking up over 60 million people and closing down tens of thousands of factories, impacting the global supply chain. The impact of the shuttering is large as China contributes a whopping 16 per cent of global GDP, up from 4 per cent when it was hit by the SARS virus in 2003 and consumes over a fifth of metals globally besides controlling over 40 per cent of the global apparel and textile trade.

As of now, from the supply side, the electronics market is the worst hit as the Hubei province, the fountainhead of the epidemic outbreak, is known as the 'Optics Valley' of the world.

NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	12028.25	12030.75	11908.05	11992.50	-53.30
COALINDIA	168.10	173.95	165.00	172.75	4.90
ZEELE	240.00	247.55	238.65	245.70	6.50
BPCIL	461.75	472.50	456.00	472.30	10.65
GAIL	118.00	119.75	116.75	119.75	1.75
ADANIAPORTS	362.50	368.45	358.35	368.00	5.20
SBIN	315.40	319.20	309.40	318.05	3.85
CIPLA	433.00	437.65	428.10	437.00	5.10
EICHERMOT	18500.00	18791.95	18339.60	18751.25	215.35
INFY	782.00	799.05	783.65	798.50	9.05
POWERGRID	182.60	186.35	180.85	185.20	1.60
IOC	111.90	115.10	110.45	112.70	0.90
TECHM	825.35	840.00	825.35	838.55	5.80
IT	1281.50	1289.80	1266.45	1288.00	7.30
TCS	2199.95	2221.00	2186.05	2215.00	11.75
ULTRACEMCO	4433.60	4488.20	4370.10	4470.70	20.85
BAJAJ-AUTO	3064.70	3090.55	3033.50	3086.00	10.40
BAJAJFINSV	9527.00	9564.95	9416.00	9550.00	21.15
KOTAKBANK	1682.50	1699.80	1678.30	1692.95	1.85
M&M	520.50	524.90	514.10	523.20	0.45
WIPRO	243.75	244.85	241.25	244.00	0.20
NTPC	109.60	110.90	108.30	110.30	0.00
HDFCBANK	1216.90	1218.50	1203.50	1217.05	-0.10
ICICIBANK	541.00	544.40	536.00	540.90	-0.70
BAJFINANCE	4769.40	4771.95	4701.60	4770.00	-6.65
BRITANNIA	3080.00	3080.00	3020.00	3075.00	-9.10
ITC	204.55	204.60	200.50	204.05	-0.75
TITAN	1314.00	1318.90	1301.25	1311.00	-5.90
AXISBANK	737.75	737.75	724.70	735.20	-2.05
ONGC	99.95	100.25	96.55	99.50	-0.45
HINDUNILVR	2252.60	2262.95	2222.10	2241.50	-11.10
SUNPHARMA	407.00	410.85	399.05	406.10	-2.30
HCLTECH	613.45	615.80	605.15	609.80	-3.65
ASIANPAINT	1879.90	1879.90	1861.00	1869.25	-12.15
RELIANCE	1475.90	1475.90	1457.40	1466.90	-11.35
TATASTEEL	434.00	435.45	421.30	432.65	-4.20
VEDL	141.75	141.75	137.50	140.70	-1.40
NESTLEIND	16569.90	16569.90	16385.05	16417.50	-179.95
JSWSTEEL	289.00	289.15	281.10	285.00	-3.15
HDFC	2349.00	2349.00	2304.00	2324.05	-26.20
DREDDY	3288.00	3288.00	3233.25	3253.00	-42.55
HEROMOTOCO	2283.20	2283.20	2225.00	2249.95	-33.40
MARUTI	6925.00	6930.00	6735.80	6795.00	-111.75
UPL	592.00	592.00	574.00	584.85	-10.15
GRASIM	737.35	741.20	715.55	723.55	-13.85
BHARTIARTL	563.35	568.85	537.30	549.00	-15.85
HINDALCO	189.15	189.45	181.75	184.80	-5.45
INDUSINDBK	1172.70	1172.70	1108.45	1138.15	-34.80
TATAMOTORS	168.00	168.00	158.60	162.55	-5.55
YESBANK	37.35	37.50	33.65	34.80	-2.35
INFRAEEL	235.40	235.40	200.70	208.35	-66.65

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP
INDUSINDBK	1174.00	1174.05	1144.15	1144.15
TATACHEM	756.00	756.55	743.20	750.00
BHARTIARTL	564.00	568.60	537.65	547.75
MUTHOOTFIN	872.20	898.00	846.40	869.00
RELIANCE	1479.00	1479.00	1458.00	1466.10
IDEA	3.28	3.28	2.83	3.03
SBIN	315.90	319.00	309.50	317.60
HDFC	2346.00	2346.00	2304.25	2323.15
YESBANK	37.45	37.55	33.70	35.05
TATASTEEL	434.60	434.75	421.35	431.65
TATAMOTORS	168.40	168.40	158.60	161.60
DMART	2381.00	2386.00	2307.35	2365.30
IBULHSGFIN	308.05	308.70	293.45	300.00
LICHSGFIN	382.00	382.45	354.50	363.65
MARUTI	6922.15	6934.50	6701.00	6772.00
HCLTECH	614.00	615.65	605.00	607.00
TCS	2209.90	2221.35	2125.30	2215.00
NCC	42.70	42.70	37.70	41.45
ICICIBANK	541.00	543.15	536.15	541.30
AXISBANK	737.20	738.30	706.65	717.35
RBLBANK	307.25	308.05	292.25	302.05
MIDHANI	228.00	237.30	214.00	219.10
IT	1281.00	1289.65	1266.65	1286.25
TATAGLOBAL	380.90	386.25	373.40	382.05
ABOTINDIA	14671.65	15650.00	14590.00	15456.95
INFRAEEL	235.00	236.10	200.70	210.10
HDFCBANK	1215.00	1218.00	1204.00	1213.50
PRMSJOHNSN	63.55	64.95	63.20	63.30
AXISBANK	737.60	737.60	724.65	733.40
HDFC	2340.00	2346.75	2318.55	2320.35
POWERGRID	183.00	185.90	181.00	185.00
JSWSTEEL	289.25	289.05	281.10	284.85
IRCON	522.30	564.00	511.00	557.70
MGL	1134.00	1174.60	1118.00	1137.60
ULTRACEMCO	4464.00	4486.40	4371.95	4467.40
BAJAJFINSV	9500.15	9559.40	9438.05	9530.75
BAJFINANCE	4777.05	4777.05	4704.00	4735.15
HINDUNILVR	2260.00	2260.00	2222.15	2232.90
ACC	1422.05	1427.00	1403.25	1422.05
BANKBARODA	82.25	82.30	78.15	81.05
ONGC	100.30	100.30	96.60	99.20
COALINDIA	169.30	174.00	165.00	172.15
DLF	217.00	219.25	216.60	218.15
JINDALSTEL	189.10	189.15	181.85	185.20
ASIANPAINT	1880.00	1884.80	1862.00	1863.30
TATAELXSI	985.95	991.65	936.00	968.05
BPCIL	460.05	472.35	456.50	471.10
TITAN	1317.00	1318.40	1302.00	1310.70
BATAINDIA	1785.00	1817.80	1785.00	1797.45
ITC	204.95	204.95	200.30	203.20
INFY	787.00	798.90	783.30	797.45
ZEELE	240.30	247.10	238.65	245.55
KOTAKBANK	1691.00	1699.00	1678.80	1691.05
BALKRISIND	1270.00	1273.45	1228.95	1238.25
IGL	467.00	479.80	462.00	470.70
JUSTDIAL	505.85	505.85	480.50	488.95
CIPLA	434.55	437.50	428.50	435.65
NITITECH	1830.00	1853.75	1808.00	1849.05
TV18BRDCST	27.90	30.10	27.35	28.85
MANAPPURAM	169.00	171.35	166.75	170.25
COLPAL	131.00	1332.75	1306.80	1325.50
AUROPHARMA	491.45	502.80	482.50	500.20
PEL	153.00	1533.00	1473.95	1522.30
DEEPAKNI	454.20	491.55	432.00	482.55
ESCORTS	885.40	896.50	872.65	888.10
DELTAACORP	155.75	155.70	146.65	149.95
BRIITANNIA	3075.35	3075.35	3022.10	3065.70
NTPC	1097.75	1107.00	1039.90	1090.70
NAM-INDIA	397.80	394.50	366.00	391.65
ASHOKLEY	81.35	81.55	79.20	80.25
PNB	52.00	52.45	49.90	52.05
DREDDY	3262.05	3281.90	3235.00	3250.20
BEML	915.00	915.00	871.95	876.55
IOC	111.75	115.10	110.45	112.70
STAR	502.40	502.40	483.20	487.85
SUNPHARMA	408.40	410.75	399.10	408.70

CORONAVIRUS

Senior doctor dies in China, toll reaches 1,868

Beijing: The head of a hospital in China's coronavirus-hit Wuhan city died of the epidemic amid criticism that a number of medical staff were infected due to official attempts to conceal the key findings of human-to-human transmission of the virus, as the death toll from the disease on Tuesday soared to 1,868.

Tuesday. Monday also saw the new confirmed infections of COVID-19 outside Hubei reduced to a number lower than 100 for the first time, Mi told the media. Comparing the statistics in the peak period, Mi said the first appearance of these noteworthy decreasing numbers demonstrate that the epidemic situation is improving. While officials claimed that the virus is stabilising, one of Wuhan's most senior doctors has died after contracting the coronavirus. used. PTT

Activist who criticised Xi over virus held: Rights group

Beijing: Police in China have arrested a prominent activist who had been a fugitive for weeks and criticised President Xi Jinping's handling of the coronavirus epidemic while in hiding, a rights group said on Tuesday. Anti-corruption activist Xu Zhiyong was arrested on Saturday after being on the run since December, according to Amnesty International. China's ruling Communist Party has severely curtailed civil liberties since Xi took power in 2012, rounding up rights lawyers, labour activists and even Marxist students. The death this month of a whistleblowing doctor who was reprimanded by police for raising the alarm about the deadly new virus before dying of it himself triggered rare calls for political reform and freedom of speech. AFP

Around 500 to leave quarantined Japan ship today: Official

AFP ■ TOKYO Around 500 passengers will leave a cruise ship quarantined off Japan on Wednesday after testing negative for the new coronavirus that has infected hundreds on board, a health ministry official said on Tuesday. "The number (who will leave Wednesday) is changing, largely because it is up to passengers (if they get off)," the official told reporters. "But it will be around 500 people." Only those who have tested negative and have not been in close contact with a person infected with the virus will be allowed off on Wednesday and many disembarking will be Japanese passengers, the official said. "They will go home on public transport but they will be taken by bus to places such as stations," he added. Those who leave the ship will not face any restrictions, the official said. "They won't be forbidden to go out."

VIRUS-HIT PROVINCE REWARDS DOCS' CHILDREN WITH EXTRA EXAM POINTS

Beijing: Children of China's frontline medical workers battling the deadly coronavirus will be awarded extra exam points when applying for schools and higher education, local officials said on Tuesday. Doctors and nurses in Hubei province — where the outbreak originated and which has reported the majority of deaths — have been lionised online and by state media. China's schooling system places a major emphasis on exams, and even younger children face extreme competition to get into top schools that parents believe will raise their chances of getting into a good university. The measures will "further care for the province's frontline medical staff" and encourage them to be more "resolute" in their fight to contain the virus, the province said in a statement. AFP

New virus poses 'enormous' risks: UN chief

Lahore: The UN secretary general said on Tuesday that the virus outbreak that began in China poses "a very dangerous situation" for the world, but "is not out of control." Speaking in an interview with The Associated Press, Antonio Guterres said that "the risks are enormous and we need to be prepared worldwide for that." Guterres said his greatest worry was a spread of the virus to areas with "less capacity in their health service," particularly some African countries. The World Health Organization is looking into how to help handle such a development, he added. Egypt recently reported its first case of the virus, raising fears of its spread to the African continent. The outbreak has infected more than 73,000 people globally. The World Health Organization has named the illness COVID-19, referring to its origin late last year and the coronavirus that causes it. China on Tuesday reported 1,866 new cases and 98 more deaths. That raised the number of deaths in mainland China to 1,868 and the total number of confirmed cases to 72,436. Travel to and from the worst-hit central China region was associated with the initial cases of COVID-19 confirmed abroad. But Japan, Singapore and South Korea have identified new cases without clear ties to China or previously known patients, raising concern of the virus spreading locally. AP

Bloomber makes debate stage, facing Dem rivals for 1st time

Washington: Billionaire Mike Bloomberg has qualified for the upcoming Democratic presidential debate, marking the first time he'll stand alongside the rivals he has so far avoided by bypassing the early voting states and using his personal fortune to define himself through television ads. A new NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist poll published on Tuesday shows Bloomberg with 19 per cent support nationally in the Democratic nominating contest. The former New York City mayor, who launched his presidential campaign in November, will appear in Wednesday's debate in Las Vegas alongside former Vice President Joe Biden, Sens. Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren and Amy Klobuchar and former South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg. Fellow billionaire and philanthropist Tom Steyer is still hoping to qualify. Bloomberg's campaign said that it was seeing "a groundswell of support across the country" and that qualifying for Wednesday's debate "is the latest sign that Mike's plan and ability to defeat Donald Trump is resonating with more Americans." "Mike is looking forward to joining the other Democratic candidates on stage and making the case for why he's the best candidate to defeat Donald Trump and unite the country," Bloomberg campaign manager Kevin Sheekey said in a statement. The Democratic National Committee recently changed its rules for how a candidate qualifies for the debate, opening the door for Bloomberg to be on stage and drawing the ire of some candidates who dropped out of the race for failing to make prior stages. The candidates were previously required to receive a certain number of campaign contributions to qualify, but Bloomberg, who is worth an estimated USD 60 billion, is not taking donations. The prime-time event will be a stark departure from Bloomberg's highly choreographed campaign. He's poured more than USD 300 million into television advertising, a way to define himself for voters without facing criticism. While he's campaigned in more than two dozen states, he does not take questions from voters and delivers a standard stump speech that lasts less than 15 minutes, often reading from a teleprompter. AP

Iran sentences alleged US spies to up to 10 yrs in prison

Tehran: Iran sentenced eight environmental activists, including an Iranian who reportedly also has British and American citizenship, to prison sentences ranging from four to 10 years on charges of spying for the United States and acting against Iran's national security, the judiciary said on Tuesday. According to the judiciary spokesman, Gholamhossein Esmaili, an appeals court issued the final verdicts. Two of the activists, Morad Tahbaz and Niloufar Bayani, got 10 years each and were ordered to return the money they allegedly received from the U.S. Government for their services. Tahbaz is an Iranian who also holds U.S. and British citizenship. Iran does not recognize dual or multiple nationalities, meaning Iranians it detains cannot receive consular assistance from their other countries. In most cases, dual nationals have faced secret charges in closed-door hearings before Iran's Revolutionary Court, which handles cases involving alleged attempts to overthrow the government. Esmaili, the judiciary spokesman, said two other activists, Houman Jokar and Taher Ghadirian, each got eight-year sentences for allegedly "collaborating with the hostile government of America." Another three of the activists, Sam Rajabi, Sepideh Kashan Doust and Amirhossein Khaleghi Hamidi, were sentenced to six years in prison each. The fifth activist, Abdolreza Kouhpayeh, got four years. All the activists were arrested in early 2018. A ninth activist who was arrested at the time, Kavous Seyed Emami, an Iranian-Canadian national, died while in custody under disputed circumstances in February 2018. His widow then was blocked from flying out of Iran, but later made it out. AP

BARE-FACED ROBBERY: THIEVES STEAL 6,000 HYGIENE MASKS IN JAPAN

Tokyo: Thieves in Japan have made off with some 6,000 surgical masks from a hospital, with the country facing a mass shortage and a huge price hike online due to the coronavirus. Four boxes containing the face masks disappeared from a locked storage facility at the Japanese Red Cross hospital in the western port city of Kobe, a hospital official said on Tuesday. "We still have a large number of masks — enough to continue our daily operations at the hospital, but this is so deplorable," the official told AFP. Police have launched an investigation as they suspect the thieves intend to resell the masks. Masks have sold out at many drug and discount stores across the nation as the number of infections have increased in Japan — one of the most affected countries after China where the death toll from the virus has hit 1,800. AFP

Ashraf Ghani secures second term as Afghan Prez: Results

Kabul: Ashraf Ghani has secured a second term as president of Afghanistan, according to final results of the September 28, 2019 poll released on Tuesday by the country's election commission. "The election commission... Declares Mr Ashraf Ghani, who has won 50.64 per cent of the votes, as the president of Afghanistan," election commission chief Hawa Alam Nuristani told a press conference in Kabul. "May God help him in serving the people of Afghanistan... I also pray that peace comes to our country," she added. The results had been delayed for nearly five months after allegations of vote-rigging from Ghani's main rival, Afghanistan's Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, forced a recount. The delay left Afghanistan facing a political crisis just as the US seeks a deal with the Taliban which would allow it to withdraw troops in return for various security guarantees and a promise that the militants would hold peace talks with the Afghan government. If all goes well, then Ghani is likely to be the man sitting across from the Taliban at the negotiating table in a bid to chart Afghanistan's future. Earlier this week, Abdullah's team said they would not accept fraudulent results. AFP

Netanyahu graft trial to begin in March: Court

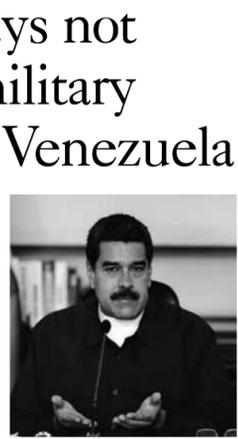
Jerusalem: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's corruption trial will begin on March 17, an Israeli court said Tuesday, just two weeks after national elections are held. Netanyahu is charged with bribery, fraud and breach of trust under a number of cases in which he is alleged to have accepted lavish gifts from billionaire friends and exchanged regulatory favors for more positive media coverage. In a brief statement, the court said Netanyahu is expected to attend the initial hearing. Israel will hold parliamentary elections on March 2, its third vote in less than a year. The first two elections were largely a referendum on Netanyahu, and the third is expected to be no different. AP

Maduro says not afraid of military combat in Venezuela

Caracas: President Nicolas Maduro on Monday said he is "not afraid of military combat," accusing his US counterpart Donald Trump of plotting to invade Venezuela with the support of regional allies. "We don't want war; we don't want violence; we don't want terrorism, but we are not afraid of military combat and we are going to guarantee peace," said Maduro in a televised speech, surrounded by the armed forces high command. "Donald Trump was convinced that it is easy to get into Venezuela," said the socialist leader, accusing the US of having assembled a "mercenary force" to invade. The US is one of more than 50 countries that have recognized opposition leader Juan Guaido as Venezuela's interim president after Maduro's 2018 reelection was widely denounced as rigged. Maduro, however, still enjoys the support of Turkey, Russia, China and Cuba. He also said there were groups of military "deserters" training in neighboring Colombia to "enter silently and attack military units." Military exercises were carried out over the weekend, Maduro added, in response to alleged attack plans orchestrated by the US, Colombia and Brazil. According to official figures, some 2.4 million soldiers and members of the civilian militia were deployed throughout the country. The practices were carried out "based on real threats, not imagined ones," said defense minister General Vladimir Padrino, who was seated next to Maduro during the president's speech. Trump vowed to "smash" Maduro's rule in his annual State of the Union address to Congress, which was also attended by Guaido, earlier this month. Trump branded Maduro as a "tyrant" during his speech and called Guaido the "legitimate president of Venezuela." After returning from a three-week international tour, Guaido said a change of Government in his country was "inevitable." On Sunday, he said the military had the opportunity to make the change less "traumatic." AFP

Mysterious toxic gas kills 14 in Pak

Karachi: A mysterious toxic gas has killed at least 14 people and sickened several others in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi, police said on Tuesday. Authorities were alerted to the incident when the residents of Karachi's Keamari area began rushing to nearby hospitals with severe breathing problems on Sunday night. The source of a toxic gas leak remained unclear on Tuesday. Officials said 14 people have been killed so far, Dawn newspaper reported. Ziauddin Hospital spokesperson Amir Shehzad told the newspaper that nine deaths took place at the hospital's Keamari Campus over the course of the past two days. According to the police, two other deaths were reported at the Kutiyana Hospital. Dozens of others have been hospitalised in various medical facilities across the city. "We are still clueless about the possible cause of the incident," Karachi police chief Ghulam Nabi Memon said. PTT



Nicolas Maduro

Turkey seeks 695 arrests over links to US-based cleric

Ankara: Turkish prosecutors have issued detention warrants against 695 people suspected of links to the US-based Muslim cleric blamed by Turkey for a failed coup attempt in 2016, state media reported on Tuesday. Anadolu Agency said prosecutors were seeking the arrests of 467 people suspected of cheating in a police promotion examination in 2009. Warrants were also issued against 157 military officers — 101 of them still on active duty — and 71 Justice Ministry personnel. On July 15, 2016, a group of officers attempted a coup to overthrow Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Some 250 people were killed and more than 2,000 were injured during the failed attempt. Some 70,000 people have been arrested and around 130,000 others, including military personnel, have been dismissed from state jobs in a crackdown on Gulen's network since the coup. Gulen, who has lived in self-imposed exile in the United States since 1999, denies involvement in the coup attempt. AP

Iran Guards member killed in Syria's Aleppo: Report

Tehran: A member of Iran's Revolutionary Guards was killed in bombardment in Syria's Aleppo on Tuesday, Fars news agency reported. "Hamidreza Babelkhani... Was martyred this morning in a rocket strike," said the Iranian news agency, which is close to ultra-conservatives in the Islamic republic. Babelkhani was also known by his nom de guerre Haj Ebrahim, Fars added, without giving his rank. The brief report also showed a picture of Babelkhani in a forest area wearing tan fatigues with the Guards' insignia and a dark green beret. Iran, alongside Russia, has strongly backed the government of President Bashar al-Assad in Syria's civil war. More than 380,000 people have been killed in Syria since the conflict broke out nearly nine years ago. Iran says its forces are in Syria at the invitation of Assad's government and only in an advisory role. AFP

WESTERN RAILWAY E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE No.S/05/2020 Date 18/02/2020

Table with columns: S.N., Short Description of Items, Quantity, T.O.D. Includes items like ELECTRO-SURGICAL GENERATOR, Hydraulic Machine, etc.

WESTERN RAILWAY EARTH & MISCELLANEOUS CONSTRUCTION WORKS

Table with columns: S.N., Short Description of Items, Quantity, T.O.D. Includes items like Earthwork, Construction of Major/Minor bridges, etc.

WESTERN RAILWAY UPDATING, RECONCILING, CERTIFICATION AND COMPUTERISATION OF LAND PLANS. Executive: DEN/East/BCT. Tender Notice No.: BCT/19-20/413 Dated: 17.02.2020.

Public Notice Shri Ram Dev Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd. House No.125, 1st Floor, Phase-4, Bharat Nagar, Ashok Vihar, New Delhi-110052.

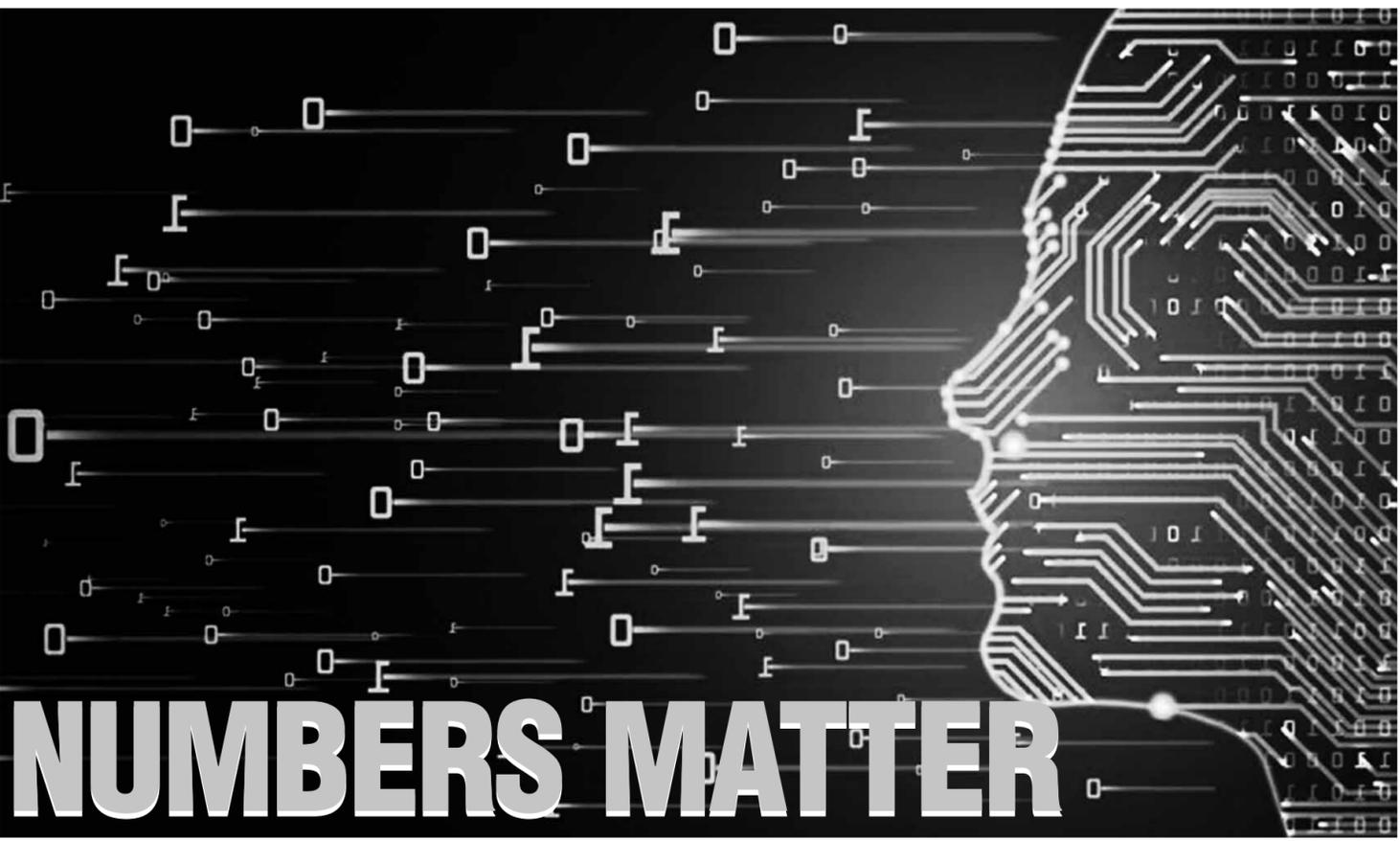
PUBLIC NOTICE Honble court of LD SHRI PRASHANT SHARMA ADJ/THC/Delhi vide order dated 15.02.2020 has appointed Sh. Himanshu Singhal as local commissioner for auctioning the articles of Fitzone Gym.

NOTICE TATA STEEL LIMITED Registered Office: Bombay House, 24, Horni Moady Street, Fort, Mumbai - 400001. NOTICE is hereby given to that the certificates for the under mentioned securities of the Company have been lost/misplaced and the holder of the said securities have applied to the Company to issue duplicate certificates.

Modification & re-alignment of 220 KV (D/C) etc E-Tender Notice No. DY.CEE/CON/MLG/04/2020; Dated: 17-02-2020.

WESTERN RAILWAY EARTH & MISCELLANEOUS CONSTRUCTION WORKS Deputy Chief Engineer (Const.) II, Western Railway, 8th floor, station building, Churchgate, Mumbai - 400 020 invites offer through E-tender portal www.ireps.gov.in under two bid system i.e. (1) Technical bid with eligibility criteria, terms & conditions and (2) price bid for the following tender - Tender No: Dy CE(C)/CCG/325. Name of work: Earthwork, Construction/strengthening of Major/Minor bridges, Construction of subways, side drains, boundary walls and retaining walls etc. between B and A to Borivali stations in connection with providing 6th line between Mumbai Central to Borivali stations of Mumbai Division of Western Railway. NIT Cost: ₹44,69,10,725.76. EMD: ₹23,84,600/-.

WESTERN RAILWAY EARTH & MISCELLANEOUS CONSTRUCTION WORKS Deputy Chief Engineer (Const.) II, Western Railway, 8th floor, station building, Churchgate, Mumbai - 400 020 invites offer through E-tender portal www.ireps.gov.in under two bid system i.e. (1) Technical bid with eligibility criteria, terms & conditions and (2) price bid for the following tender - Tender No: Dy CE(C)/CCG/325. Name of work: Earthwork, Construction/strengthening of Major/Minor bridges, Construction of subways, side drains, boundary walls and retaining walls etc. between B and A to Borivali stations in connection with providing 6th line between Mumbai Central to Borivali stations of Mumbai Division of Western Railway. NIT Cost: ₹44,69,10,725.76. EMD: ₹23,84,600/-.



NUMBERS MATTER

Data science and machine learning offer several opportunities. KUNAL JAIN shares tips that can help to make it a lucrative option

Technology is changing at a pace that multiple industries are ripe for disruption. What was relevant and sought after a few years ago, is no longer in vogue. Ask a Digital Marketeer, a banker or for that matter a professional in any industry — would they be relevant if they did not learn new things for the last five years?

In a lot of scenarios — having experience is actually going against you. Try saying that you have seven years of experience in NET/Java/software testing and see what opportunities do you get. Now say that you are in your final year of graduation, have a good understanding of machine learning and have been winning data science competitions for a year — you will see floodgates of opportunities open.

The point is that the field for creating impact after graduation has never been this flat before.

Also there has been a slew of new technologies which have become mainstream in the last five years. blockchain, data science, Internet of

Devices (IoT), augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR), reusable space vehicles, new programming languages, new programming frameworks — all of these have come up in the last five years.

So one can't ask for experience beyond a few years, if one wants to hire a lot of people and make fast progress. Among all of these, data science and machine learning probably hold the most number of opportunities as things see today. Data science is now a horizontal impacting multiple industries — banking, telecom, e-commerce and oil & gas. So, it is no surprise that most of the graduates coming out today look up to building careers in data science.

Having said that, a lot of them do not make a meaningful effort in learning and applying the subject. Hence, it is still a very small percentage of people coming out today — who get opportunities in data science. But, with the right preparation and application — there is no limit to the kind of opportunity you can get and the kind of impact you can create.

START LEARNING ABOUT DATA SCIENCE AND PROGRAMMING AS SOON AS YOU CAN. IT DOES NOT MATTER WHICH STREAM YOU ARE IN. AS LONG AS YOU HAVE GOOD QUANT SKILLS, LOVE PROBLEM-SOLVING AND HAVE A LOT OF CURIOSITY, YOU ARE A GOOD FIT

So, how does one prepare for a data science career as a person graduating soon? Here are some handy tips.

- Start learning about data science and programming as soon as you can. It does not matter which stream you are in. As long as you have good quant skills, love problem solving and have a lot of curiosity — you are a good fit with data science roles. Start by learning python, basics of statistics and linear algebra. Once you have done that — you can move ahead with learning data science algorithms and processes.
- Apply what you learn. Data science is actually an Applied Science and what better way to stake your claim than showing some applications. You not only learn how to solve problems using these tools and techniques, but also differentiate your resume from all those wanting to do data science but not putting in efforts in the direction. Participate in practice problems on Analytics Vidhya or Kaggle to start with. Once you are comfortable, participate in a few hackathons and data

science competitions. You can also pick up open data sets in the area of your interest to create projects and solve problems.

- Participate in data science communities and look for mentors. There are some thriving data science communities today in India. Join these communities, interact with data science professionals through meetups, webinars, slack channels and find a few mentors to guide you for the rest of your career.

As long as you have a few years to learn, you can start devoting a few hours daily and build up the momentum over time. If that is not the case and you have placements coming up in the next 3 - 6 months, you will need to put in more effort to cover up for the expectations. There is no dearth of resources available — only time! So make sure you devote high quality time and you can cover the ground.

Remember — you can't really ask for a better time to graduate!

The writer is CEO & Founder of Analytics Vidhya

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The more that learn to read the less learn how to make a living. That's one thing about a little education. It spoils you for actual work. The more you know the more you think somebody owes you a living.

— Will Rogers

COMPUTER SC & TECH

Manav Rachna University invites applications for admission to its Computer Science & Technology programmes for the session 2020-23/24.

Programmes offered: BTech Computer Science and Engineering (Four years), MTech Computer Engineering (Two years), BTech Computer Science and Engineering — Specialisation in Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning in Association with Xebia (Four years)

Eligibility: Merit preparation/short listing of candidates shall be on the basis of score in JEE Mains 2020/SAT/Uni Gauge E 2020/MRNET 2020/Class XII qualifying examination.

How to apply: Log on to manavrachna.edu.in.

Admissions OPEN

for admissions to its Comprehensive Make-up Artistry course.

Eligibility: Class XII pass (all streams)

Last date to apply: February 23, 2020

How to apply: Log on to www.makeupstudio.in/course/comprehensive-make-up-artistry or candidates can download the application form website and apply or walk into the corporate branch with all documents to register.

MAKE-UP ARTISTRY

IMS-Design & Innovation Academy invites applications for admissions to its Bachelors of Science: Jewellery Design, Bachelors of Fine Arts: Fashion Design, Bachelors of Fine Arts: Applied Arts and Bachelors of Fine Arts: Fashion International.

Eligibility: Candidates who have passed or will appear for the qualifying examinations under the higher secondary from any recognised Board of Education such as AISSCE/IB/ICSE, or equivalents.

All eligible candidates will have to undergo Design Entrance Exam (DEE) at DIA, Campus Noida which comprises of a written test and personal interview.

Last date to apply: July, 2020

How to apply: Log on to www.diaindia.co.in or the application form can be obtained for ₹1000 by cash from the academy or by post enclosing a Demand Draft of ₹1050/- in favour of Design & Innovation Academy.

UG-PG PROGRAMMES

The Indian Institute of Art and Design (IIAD) in collaboration with Kingston School of Art, London invites applications for admissions to its undergraduate programmes in Fashion Design, Fashion Business Management, Communication Design and Interior Architecture & Design. It also offers post-graduate programmes in Fashion Design and Fashion Business Management. The Institute offers these programmes through its creative studio-based education and strives to groom the next generation of designers and design thinkers at its campus in New Delhi.

Admission process: IIAD entrance test

Exam date: April 26, 2020

How to apply: Log on to www.iiad.edu.in or call on +91 98713 83633, +91 11 4138 0000.

MAKE-UP ARTISTRY

Make-up Studio Training Center invites applications

For a holistic future

Business management courses help students to think innovatively. They also help prepare them for unexpected situations that might arise in a business, says DR ADYA SHARMA

Business can be characterised as all types of exchange, trading of merchandise and enterprises with the aim of generating profits. But business must be firmly entwined with morals. People, organisations and Governments are consistently broiled with charting out policies pertaining to what is best for an economy and for the development of capital. They are constantly on the lookout to avoid any situation like inflations or recession.

The job of the people in management is characterised by these standards of what is best for individuals and what is best for the organisation, and this requires the ability to understand human conduct and in turn, setting up a compelling style of an initiative.

So, in a world that is heavily relying on the right personnel to execute the right orders, what does a degree in management teach?

What you may discover in a business degree covers an expansive scope of subjects, for

example, financial aspects, accounting and innovative strategies that prepare individuals for a plethora of situations. A business degree may begin with learning the pertinent ideas in these fields, to guarantee there will be no critical holes when beginning a vocation. In later years, obligatory modules can be clubbed with specific territories of study, for instance, organisation law or buyer conduct.

It is important that managerial aspirants learn from their own firsthand experience, and hence emphasis on experiential learning as an integral part of curriculum is important.

The course also rather offers one the chance to expand one's innovative edges. Aside from the theoretical knowledge on subjects, which are pivotal, one will likewise be prepared for unexpected situations that might arise in a business. Even if one has to consider turning an idea into a startup, the educational programme has been designed in a way that every

perspective can be checked out.

The best management education cultivates citizenship through a broad-based education that also covers humanities and social sciences.

The potential outcomes for a business graduate are practically innumerable. Positions as an investment banker or a financial regulator might be engaging, however, individuals must be aware of the high-pressure nature of such jobs. Individuals can also work in retail management where major FMCG companies can open doors for individuals

with a degree in business management.

The more enterprising students can find success by building their own business without any degree of study. But the lofty expectation to know everything, find funding, and the knowledge to fight the ever-changing business landscape can happen only through a degree in business management.

People who pursue Business Management are also offered a tremendous pay package right from their placements. The degree also additionally allows one to work in

various administrative situations in different associations. In this way, with the steady interest of the board, one can develop themselves in their profession significantly.

Management programmes are designed to help in improving one's holistic abilities. Under this programme, students are made to take a shot at different situations, understand different scenarios and compose projects so that they can confront realistic business scenarios. At the point where every job requires one to be a pioneer, these qualities will be especially significant.

Having a range of abilities relating to business management can help anyone with a rewarding vocation. Getting admission to business management, one can start right after they finish Class XII, as an undergrad programme, or after graduation. There are numerous specialisations that one can decide on, in the center of their profession.

The writer is from Symbiosis Centre for Management Studies, Pune



It's all in the name

ITCOUNTS

Name number is the most important and significant number among the three — name number, psychic number, destiny number. The name number is important for each and every person because the influence of one's name number, unlike one's psychic and destiny numbers, continues even after one leaves one's body.

Your name is the first gift you receive after birth, and it was chosen specifically for you. Your full name is an element in your numerology chart that is explored in depth by finding the various arithmetic factors within it and utilising them as elements of their own.

The name number plays a key role in one's social life and marriage. This is the reason it was popular to add the family name to the maiden name after marriage. Adding the family name to the maiden name creates harmony with the husband in the family name. It is generally believed but may not be 100 per cent true.

One should always remember that for integration of a new pattern, it takes minimum two-six months (it will take three-

months, if the age of person is between 22-42, it will take two months, if the age is below 21 and five-six months if the age of the person is above 42). The results will be better and faster, if the person is called by a new name more frequently, so as to get its best effects.

If any change is made in the spelling of a name of a person, though the pattern of sound waves in the water in the body remaining the same, then it will take minimum six months to integrate with the body. In such cases whatever the spelling of new name is changed, its integration with

the body and subconscious mind will depend upon how frequently the spelling of the name are written or communicated with the people and in the social media.

More and more we start writing the new name with the new spelling, faster the effect will be. If you just change the spelling and remain silent and do not use it frequently, it will never give any effect. The effect is directly proportionate to the frequency with which the new name or its spellings are used. Once after the change you start observing the change in your behaviour, peace of mind then you should think that this new name is vibrating positively with you and the new planet, which is formed start vibrating with your date of birth and results will become positive.

You should go on writing your name with the new addition of alphabet, at least twenty to thirty thousand times on a piece of paper for about ten minutes every day. This will improve vibration of name and the person can perform better.

The writer is a renowned entrepreneur, motivational speaker and numerologist

JC CHAUDHRY

Students' connect programme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Legrand India, a part of the Legrand Group conducted a Students' Connect Programme for the winners of the UGAM — Legrand's Scholarship programme on February 17, 2020.

This is an initiation to build a lasting relationship with the students and is an orientation about the industry, know-how from SMEs and gaining mentoring support from Legrand leadership team/employees.

The group entered the education sector in 2018 with an objective to help girl students to pursue their higher education. This scholarship intends to assist the deserving girl students for pursuing engi-

Inauguration of Anugoonj at IP varsity

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The renowned film producer Anil Sharma, who produced the superhit film *Gadar*, inaugurated the 21th Annual Cultural festival of IP University 'Anugoonj 2020' at the Dwarka campus of the University here on February 17, 2020. Delving down the nostalgia, he said such type of functions remind me of my childhood. He called upon the students participating in this cultural festival to go ahead to achieve their goals in life.

Presiding over the function the Vice Chancellor of the university Prof Mahesh Verma said: "We learn a lot of things outside the class

room. Festivals are fun but it involves a lot of good things to learn like healthy competition, leadership, confidence, esteem etc. the education combined with culture is essential for life."

Prof Manpreet Kaur Kang,

Director — Students Welfare of the University informed on the occasion that apart from University schools, all the affiliated colleges are actively participating in the festival.

Dr Anjali Shaukeen, Associate Director — Students Welfare of the University presented Annual Report of the Directorate of Students Welfare.

This three days cultural conclave of the University is loaded with a number of star performances like band performance by Sankraman Band and star night by play back singer Benny Dayal on the concluding day of the event.

Quintessence 2020

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Lady Irwin College's Annual festival is an event packed with a perfect balance of constructive creativity, fun and frolic. The fest spans over two days, starting today, consisting of numerous competitions and activities, organised by various societies of the College.

These include a fashion show, jam session, street dance, film making, group dance competition, environment hunt and stage play competition among other activities.

Each fest day will end with a live performance; tonight will be a DJ Night, where DJ Carnivore will be dropping popping beats; the second evening will be graced by Mohit Chauhan who has sung songs like *Dooriyan*, *Rabba* and *Bezubaan*.

Proper strategy is key

With less than two months left for JEE Mains exam, FIITJEE expert RAMESH BATLISH shares tips for last-minute prep



The first phase for admissions to BE/BTech (Paper-I) and BArch/BPlanning (Paper-II) was held between January 6-9, 2020 and the second phase will be held between April 5-11, April 2020. Students have the option to appear in one or both phases. The result will however consider the students' performance in the best of the two phases.

Clearing JEE (Main) is not difficult. Systematic approach towards its preparation will help. The JEE (Main) consists of CBSE syllabus of Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics and some common topics from Classes XI and XII of State Boards. About 25% questions in the exam are easy, 50% are average and 25% are difficult. The cut-off for JEE (Main) is generally around 65%.

TIPS FOR PHYSICS

- ◆ Mechanics is one topic that is considered less scoring by most experts. However, this is also the topic that forms the major portion. This topic can't be neglected.
- ◆ One must try to concentrate on other scoring topics to ensure a better performance, for example Optics, Electricity

and Magnetism.

- ◆ Kinematics and particle dynamics are important topics of Mechanics that make regular appearances.
- ◆ Refer to past years' papers, and sample test papers to understand what to expect when you have started solving advanced level problems.
- ◆ According to the general trends, Mechanics and Electricity and Magnetism are the most important topics in terms of the number of questions asked in JEE of previous years. Vector is one concept that students commonly encounter in dealing with any of these topics, so effort must be taken to understand it properly.
- ◆ In the decreasing order of the marks they carry are listed different topics of Physics according to their appearance in previous year's papers.
- ◆ Thermodynamics is important from the terms of Physics and Chemistry so concentrate on that as well.

TIPS FOR MATH

- ◆ Previous JEE papers suggest that in more attention should be paid to Chapters like Vectors and 3-D than Probability or Indefinite integration as

Vectors and 3-D offers very less scope to examiner, as far as variety in questions is concerned. One more chapter is Complex Number, from which every year 2-3 problems are asked. Hence mastering complex numbers, vectors, 3-D and Definite integral must be on top priority.

- ◆ Keeping in mind the trend of last years' paper all topics had been covered with more importance given to topics of Algebra, Calculus and Co-ordinate Geometry.
- ◆ To tackle questions from Co-ordinate Geometry all aspects and the results of Algebraic Calculations of properties of conics must be known.
- ◆ In chapters of Calculus like Functions, Application of derivatives one can fetch easy marks if graphical approach is adopted.
- ◆ Trigonometry though having less weightage must not be ignored as it is scoring. One must grasp all important formulae in Trigonometry. This is a scoring topic in Mathematics.
- ◆ Chapters like Mathematical Reasoning / Determinants/ Statistics/ Mathematical Induction must also be covered to fetch some quick marks as the questions from this chap-

ter are relatively simple.

- ◆ Refer to past years' JEE Main papers, and sample test papers to get familiar.

TIPS FOR CHEMISTRY

- ◆ Conceptual clarity, application skills and awareness to the prescribed syllabus should be the focus.
- ◆ Practice the most relevant questions daily to develop speed. Pay special attention to topics like Mole concept, Chemical Equilibrium and Electrochemistry.
- ◆ Take a careful and patient approach for Organic Chemistry giving attention to the topics like Stereochemistry, GOC (General Organic Chemistry) and Functional Group Analysis.
- ◆ In Inorganic chemistry most of the questions which are asked are conceptual, concerned with structures, processes and applications. Special attention is a must to the topics like Chemical Bonding and Coordination Chemistry.
- ◆ Special attention should be given to the topics like Biomolecules, Chemistry in everyday life and Environmental chemistry.
- ◆ Special attention to NCERT should be given as JEE Main is completely NCERT

based in Chemistry.

- ◆ Special attention should be given to the topic Drinking Water. One should try to learn the Threshold Limits for the various ions in drinking water.

Attempt theoretical questions first and then questions which require calculation. It is advisable to avoid numerical questions in the first 10 or 15 minutes of the exam.

DOS

- ◆ Attempt easy questions first.
- ◆ Choose sections that have less risk and more gain.
- ◆ Carefully scroll through the entire question paper in the first five minutes.
- ◆ Keep a check on time while attempting the paper
- ◆ Attempt all numerical based type questions as there is no negative marking.

DON'TS

- ◆ Start from question you don't know.
- ◆ Get upset if any section is tough. You can score in other sections.
- ◆ Guess if you have no idea about the concept involved in a question.
- ◆ Be nervous if you find the paper tough, since it is the relative performance that counts.

'New learning space with digital education

There is room for improvement in data-driven decision-making across campuses, says DR KULNEET SURI

Data and big data have been buzzwords for the last several years. Universities are making great progress when it comes to using data to help with retention and student success. However, there is still much room for improvement to take advantage of data-driven decision-making across the entire campus.

For instance, data can be used to determine if classrooms are being utilised optimally before new construction projects are kicked off. It can and should be used to determine if aging computer labs should be renewed or transformed into something that is more useful to the university. Efforts like these can not only streamline campus operations, but also ensure that we are making most of the resources we have in the service of teaching and learning.

Another area where data can be used more is Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data. Historically, GIS data has primarily been used in sciences. But that same data could be analysed in practically any class on a college campus. Think history, political science, criminal justice, urban planning — there is so much data out there, and we can all do a better job of using it.

The future of any innovation in teaching and learning is almost always a combination of all of the following: Academic discipline, pedagogy, learning environment, data and educational technology. And data-informed research and formative evaluation is the key to avoiding just chasing shiny new objects on the one hand and just staying with what we've always done on the other. The foundational blocks for making any headway in analytics, particularly learning analytics, are:

- Institutional (rather than vendor) ownership of data generated by teaching and learning activity.
- Transparency of data models created through our data (rather than being proprietary).
- Data and integration standards.

YouTube began in February 2005, and 12 years later, Wikipedia reports a billion hours of content watched on the platform each day. The sheer volume of educational video creates challenges for faculty in creating new content, as well as finding and reusing content. During the busy academic semesters, faculty do not have time to watch, curate and clip videos! The cognitive overload of video use can be significant, leading us to look for specialised collections like Ted Talks and Khan Academy. Harvard's DART initiative is one



Dr Kulneet Suri
Senior Director at Institute of Management Studies, Noida

recent effort to try to help faculty and instructional designers make full use of open access assets created for edX MOOCs.

As we increase dependence on instructional videos, we also need to focus on issues of accessibility for people with a range of needs. Digital education is generating new learning opportunities as students engage in online, digital environments and as faculty change educational practices through the use of hybrid courses, personalised instruction, new collaboration models and a wide array of innovative, engaging learning strategies. A 21st Century view of learner success requires students to not only be thoughtful consumers of digital content, but effective and collaborative creators of digital media, demonstrating competencies and communicating ideas through dynamic storytelling, data visualisation and content curation.

As instructors create assignments and develop rubrics for assessing new forms of student work across academic disciplines, faculty and students would benefit from access to new collaborative spaces with the technology and consulting expertise to successfully complete media-rich assignments and projects. One example at Oregon State is in general biology courses, where senior instructors Lesley Blair and Mark Lavery infuse their own lectures with media-rich components and have their students include their own media elements in assignments and social media postings.

One are the days of authoritative and impolite boss of 70s and 90s. In 21st Century if you want to be accepted and appreciated by your employees you need to put extra effort. No one likes a rude boss or leader or one who doesn't care and listen to. Your team would be attracted to you if you show a little kindness.

Respect: The most important is giving respect. The trade of respect is well defined by nature. You will get respect only, when you give it. Respect people for what they do. Doesn't matter what level they are, they are doing their best in their abilities to perform for whatever job is assigned to them. By showing a little respect to all you deal with, you command

unfathomable power, which makes you the real leader.

Lead: Everything rises and falls on leadership so if you're going to create that atmosphere of kindness in your company, your acts of kindness should be seen and not just heard. Try to avoid jokes you know people would get sensitive to, jokes about things like gender, religion and politics would offend a section of the team, you don't want to burn your bridges before you're even midway.

Accept criticism: You may not be right all the time, it's possible that while handling management and other responsibilities in your work you may miss it at some point. So

MIND IT

you should welcome criticism.

To be a favourite boss and leader it is important to understand the importance of other people's thoughts and adopt the ability to shift our preconceived notions to the side so we can offer acceptance in response to their thoughts even if they are against us. It is an imperative step in the direction of becoming a leader

Encourage learning: Make it clear that you understand that very few people get it right on their first day or week or month and that you're ready to work with them so they

can improve. Try to avoid fatal mistakes by delegating key tasks to proven employees but also get others going for the low hanging fruits so they can build on their confidence.

Promote workplace friendships: If you're that boss that's improving relationships in the office, people would love you. But workplace friendships can get toxic without control, so you shouldn't get it wrong at the beginning.

Pair people with overlapping skills. So if you need work done on your website, don't pair two people with huge egos. Treat every

member of your team equally, so these partnerships should be a way to help those lacking in specific skills. And again don't force it, if it's not working, try reshuffling, it's okay to tweak things until you get it right.

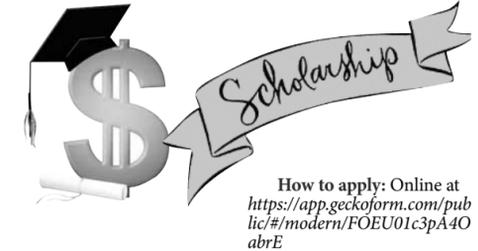
Don't put them in the spot: Try to avoid public criticism as much as you can. Work with employees that are not taking the right decisions, help them improve delivery at work. Putting any of your employees on the spot can force them into trying to prove you wrong. And sometimes they try too hard and make more mistakes.

Don't force it: Everyone hates forced friendships because most of them don't just work out. Yes, you should be kind to your

employees but if it doesn't flow naturally, it'll be rebuffered. Being professional and exhibiting leadership should be your stance in the early days of this relationship building. Remember it's not your job to be the cool boss but a good relationship with your staff rubs off on your company

Be honest and humble: Don't make promises you can't keep. Employees may have different views on the path they think the company should do but it's up to you to ensure you don't raise their hopes unnecessarily. If there are answers you need to think about, do that, you should be in a composed state when chatting.

The writer is Achal Sharma, International Life Coach & Social Scientist



The Newcastle University, UK, has announced a new round of scholarship support for outstanding applicants from India.

Value of award: 50% or 100% of tuition fees.
Eligibility: To be considered for the 100% scholarships applicants must: Be a national of one of India; Be assessed as international for fee purposes; Hold an offer for an eligible undergraduate or postgraduate degree programme at the university's city-centre campus for the 2020/21 academic year. Eligible candidates will be assessed according to evidence of academic ability, commitment to studies and quality of application.

Application duration: September 2020 for the full duration of the degree programme.

Application form: Candidates can apply for this scholarship online separately to their course. They must already hold an offer to study at the University to apply and will need to provide details of qualifications, a personal statement and a reference. To know more visit: <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/country/india/#feesand-funding>

How to apply: Online at <https://app.geckoform.com/public/#/modern/FOEU01c3pA40abrE>

Application deadline: March 27 2020 and May 29, 2020.

The Vancouver Island University invites applications for its VIU World-Wide Entrance Scholarships for the incoming first-year high-potential overseas aspirants. The program is open for international students who will commence in the undergraduate degree coursework at the VIU in Canada.

Eligibility: The awards are available for new long-term academic undergraduate student applicants. Must attach Attach certified copies of all educational documents and copy of passport.
Admission requirements: Applicants must have graduated from high school or equivalent. **Language requirement:** Claimants are required to fulfil the English language requirements of the university.

How to apply: For grasping the opportunity, you have to enrol in the UG degree coursework online or offline and submitted it to International Admissions Vancouver Island University 900 Fifth StreetNanaimo, B.C. V9R 5S5 Canada. No application is necessary.
Application deadline: The last date to apply is March 31, 2020.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AT MOBISHAALA
Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹10,000-₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/2911182
Application deadline: February 22, 2020

GRAPHIC DESIGN AT DEBATE MARKETERS
Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹10,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/2911183
Application deadline: February 22 2020

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AT INTELLIFY
Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹5,000-₹7,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/2911184
Application deadline: February 23, 2020

SALES AND MARKETING AT SSN WEB ARCHITECTS
Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/2911185
Application deadline: February 25, 2020

MARKETING AT SKMTECHNOSOLZ
Location: Bengaluru
Stipend: ₹10,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/2911181
Application deadline: February 22, 2020

GRAPHIC DESIGN AT IRA PARENTING
Location: Bengaluru
Stipend: ₹15,000-₹18,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/2911180
Application deadline: February 25, 2020

OPERATIONS AT ETHNIC FASHIONISTA
Location: Bengaluru
Stipend: ₹6,000-₹8,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/2911179
Application deadline: February 22, 2020

STUDY ABROAD

'One can rely on scholarships and grants for funds'

There is always a way to ease financial burden while studying abroad, says ROHIT SETHI

Pursuing education abroad can be a costly affair for many. It is not just the tuition fees but also the living expenses that need to be taken care of. With the fall in the value of rupee every year, it is only adding up to the burden.

Managing funds in a foreign country can be relatively challenging. If unable to manage expenses of their three-year graduate programme, students are compelled to seek part-time employment, which is good but sometimes end up becoming a priority.

Relying on scholarships and grants for funding options: Expenses vary in every country considering the currency exchange value, the university and the course. Students can look out for managing their tuition fees and scholarships and grants are the best possible financial aid in this case. There are merit-based scholarships offered by the Federal and State Government, large corporations, local businesses, professional organisations or universities.

Students can also opt for programme-based scholarships and specific allowances provided on the basis of factors like gender, race, religion, disabilities, or sexual orientation. For instance, Benjamin A Gilman Scholarship or Diversity Abroad Scholarships can be beneficial for diverse students searching for financial aid. Finally, there are grants, mostly need-based that doesn't require to be repaid. They are mostly given on the basis of financial circumstances but may also consider other factors like physical or mental disabilities. The Department of Education in the US offers several federal grants to students who attend four-year colleges or universities and community colleges. Germany, too, awards numerous merit-based grants. For example: The University of Hamburg offers a merit grant of 720 – 1,000 EUR/month for two semesters (12 months).

Some external agencies and trusts also provide scholarships. However, bagging a scholarship is not an easy process as thousands of students target for the same. Students are required to go through a number of exams to determine their eligibility.

The writer is Director, ESS Global

IN BRIEF

CONTENT IN HINGLISH TO MAKE LEARNING EASIER

The Lido Learning announced the launch of live tutorials in Hinglish to facilitate easier adoption of concepts and simplify e-learning across India. Students in metro and smaller cities are more comfortable with Hinglish.

The emergence of ed-tech in Tier II and Tier III cities in India is largely due to the availability of educational content in vernacular languages. Despite children going to English medium schools, research shows that many students struggle with English as a language. Students especially struggle when studying and trying to grasp complex

concepts in other subjects like Math and Science that are taught in English.

Sahil Sheth, founder-CEO, said: "Students and their well-being is at the center of everything that we do. Subjects like Math and Science can be complex and mind-numbing for many, learning the curriculum in a language they are comfortable can keep them more engaged. The launch of Hinglish content was prompted by our core belief that a student must be in a comfortable space while learning and have accessibility to educational content in diverse languages."

AIFF INTRODUCES FOOTBALL MASTERS COURSE

All India Football Federation (AIFF) officially launched its Football Management Programme with the signing of an MOU with Spanish La Liga SmartBankco-leaders Cadiz CF. This will enable students to study in three cities — Delhi, Mumbai and Cadiz (Spain).

The programme will provide students with hands-on experiential training on every aspect of football in India and abroad. This programme

will provide exemplary football managers to meet the needs of Indian football.

Praful Patel, President, AIFF said: "We felt that such a programme was much needed to help students understand the nuances and global practices involved in managing football. With the curriculum combining theoretical and practical knowledge, there will be a paradigm shift in football management in our country."

Key features: Inculcates exclusive and rare learning insights in to the operations of Cadiz CF — by giving students the opportunity to live and work in the club for a month. A common admission test ensures that interested candidate has an equal opportunity to enroll in the limited seats on offer each year. Strong line-up of global faculty to share their knowledge.

TOPPR FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

Toppr conducted the city-level round of Toppr Fellowship Programme in Delhi.

This year, over 200 schools from the city participated in the programme.

The programme, which comprises of test, seminar and counselling, is designed to help students of Classes V to XII understand their strengths and weaknesses, and show them a new engaging way to learn. Curated by top teachers of India, it is a 30-minute test that identifies students' conceptual understanding, numerical abilities and problem-solving skills.

Sunil opens India's Gold account

Competing in 87kg category wrestler rewrites history and becomes third Indian to win yellow metal in Greco-Roman

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Wrestler Sunil Kumar won India's first Gold medal in the opening day of Asian Wrestling Championship 2020 here at KD Jadhav stadium on Tuesday after beating Kyrgyzstan opponent Azat Salidinov 5-0 in the final match of 87kg Greco-Roman category.

Last edition Silver medalist dominated the entire game and didn't allowed his counterpart to gain any sort of breathing space and in process put a full stop to country's 27-year drought for the yellow metal. Sunil now becomes only the third Indian ever to achieve this feat after Pappu Yadav.

Sunil with his comprehensive defence was able to keep Salidinov at bay for most of the bout. Salidinov didn't have an answer to the strategy of Sunil and finally went down pretty easily.

Earlier, Sunil on his way to the final made an impressive comeback in the semi-final bout. He came back from 1-8 down to win the bout 12-8. This was an improvement for

Asian Wrestling Championship
Live from 11:00am IST
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK



India's Sunil Kumar celebrates after his win against Salidinov Azat (KAZ) in the final of 87kg category wrestling match during the Asian Wrestling Championship 2020

Sunil from his 2019 performance in the same tournament where he won a Silver Medal.

Speaking after the win he said, "I am feeling happy to have earned India's first Gold Medal today (Tuesday). I have worked really hard on my ground techniques and it feels good to have done better than my last year's performance."

Before Sunil's historic Gold medal win, Arjun Halakurki (55kg) won his Bronze Medal bout defeating Donghyeok Won of Korea. Arjun started the bout slowly and was down by 1-4 in the first period. But, Arjun didn't give up and came back strongly snatching six straight points with a combination of good defence and attack. The final score at the end of the bout was 7-4 in favour of Arjun.

Though, India's third medal hope Mehar Singh (130 kg) suffered a setback as he lost his bout against Roman Kim of Kyrgyzstan by a narrow scoreline of 2-3. Mehar was majorly suffering the aftereffects of his wrist injury which he suffered in his semi-final bout earlier.

SINGLES

BAVUMA OUT OF FIRST T20 I

JOHANNESBURG: Batsman Temba Bavuma has been ruled out of the first Twenty20 international against Australia at the Wanderers Stadium on Friday because of a hamstring strain. He was injured while fielding in the third match against England. He will stay with the South African squad in the hope that he will be fit for the second and third matches against Australia in Port Elizabeth on Sunday and Cape Town on Wednesday.

AMAAN INCLUDED IN IND SQUAD

NEW DELHI: The Basketball Federation of India on Monday announced the senior men's squad that will be part of the 2021 FIBA Asia Cup Qualifiers. Singh, who recently led Punjab to gold in the U-21 category in the 2020 Khelo India Youth Games, has been at the NBA Global Academy in Canberra, Australia for over a year. Also part of the squad is 17-year-old Amaan Sandhu. Sandhu, a student-athlete at the NBA Academy India, was also part of the gold-medal-winning Punjab squad. He was one of three Indians (the only boy) selected to the Basketball Without Border Global Camp at the 2020 All-Star Weekend in Chicago.

MOEEN TO CAPTAIN BIRMINGHAM

LONDON: Moeen Ali will captain Birmingham Phoenix in English cricket's new Hundred competition, it was announced Tuesday. The England all-rounder, who grew up near Edgbaston, the venue for the Phoenix' home matches, will lead a side that includes fellow World Cup winner Chris Woakes as well as Kane Williamson, the captain of the New Zealand side beaten in last year's thrilling global 50-over final. A dashing left-handed batsman and off-spin bowler, Moeen rose through the ranks at Edgbaston with Warwickshire before establishing himself in county cricket with Midlands rivals Worcestershire. "Every time that I come to Edgbaston it takes me back to some great first memories of coming here at a very young age," said Moeen in a statement.

VIETNAM F1 GRAND PRIX GETS GO-AHEAD

HANOI: Vietnam's inaugural Formula One Grand Prix will take place in Hanoi in April as planned, organisers told AFP Tuesday, avoiding the fate of the Chinese Grand Prix which was postponed over the deadly coronavirus. The race will be held as "scheduled" on April 5, Le Ngoc Chi, CEO of Vietnam Grand Prix told AFP. The virus, which has killed more than 1,800 people in China, has trashed Asia's sporting calendar, forcing the postponement of top events including the Shanghai grand prix and the Hong Kong Sevens rugby. But Vietnamese authorities said the country's inaugural Formula One race would go ahead on schedule.

SANIA AND GARCIA SAIL INTO QUARTERS

DUBAI: Indian tennis ace Sania Mirza and Caroline Garcia registered a hard-fought win over Russia's Alla Kudryavtseva and Slovenia's Katarina Srebotnik to advance to the women's doubles pre-quarterfinals at the Dubai Open here on Tuesday. The Indo-French pair beat their Russian opponents 6-4, 4-6, 10-8 in the first round match. The Sania-Garcia combine will now meet the fifth seeded duo of Saisai Zheng of China and Barbora Krejickova of Czech Republic in the round of 16.

HANPREET TO LEAD IND IN FIH PRO LEAGUE

NEW DELHI: Manpreet Singh will lead India in the upcoming FIH Pro League matches against world no.2 Australia, a 24-member team for which was announced by Hockey India on Tuesday. Harmanpreet Singh will shoulder the duties of the vice captain in the matches, scheduled to take place on February 21 and 22 at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar. Indian Team: Sreejesh Parattu Raveendran, Krishan Pathak, Amit Rohidas, Surender Kumar, Birendra Lakra, Harmanpreet Singh, Varun Kumar, Gurinder Singh, Rupinder Pal Singh, Manpreet Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Hardik Singh, Chinglensana Singh, Raj Kumar Pal, Akashdeep Singh, Sumit, Lalit Upadhyay, Gursahibjit Singh, Dilpreet Singh, SV Sunil, Jarnmanpreet Singh, Simranjeet Singh, Nilakanta Sharma, Ramandeep Singh. AGENCIES

Five Indian cities to host FIFA U-17 Women's WC matches

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a first, five Indian cities - Guwahati, Kolkata, Navi Mumbai, Bhubaneswar and Ahmedabad on Tuesday have been confirmed as the host cities for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup scheduled to take place in India from November 2 to November 21 this year.

To set the stage for the future of women's football, FIFA and Local Organising Committee (LOC) also announced the match schedule alongside the Official Slogan - Kick off the dream for the tournament here in presence of Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs Kiren Rijiju, Sarai Bareman, FIFA Chief Women's Football Officer, Roberto Grassi, FIFA Head of Youth Tournaments and AIFF president Praful Patel, who is also LOC



Praful Patel, Kiren Rijiju, Sarai Bareman and Roberto Grassi during the announcement and launch of official slogan for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup

Chairman and FIFA Council member.

Sixteen teams featuring the rising stars of women's football will compete across 32 matches to lift the

Guwahati and Kolkata), with the knockout stages also taking place in four cities (Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata and Navi Mumbai). The winners will lift the trophy at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai on November 21.

Following the launch of the Official Emblem in November 2019, the unveiling of the five host cities and the match schedule marks a major milestone for the tournament as fans in the host cities and across India prepare to welcome the future stars and heroes of women's football.

The key dates for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2020 include: Opening match - November 2.

Quarter-finals - November 12 and 13. Semi-finals - November 17 and 18. 3rd/4th-place playoff & final - November 21.



Jose Mourinho applauds during the last minutes of the English FA Cup

Spurs holding on for dear life after Son's injury: Mourinho

AFP ■ LONDON

Tottenham Hotspur's hopes of obtaining something from the season have been equated to someone hanging on for dear life from a balcony in a typically colourful analogy by their manager Jose Mourinho.

The 57-year-old Portuguese made the comparison after he said he believed Korean star Son Heung-min's season could well be over due to a fractured right arm.

Mourinho is already without star striker Harry Kane — side-lined since January with a torn hamstring — as the club enters a crucial period. Midfielder Moussa Sissoko is another long-term casualty.

Spurs host German side RB Leipzig in a Champions League last 16 first leg match on Wednesday and play Chelsea in a match that could prove pivotal in the dog-fight for the fourth and final Champions League spot.

"You know I like analogies," said Mourinho, who took over after Mauricio Pochettino was sacked in late November last year.

"Sometimes I do good ones and sometimes silly ones. This time I do this."

"When we arrived we were in minus 12 floor, we got on the stairs and we started climbing."

"But immediately the stairs broke and trouble."

"We were trying to find a way."

"Lots of effort but we were going and going."

"Then 11th floor and when we arrived on the fourth floor, where we wanted to arrive, someone took the stairs away so we are now in trouble."

"We are holding by our arms on the balcony."

Mourinho said the club were at a crossroads in their season.

"Now we have two options," he said.

"To fall and die because it's the fourth floor."

"The other is to climb. We will be on that balcony fighting with everything we have."

'WE MISS HIM'

Son's absence comes as a cruel blow to the player and the team as he had been in a rich vein of form scoring in the last five matches after filling in for Kane up front.

The 27-year-old South Korean international forward suffered the injury in the 3-2 Premier League victory over Aston Villa — in which he scored twice including the late winner — on Sunday.

Son suffered the injury in a robust first-minute challenge from Villa's Ezri Konsa. The club did not specify how long Son would be out — he is due to undergo surgery this week — but Mourinho was pessimistic.

"I'm not going to count on him again this season," Mourinho said.

The club said only after the medical operation would they be able to say how long he would be absent.

"Following surgery, our medical staff shall be reviewing management options for Son's rehabilitation with the player expected to be sidelined for a number of weeks."

Mourinho said he would have phrased the statement differently.

"The club wrote a nice statement," he said.

"If I was the one to write the statement I would write different. We miss him," added the 57-year-old Portuguese.

With both Kane and Son missing, Lucas Moura looks like having the burden placed on him as Mourinho discounted untested Irish youngster Troy Parrott.

"In some periods I was worried about not having attacking options on the bench, now it's not having attacking options on the pitch," said Mourinho.

"My thoughts are that Troy Parrott is not ready and Ryan Sessegnon is not a striker."

Utd stun Chelsea to close gap on top four

AFP ■ LONDON

Manchester United moved to within three points of fourth-placed Chelsea with a smash and grab 2-0 win at Stamford Bridge thanks to goals from Anthony Martial and Harry Maguire.

Chelsea had two goals disallowed by VAR reviews and were furious Maguire was not sent-off early on for an off-the-ball kick out with Michy Batshuayi.

However, Blues boss Frank Lampard cut a frustrated figure as the flaws in both boxes which have seen his side win just four of their last 14 league games were exposed once more against ordinary opposition.

Victory lifts United up to seventh and within two points of Tottenham in fifth, which could be good enough to qualify for the Champions League next season pending Manchester City's appeal again a two-season ban from European competition.

Lampard made a bold call before kick-off by again dropping the most expensive goalkeeper in football history, Kepa Arrizabalaga, to the bench in favour of the 38-year-old Willy



Manchester United's Luke Shaw, left, and Chelsea's Mason Mount battle for the ball

Caballero.

Batshuayi also started with Tammy Abraham ruled out by injury and Lampard's anger at missing out on a striker in the January window was borne out by a poor night for the mis-

firing Belgium forward.

Chelsea suffered another injury blow early on when N'Golo Kante hobbled off and the France World Cup winner is now a doubt to face Bayern Munich in the Champions League next

week.

The loss of Kante did not disrupt the home side's early rhythm as Reece James and Willian fired just wide.

Chelsea were then furious Maguire somehow escaped without being sent-off for kicking Batshuayi after the two collided in front of the dugouts.

The former Marseille attacker then squandered the first of a host of chances by firing wide from Mason Mount's cut-back.

ONE-WAY TRAFFIC

Chelsea's sense of injustice increased when Willian was harshly booked for diving as he went down under a challenge from Bruno Fernandes looking for a penalty.

United had not made Caballero make a single save before going in front a minute before the break when Martial planted a brilliant header into the far corner from Aaron Wan-Bissaka's cross.

There was still time for Batshuayi to miss another chance before half-time when he skewed wide from a narrow angle.

The one-way traffic continued at

the start of the second period as Mount hit the post and a brave block from Wan-Bissaka deflected Pedro's goal-bound effort behind.

But even when Chelsea did get the ball in the net through substitute Kurt Zouma, the goal was ruled out by VAR for a push on Brandon Williams by Cesar Azpilicueta.

Fernandes was unable to make much of an impact from open play in his second United appearance since a USD 62 million move from Sporting Lisbon.

However, the Portuguese international is a huge threat from set-pieces and nearly caught Caballero out with a free-kick that crashed back off the post.

Moments later, Fernandes provided his first assist for the Red Devils with a corner which Maguire powered home.

Lampard had seen enough from Batshuayi and handed Olivier Giroud a rare appearance off the bench for the final quarter.

The French striker thought he had given Chelsea a lifeline with a near post header, but was ruled offside after a VAR review.

AC Milan eye Euro spots after Torino win

AFP ■ MILAN

AC Milan closed in on the European places in Serie A after Ante Rebic fired them to a 1-0 win over Torino.

Rebic on Monday swept home Samu Castillejo's low pull back in the 25th minute to consign to draw Milan level on 35 points with Hellas Verona, who currently occupy the final Europa League spot on goal difference.

Rebic's winning goal was his sixth in seven games in all competitions, a run that comes after failing to score at all in the first half of the season.

The Croatian's strike helped the hosts bounce back from last week's derby disap-



Ante Rebic celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal

pointment against Inter Milan to continue a positive run under coach Stefano Pioli that also saw them unlucky not to beat Juventus in the Coppa

Italia semi-final first leg last week.

They have lost just once since the turn of the year — to title-chasing Inter — and are playing well enough to aim for European football next season.

However the Champions League will likely be beyond them thanks to the 10-point gap between them and fourth-placed Atalanta.

Torino meanwhile are inching closer to the relegation zone after their fifth straight defeat, a slump that shows little sign of ending.

They are just five points from the drop despite bringing in Moreno Longo to replace Walter Mazzarri earlier this month.

Bencic soars, then crashes in Dubai

AFP ■ DUBAI

Holder Belinda Bencic ran off the first 19 points against Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova before collapsing to a 1-6, 6-1, 6-1 loss on Tuesday at the Dubai Championships.

Another former champion, the 2017 and 2018 winner Elina Svitolina, also fell, 6-2, 6-1, to US qualifier Jennifer Brady.

Pavlyuchenkova could not have made a worse start. "It's tennis, sometimes it happens," the

31st-ranked Russian said "You go out there and you just don't feel anything."

"I just kept on fighting, still trying to hit every ball, trying to be there

"It doesn't matter what the score is, just play. Slowly I started to turn it around, I started to find my game."

"I honestly wasn't focusing on the score. Sometimes you can play amazing tennis and still lose 6-1. In the third set, it was a good level from both of us."

Bencic, who is Swiss was seeded four

and Svitolina third. That leaves the spotlight to tournament number one Simona Halep and second-seeded Karolina Pliskova, who begin in the second round after byes.

Weekend ATP Rotterdam winner Gael Monfils watched in pain as girlfriend Svitolina went down to Brady.

Svitolina had little to offer as the 52nd-ranked Brady gained her second victory this season over a Top 10 opponent after beating Barty in Brisbane. The Ukrainian's

usually steady game was nowhere to be found at the Aviation Club as first-round play concluded.

"It was not a bad start, but then everything just went downhill," Svitolina said.

"I wish I could regroup better. In the end, I didn't feel so good the ball. Just everything was all over the place today." At this level it's tough to pick just one thing; everybody is putting the ball over the net, and you have to play long rallies, you have to build the points.

MESSI & HAMILTON ARE WORLD'S BEST

PTI ■ BERLIN

British F1 ace Lewis Hamilton and Lionel Messi, arguably the world's greatest footballer, were on Monday declared the joint winners of the prestigious Laureus World Sportsman of the year award.

They received the same number of votes, a first in the 20-year history of the awards with the jury unable to split Hamilton and Messi.

Messi, the six-time FIFA World Player of the year, is the first team-player to bag the award. He though was not present to receive the award and sent a video message.

They pipped golfing great Tiger Woods, Kenyan marathoner Eliud Kipchoge, tennis legend Rafael Nadal and MotoGP champion Marc Marquez.

American gymnast Simone Biles who won five gold medals at the 2019 World Championships, grabbed the World Sportswoman of the year award, her third in four years after winning it in 2017 and in 2019.

She beat a strong challenge from Jamaican sprinting great Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, who

missed out on the honour for the fifth time. She was nominated 2010, 2013, 2014 and 2016 also but did not win it.

The most decorated gymnast also beat competition from American footballer Megan Rapinoe, Japanese tennis sensation Naomi Osaka, American track and field athlete Allyson Felix and skier Mikaela Shiffrin.

Snowboarding sensation Chloe Kim won the World Action Sports person honour, her second straight in the same category.

In the Sports person of the year with a disability category, Oksana Masters, born with limb impairments caused by radiation from Chernobyl and adopted by an American single parent, was recognised for an outstanding year in 2019.

She won five Gold medals and a Silver at the World Para Nordic Skiing Championships.

South Bronx United (SBU), a football programme based in New York, was honoured with the Sport for Good Award. The programme uses football to achieve educational outcomes for young people from underserved communities.

The 2019 Rugby World Cup



British reigning F1 drivers champion Lewis Hamilton poses with Worlds best sportsman of year Award during the 2020 Laureus World Sports Awards

winners South Africa won their second Laureus World Team of the Year Award, beating Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool and the US Women's Football Team, among others.

For the 2020 Laureus World Comeback of the Year, Germany's gritty F3 driver Sophia Florsch was the winner.

Travelling at 276km per hour, she had lost control of her car at the Macau circuit, crashing through safety barriers and leaving her with a spinal fracture which required an 11-hour surgery and months of rehabilitation.

In November 2019, a year on from her accident, the 18-year-old Sophia was back in the cockpit, racing once again in the Macau Grand Prix.

Egan Bernal, who became the youngest rider to win the Tour de France at 22, grabbed the World Breakthrough of the Year award.

German basketball great Dirk Nowitzki was recognised at the Ceremony with the Laureus Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to the sport of basketball.

Spanish Basketball Federation got the Exceptional Achievement Award.

Tendulkar wins best sporting moment award

PTI ■ BERLIN



Batting great Sachin Tendulkar being carried on the shoulders of his teammates after India's World Cup triumph at home in 2011 was voted the Laureus best sporting moment in the last 20 years.

With the backing of Indian cricket fans, Tendulkar got the maximum number of votes to emerge winner on Monday.

The charged-up Indian cricketers rushed to the ground at the Wankhede Stadium and soon they lifted Tendulkar on their shoulders and made a lap of honour, a moment etched in the minds of the fans.

Former Australian skipper Steve Waugh handed the trophy to Tendulkar after tennis legend Bros Becker announced the winner at a glittering ceremony.

"It's incredible. The feeling of winning the world cup was beyond what words can express. How

many times you get an event happening where there are no mixed opinions. Very rarely the entire country celebrates," Tendulkar said after receiving the trophy.

"And this is a reminder of how powerful a sport is and what magic it does to our lives. Even now when I watch that it has stayed with me."

Won't rule out playing 2023 WC: Taylor

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Veteran New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor doesn't rule out playing the 2023 ODI World Cup but says his form, fitness and motivation level at the end of next year will decide whether he actually manages a place in the squad.

The 35-year-old will become the first cricketer in the world to complete 100 games across three international formats when he steps out for the first Test against India at Basin Reserve on February 21.

"I haven't ruled it (2023 World Cup) out but I still think it's a long way away. First and foremost I want to get to next year - the Twenty20 World Cup and then the home summer - and then I'll have a good idea on how I'm placed at the end of next summer," Taylor was quoted as saying by 'stuff.Co.Nz'.

"Whether there is still a drive, whether I'm good enough, whether I'm fit enough, and whether I deserve my spot in the side. If I can tick all those, then definitely 2023

is an option."

The big-hitting batsman said despite his desire to continue, he won't put himself under too much pressure.

"You always want to do well and first and foremost the game is more important. At the same time you can put extra pressure on yourself. You've just got to go out and enjoy it and take it as another game. Hopefully I can contribute in any way I can," he said.



Can't wait to get Virat out: Boult

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

There are no half measures for fit-again New Zealand pace spearhead Trent Boult who is ready to challenge India captain Virat Kohli on his return to international cricket during the two-Test series starting here on Friday.

Boult was out of action for the past six weeks due to a fracture on his right hand sustained during the Boxing Day Test against Australia and missed out on the limited-overs leg of the India series.

Back for the traditional format, the left-arm fast bowler made his priorities clear ahead of the first Test.

"That's personally why I play the game, to get guys like that (Kohli) out and test myself against them, so I can't wait to get stuck in. But he's an exceptional player. Everyone knows how great he is," Boult said, sending out a warning after landing in the capital city for the opening Test.

The Basin Reserve track will have a lot for the seamers and in conditions conducive to seam bowling, a wily customer like Boult might prove to be a handful.

"I'm preparing for a solid wicket. It generally is very good here and goes the full distance (five days). I do enjoy playing here, the history that's involved, and it's going to be an exciting week building up. I can't wait to get out there," said the 30-year-old who has taken 256 wickets from 65 Tests.



New Zealand seamer Trent Boult celebrates after taking wicket

It was frustrating for him to watch his side get walloped 0-5 in the T20 series but exhilarating to when it got its mojo back in the subsequent one-dayers. The Black Caps won 3-

0 in the 50-over format.

"I think it is what it is. I have just got to put the last six or so weeks behind me and just back myself to get out there and do my thing," said Boult,

"That's personally why I play the game, to get guys like that (Kohli) out and test myself against them, so I can't wait to get stuck in. But he's an exceptional player. Everyone knows how great he is,"

who warmed up by playing a club game at the picturesque Taupo ground.

"I was pushing in off the long run. I think a couple of the clubbies from Taupo really enjoyed that. It was a good afternoon," added the pacer, who sent down eight overs in a friendly game for his club Cadets.

Professionally, Boult had to lie low due to injury, but it was also a good break as he and wife Lana welcomed their second child.

"Having some time away from the game and having my second son a couple of weeks ago came at quite a good time," said Boult.

Fighting fit, all he wants now is to get hold of a red kookaburra and get a few to tail into Kohli and company.

"I am hungry to be here and can't wait to get back in the white and get the red ball moving around," he said.



Indian wets team celebrates after winning the warm-up match against West Indies BCCI

Poonam's three wickets help Ind edge out WI

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Spinner Poonam Yadav claimed three wickets as India geared up for the ICC women's T20 World Cup with a thrilling two-run win over the West Indies in a low-scoring warm-up match here on Tuesday.

Electing to bat, India posted a lowly 107 for eight in their stipulated 20 overs before returning to restrict West Indies to 105 for seven.

Chasing 108 to win, West Indies were comfortably placed at 57 for one in 13 overs when Deepti Sharma struck, cleaning up opener Lee-Ann Kirby (42) to trigger a collapse.

Soon skipper Stafanie Taylor (16), Chedean Nation (0) and Deandra Dottin (1) were back in the hut as West Indies slipped to 67 for five in the 17th over.

Hayley Matthews (25) and Chinelle Henry (17) blasted three fours and a six in the 19th over to leave them with 11 to get off the last six balls.

Henry blasted Poonam for a four but the Indian dismissed

Matthews in the fourth ball.

West Indies needed three runs off the last ball but Henry was caught by Veda Krishnamurthy.

Earlier, India's top-three failed to fire as they were reduced to 17 for three in 3.1 overs. Opener Smriti Mandhana (4) lasted just six balls, while Jemimah Rodrigues (0) failed to open her account. Young Shafali Verma blasted a couple of fours before being caught by Britney Cooper off Shamalia Connell (2/20).

Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (11), too, didn't stay long, while Krishnamurthy was cleaned up by Afy Fletcher (1/26), as India slumped to 52 for five in 11.2 overs.

Deepti Sharma made a 32-ball 21 before becoming a victim of Anisa Mohammed (2/16), while Pooja Vastrakar (13) was removed by Aaliyah Alleyne (1/9). Stafanie Taylor then got rid of Taniya Bhatia for 10.

Shikha Pandey finally smashed a 16-ball 24 to give some respectability to the total.



Kyle Jamieson after dismissing Prithvi Shaw

Jamieson credits shift to Auckland for making him better cricketer

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Towering New Zealand pacer Kyle Jamieson has revealed that moving from Canterbury to Auckland helped him get rid of a detrimental aggressive streak and become a cricketer worthy of national duty.

The 6'8" tall pacer, who made his ODI debut against India in the recent series, was handed a place in the Test squad for the upcoming two-match rubber beginning at Basin Reserves here on February 21.

"I'm a pretty fiery character on the field. On the field I'm pretty aggressive. I think it came out in ways I necessarily didn't like. I would sort of do it and then post-game be like, 'What did I do that for?'" he was quoted as saying by 'stuff.Co.Nz'.

Jamieson shifted to Auckland, where he was born, prior to this season after making his T20 debut for Canterbury in 2016 in the Super Smash.

negativity around him in Canterbury, where he grew up, and it affected his behaviour.

"There was a bit of negativity surrounding myself and that environment and that was coming out in my behaviour on the field," he said.

The 25-year-old said returning to Auckland made a massive difference to his game.

"I'm really enjoying my cricket, which is probably something I couldn't say a couple of years ago," said Jamieson, who scored 25 and took 2 for 42 on debut during the second ODI against India at Eden Park.

"I was going through a bit of stuff off the field. Just the chance to come in with this group and turn up and learn everyday - try and better myself as a cricketer - was something that was too hard to turn down, so look, it's been massive for my game.

"...It was just a shift that I needed to make. Most importantly, I needed to be happy and I needed to enjoy my cricket. Wherever that may take me, then it will," he added.

'NZ's conservative approach against Bumrah will soon be adopted by others'

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

New Zealand's conservative approach against Jasprit Bumrah could become a template for other teams as they look to tackle the Indian pace ace who recently endured a rare wicket-less outing in an ODI series, reckons former fast bowler Shane Bond.

The premier bowler copped criticism for his lean run during the three ODIs against New Zealand and Bond put that down to expectations.

"That's the nature of expectations when you got a bowler of Jasprit's quality," Bond, the fastest New Zealand bowler during his time, told PTI in an exclusive interview.

"I thought New Zealand played him well and identified him as a risk. They have played him conservatively and obviously there was some inexperience around (Navdeep Saini and Shardul Thakur)," he said.

"All teams will now identify him as a risk and attack others. So that's where the bowling group and what they do (as a group) is massive. It is not an easy place to bowl as wickets are flat."

But Bond felt Bumrah's bowling wasn't all that bad during the series, which India lost 0-3.

"At the end of the day, all you can do is try and bowl well. He bowled reasonably well but sometimes you don't get wickets," Bond said.

Bond, who has spent considerable amount of time with Bumrah as the Mumbai Indians bowling coach in the IPL, nonetheless expects India's premier strike bowler to have a "massive impact" on the two-Test series starting Friday.

"When you come back from a lay-off, it's always hard to get into the groove. Just that he hadn't had a lot of game before the series and conditions are a bit foreign," said Bond.

"Although New Zealand played him well in limited overs, Jasprit will have a massive impact on the Test series. I have no doubt about that,"



'Hope Pandya gets to play some cricket before IPL'

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Mumbai Indians bowling coach Shane Bond wants all-rounder Hardik Pandya, who is recovering from a back surgery, to play a few matches before the Indian Premier League, beginning March 29.

"I only hope he gets to play some cricket before the IPL and always believe it's better to spend a little bit longer for coming back rather than rushing it," Bond said.

"There's no doubt he can come back. I am just pleased that they are taking an orthodox approach with Hardik's rehabilitation and T20s, especially IPL will be nice for him to comeback as he will not be over-bowled."

Pandya underwent a productive net session at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru recently.

He was seen facing throwdown in the nets and mainly played with a straight bat. It is not yet clear if he will make a comeback in the South Africa ODIs next month or the IPL.

Earlier this month, Pandya was ruled out of the Test series against New Zealand after failing to regain full match fitness.

added the bowler, whose promising career was cut short by numerous injuries.

"It always takes time to get back to top form because there is no substitute of game time. So it's good for Jasprit that he is leading into Test matches with some short form cricket," said Bond, who played 18 Tests, 82 ODIs and 20 T20 Internationals.

Limited DRS use was always planned for Ranji semifinals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The limited use of Decision Review System was always planned for the Ranji Trophy semifinals and not from the knockout stages, clarified BCCI's general manager of cricket Saba Karim on Tuesday.

The move to introduce limited DRS comes after the umpires committed some howlers in some knockout games of the previous season. However, the quarterfinals starting on Thursday will not see the use of DRS.

"We are introducing from the semifinals. This the first time we have initiated this program, we wanted to bring in semifinals and we have done that. It was never meant for the quarterfinals," Karim, also a former India wicketkeeper, told PTI.

"The whole idea is that we wanted to bring in the DRS wherein we can have uniformity for both the games and that will be in the semifinals. All the four teams have been pitted equally and that would not have been possible before (in quarters)," he said.

The restricted technology for Ranji semis will not have Hawk Eye and Ultra Edge, two key components of the DRS used in international games.

"We will be using the technology which is available to us. We are looking at a very limited use of the DRS. We don't have snickometer and ball tracking. We have red zone and we have spin vision and we will try and give whatever is available to umpires for them to decide," added Karim.