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NEW DAWN FOR
THE MILITARY

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VIRUS SURGES PAST 2,000

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**HAD TO FACE
MY FEAR IN
BHOOT: VICKY
13 VIVACITY**

Shaheen Bagh sticks to its guns

Protesters refuse to lift blockade until CAA goes; mediation to continue

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Supreme Court-appointed interlocutors Sanjay Hegde and Sadhana Ramchandran visited the Shaheen Bagh protest site on Wednesday and held talks with the protesters for almost three hours but could not persuade them to shift from the spot. Former CIC Wajahat Habibullah accompanied the two interlocutors.

Refusing to budge from their earlier stand of continuing their sit-in until the CAA is scrapped and NPR and NRC process stopped, protesters told the interlocutors that they are open to further talks. Hegde and Ramchandran said they will visit the protest site again on Thursday to resume the dialogue with the protesters.

Protesters have blocked an important arterial road connecting Delhi and Noida since December 15 last year, causing trouble to commuters and schoolchildren.

First, Hegde explained in detail the SC order to the protesters, who had turned up in large number. It was translated into Hindi by Ramchandran. Later addressing protesters, Ramchandran said, "The SC has upheld your right to protest but then other citizens also have their rights and it should also be maintained. We want to find a solution to the problem. We will listen to everyone."

During the talks, women, young and old, tried to explain their point of view to the inter-



Supreme Court-appointed interlocutors Sanjay Hegde and Sadhana Ramchandran interact with the protesters at the site of their ongoing agitation against CAA and NRC at Shaheen Bagh in New Delhi on Wednesday. PTI

locutors. There were tears and defiance too as they poured their hearts out to the two interlocutors on Wednesday, the first attempt to reach out to those sitting in protest against the citizenship amendment legislation for more than two months.

Responding to the concerns raised by the women,

Ramchandran said all the points will be put forward before the SC and discussed in detail. "However, I want to say one thing. A country that has daughters like you can never face any threats," she said.

A woman broke down while talking to the mediators. She said they are protesting to save the Constitution but people

see only the inconvenience of commuters who have the option of taking so many other roads. "Aren't we facing inconvenience sitting here in cold nights taking our children to the protest. We are ourselves so troubled, what trouble will we cause to citizens?" she said. She scotched the allegations that they are not letting

ambulances and vehicles pass. "The road hasn't been blocked by us. In fact, it is the Centre that has blocked freedom in this country," she added.

Bilkis, an elderly woman, said they wouldn't move an inch even if someone fires a bullet. She said the main tent where the podium has been erected covers only 100 to 150 metres of the road.

She claimed, "We have not blocked the whole stretch. It is the Delhi Police which barricaded the whole road in the name of security. Why don't you get that removed first? We never asked police or any authority to block the roads for us. It is they who did it and are now blaming us."

"We are being called traitors. When we pushed Brits out of the country, who is Narendra Modi and Amit Shah? You remove NRC and CAA, we will clear the site in no time," she added. Another woman described their ongoing protest as mental trauma. She says they jump up even at the slightest noise at night, fearing police action.

On Monday, the SC observed that the blockade of the road at Shaheen Bagh was troubling and suggested the protesters go to another site where no public place would be blocked. It, however, upheld their right to protest.

The SC asked Hegde to play a constructive role as an interlocutor to persuade the protesters to move to an alternative site.

Mahant Nriyaa Das picked as Ram Mandir trust prez



Members of the Sri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra, the trust set up to oversee construction of the Ram temple at Ayodhya, during its first meeting at Greater Kailash in New Delhi on Wednesday. PTI

Modi's ex-aide Nriyaa Das heads construction committee of trust

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mahant Nriyaa Gopal Das was elected president and VHP leader Champat Rai general secretary of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Tirth Kshetra Trust at its first meeting here on Wednesday.

The meeting, held at the residence of senior lawyer K Parasaran, also elected Prime Minister Narendra Modi's former principal secretary Nriyaa Das as the head of the temple construction com-

mittee of the trust. The meeting was aimed at working out modalities to speed up the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya. It was also decided to open an account in Ayodhya's State Bank of India branch for donations for the Ram temple construction, Champat Rai told reporters after the meeting.

Swami Govind Dev Giri of Pune was appointed as treasurer of the trust.

Among those present at the meeting were the Central Government representative, Additional Secretary in Home Ministry Gyanesh Kumar, UP Government's representative Avinash Awasthy and Ayodhya District Magistrate Anuj Kumar Jha.

After the Supreme Court verdict, Modi had announced the formation of the 15-member trust in Parliament on February 5. The Trust has seven members, five nominated members and three trustees.

Senior lawyer Parasaran was named as the head of the trust and its other members include Jagatguru Shankracharya, Jyotishpeethadheeshwar Swami Vasudevanand Saraswati Ji Maharaj from Allahabad, Jagatguru Madhavacharya Swami Vishva Prasannatheerth Ji Maharaj, Pejwar Math in Udupi, Yuggurush Paramanand Ji Maharaj from Haridwar, Swami Govinddev Giri Ji Maharaj from Pune and Vimalendra Mohan Pratap Mishra from Ayodhya.

Trump relishes prospect of 70 L welcoming his Ahmedabad rally

POTUS for 'big deal', but raises concern 'India not treating US' well in trade

PNS/PTI ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump will hold extensive talks here on February 25 on a whole range of bilateral issues, including defence and trade. Trump is scheduled to arrive in India on a two-day visit starting February 24. While looking forward to his visit, Trump said he is saving the "big deal" in trade for later and voiced concern over "India not treating US" well in trade.

Explaining the contours of the high-profile visit, Foreign



Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said on Wednesday Modi and Trump will hold talks to deepen cooperation in a range of key sectors, including defence and trade.

The US President will be accompanied by First Lady Melania Trump and a high-level delegation, he said, adding India and the US have an unprecedented level of convergence.

Though Trump is not happy with the bilateral trade

ties, he praised Modi and said he is looking forward to his visit to India. "I happen to like Prime Minister Modi a lot," Trump said.

"He (Modi) told me we'll have seven million people between the airport and the event. And the stadium, I understand, is sort of semi under construction, but it's going to be the largest stadium in the world. So it's going to be very exciting... I hope you all enjoy it," he told reporters in Washington on Tuesday.

He was referring to a scheduled joint public rally with Modi at the newly-built Motera Stadium in Ahmedabad.

Shringla said the 'Namaste Trump' event in Ahmedabad on February 24 will be similar to the 'Howdy Modi' event that was held in Houston last year. The couple will visit Agra later the same day.

Meanwhile, Trump said he is "saving the big deal" with India for later and does not know if it will be signed before the presidential election in November, signalling that a bilateral trade pact may not materialise during his maiden visit to New Delhi.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with an artisan at Hunar Haat at Rajpath in New Delhi on Wednesday. During a surprise visit to the event, Modi also relished litti-chokha — a Bihari dish — and kulhad tea. PTI

CCS OK's \$2.6 bn deal for 24 US naval copters

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Head of US President Donald Trump's maiden visit to India, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday approved a \$2.6-billion deal for buying 24 multi-role Naval helicopters. The deal is likely to be announced during Trump's visit to India.

The helicopters manufactured by Lockheed Martin will be procured through the Foreign Military Sale (FMS) wherein the US Government will stand guarantee for all issues, including meeting time lines, spare parts and other contractual obligations. Incidentally, India and US defence trade has crossed the \$18 billion mark in the last few years.

The 24 MH-60R Seahawks will replace the ageing Seaking and Kamov helicopters flown by the Indian Navy. The approval for buying new helicopters was

given by Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) in 2018. At present, the Navy has 12 British made Seakings and ten odd Russian manufactured Kamovs.

These fourth-generation MH-60Rs "Romeos" helicopters will come loaded with both torpedoes and missiles which can be used to target submarines. A 30 per cent off-set clause could be a part of the deal. The deal could include training, support, spares and air-to-ground weapons also.

From the day of signing the contract, these helicopters will be delivered in five years. India will pay an initial 15 per cent instalment for the helicopters. The first lot of helicopters will be delivered in two years, sources said.

MH-60 was earlier selected through a competitive process for 16 helicopters with an optional clause for eight more, but the deal fell through due to pricing issues and other development leading to tender's cancellation.

Priyanka, Scindia lined up for RS

Opp strength to fall, Cong may lose 9 of its 19 seats in House

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress may induct bigwigs like Priyanka Gandhi Vadera, Jyotiraditya Scindia and Randeep Surjewala into the Rajya Sabha amid reports that the Opposition strength in the Upper House could reduce further and the Congress may lose 9 or 10 seats — of its 19 seats falling vacant — in the elections slated later this year to fill up 68 vacancies.

The ruling NDA does not have a majority in the Rajya Sabha and the Government has to seek the support of friendly parties such as the



AIADMK and the BJD to get crucial legislations passed in the Upper House.

The BJP has the maximum of 82 members and the Congress 46 in the Rajya Sabha, which has a total strength of 245. There are 12 nominated members in the Upper House, eight of whom have aligned with the BJP.

Sources in the Congress said the party is confident of

retaining nine seats on its own and winning one or two more with the help of its allies. It is likely to gain seats in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra, where it is in power.

"The Opposition strength will fall after elections are held to fill up 68 vacancies in April, June and November, that may lead to the ruling NDA slowly inching towards the majority mark in the Rajya Sabha.

While 51 seats in the Rajya Sabha are falling vacant in April, five more in June, one in July and 11 in November this year," sources in Congress explained.

Top Congress leaders Motilal Vora, Madhusudan Mistry, Kumari Selja, Digvijay Singh, BK Hariprasad and MV Rajeev Gowda are among the top Congress leaders whose tenures are ending in April and June.

Fasal Bima Yojana tweaked for farmers' benefit, voluntary now

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Modi Government on Wednesday approved major changes in the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) making it voluntary for farmers with existing crop loans or those willing to take new ones, as it seeks to address the concerns raised by farmers' body and States in implementation of these programmes.

After the Cabinet meeting, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said the Government has decided to revamp PMFBY and Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS).



A woman works in a paddy field on the outskirts of Gauhati on Wednesday. AP

usually pick up, Tomar said. These modifications will help in addressing the concerns raised about the PMFBY scheme by farmers organisations and States, he said.

Among other modification, Tomar said the allocation of business to insurance firms through tender process would be done for three years as against the current policy of one to three years.

The Minister said insurance claims worth ₹60,000 crore have been cleared, and ₹13,000 crore premiums collected. As per modification, States will not be allowed to implement these schemes in subsequent seasons in case of considerable delay in release of requisite premium subsidy to insurance companies beyond a prescribed time limit.

CAPSULE

3 HIZBUL TERRORISTS KILLED IN PULWAMA

Srinagar: Three Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists were killed in an encounter with security forces in the Tral area of Pulwama district in J&K, police sources said on Wednesday.

WHALE SHARK NUMBER DOWN BY 63% IN 75 YRS

Gandhinagar: The population of whale sharks, one of the endangered migratory species, has declined by 63% in last 75 years in the Indo-Pacific region, a nature conservation body Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) said.

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Dehradun achieves ODF++ status

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Dehradun achieved the status of ODF++ under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) and became the first city to achieve it in Uttarakhand. In addition to this, six other towns achieved ODF+ status.

The list informing about this was released on Tuesday night. This Open Defecation Free ++ status will also bring the city 500 points in the Swachh Survekshan 2020, said the Dehradun mayor Sunil Uniyal 'Gama'.

He also felicitated the Dehradun municipal commissioner Vinay Shankar Pandey. According to deputy municipal commissioner of Dehradun, Rohitash Sharma, "The credit for this achievement goes to the municipal commissioner Vinay Shankar Pandey and the team formed by him which worked really hard to achieve this status."

We also achieved number one ranking in the state according to the online feedback in Swachhata app for Swachh Survekshan which is all due to the efforts of the MCD."

"This status of ODF++ will also give the city 500 points in the Swachh Survekshan 2020 which will be helpful in achieving a better ranking in the country," added Sharma. Apart from Dehradun, ODF+ certification was granted to Bhimtal, Swargashram, Dugadda, Pauri,



Cong suspends Councillor Sumitra Dhyani

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Yamuna Colony councillor Sumitra Dhyani has been suspended by Uttarakhand Pradesh Congress Disciplinary Committee (UPCDC) from the party for one month due to her offensive behaviour towards another councillor Komal Bohra in the last board meeting of the MCD.

The suspension order was issued by the president of UPCDC Pramod Kumar Singh in which he said that during the MCD board meeting on January 9, Dhyani became aggressive towards councillor Bohra and the Congress party does not take such kind of behaviour for granted. Therefore the membership of Dhyani in the party has been suspended for one month.

He further added that Dhyani was also issued a letter by the party on Bohra's complaint but her explanation was not found to be satisfactory by the committee, hence she was suspended from the party for a month.

It is pertinent to mention here that an altercation took place between the two councillors in which Sumitra Dhyani had allegedly slapped Komal Bohra when she was reportedly trying to offer her a seat.

Though Dhyani had denied all the allegations in the past saying nothing serious happened, Bohra was enraged and wanted justice for the embarrassment she had to face in the board meeting.

(MoHUA) in January and the status of ODF++ has increased the chances of Dehradun to secure a better rank this year. During the past two years, Dehradun could not secure a rank even in the first 100 cities of the country in the cleanliness survey.

CS reviews road safety works, approves proposals

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief secretary Utpal Kumar Singh directed the Transport secretary Shailesh Bagauli to receive proposals under the road safety fund from departments related to transport, police, Public Works Department and Education and get the budget sanctioned for the same. He also granted approval to various work proposals. Singh issued these directions while chairing a meet of the road safety fund management committee here on Wednesday.

The chief secretary reviewed the works done with budget approved from the fund for 2017-18 and 2018-19. He also directed that the ₹7.23 lakh approved for the delineation training workshop proposed by the education department be released soon. The education additional director informed that as per the approved plan, the education department has started the training work with its resources. Singh also granted approval to the proposal for setting up crash barriers and parapets at a cost of ₹68.14 lakh in the potential accident sites



between kilometres 19 and 51 on the Ghanshali-Tilbada motor road. This proposal is also included in the chief minister's announcements. Singh also granted approval to proposed road safety works costing Rs 8.86 lakh on the Lohaghat-Badakot-Simalkhet-Kalikhan-Bhanauli motor road in Champawat district. He directed the PWD road safety cell nodal officer to ensure that these two works are completed within the set time frame with focus on the quality.

Singh reviewed the physical progress of approved works amounting to ₹4.49 crore under transport department, ₹6.06 crore under police

department and ₹2.25 crore under PWD for the years 2017-18 and 2018-19. He directed the officials concerned to ensure speedy execution of the proposed works while adding that work plans for the coming year should be prepared and submitted.

The director general (Law and Order) Ashok Kumar, deputy inspector general (Traffic) Kewal Khurana, education additional secretary Ravneet Cheema, deputy transport commissioner Sanat Kumar Singh, Sudhanshu Garg, PWD superintending engineer Om Prakash and other officials concerned were also present in the meeting.

Satpal Maharaj holds Delhi roadshow for Uttarakhand Wellness Summit 2220

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

As part of the series of investor roadshows being held as a precursor to the Uttarakhand Wellness Summit 2020 slated to be held during April at Dehradun, the State's Tourism and Culture Minister Satpal Maharaj delivered the keynote address at a show held in Delhi on Wednesday. The State Government's delegation is slated to head next to Kochi in Kerala to increase investors' interest. Earlier, chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat had kicked off the roadshow in Mumbai on February 18.

Addressing the invited guests and the members of the media at the roadshow, Maharaj said, "It is a matter of pride for me and it gives me immense pleasure to represent Uttarakhand in this roadshow. Uttarakhand has, from time immemorial, been the top choice for ascetics and devotees who are in search of the divine. But now we are also focusing on developing the state as an industrial hub."

He further added, "The primary objective of this roadshow is to shed light on the potential of developing Uttarakhand into a global spiritual economic zone, capitalising on the Global Wellness Economy, worth \$4.2 trillion in 2017, growing at 6.4 per cent annually."

The Uttarakhand State Government will also be organising national and international roadshows, ambassadors' round table meet in Rishikesh and a curtain-raiser event in Almora to promote the upcoming summit. The Wellness and AYUSH sector has been accorded the status of an industry in order to enable potential investors to avail incentives from the sector agnostic as well as sector-specific policies.

In order to enable ease of doing business, a single window clearance system has been established by the Investor Promotion and Facilitation Centre (IPFC), and a centralised one-stop-shop for investors and businesses has been set up to



facilitate interaction with the Government of Uttarakhand for their investment needs," he said.

A detailed presentation on Uttarakhand Wellness Summit was given by the State's director general and commissioner of Industries, L. Fana. A detailed session covering the scope and scale of the wellness sector in Uttarakhand was presented by the Industries principal secretary Manisha Panwar to industry leaders, business owners and entrepreneurs.

In her presentation, Panwar apprised them of the abundant opportunities across subsectors pertaining to nutraceuticals, organic food, natural fibre, beauty products, wellness real estate and such other sectors.

In a presentation on tourism sector of Uttarakhand the Tourism secretary and UTDB CEO Dilip Jawalkar shed light on the integration of wellness tourism relating to the overall Uttarakhand tourism economy. He also apprised the gathering on the role that innovative initiatives such as AYUSH health centres/retreats, ecotourism, aroma therapy/aroma tourism, Yoga wellness tourism will play in the coming years.

Delivering the concluding remarks, CII Uttarakhand state council vice chairman Ashok Windlass appreciated the state government for its initiative and expressed his confidence over the success of Uttarakhand Wellness Summit 2020. Apart from thanking chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat, he also thanked Maharaj for revealing the roadmap for the growth and well-being of mountain state.

MCD marks lands for various projects

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Municipal Corporation of Dehradun (MCD) has marked lands for the construction of a petrol pump, gas agency and skill development centre as approved in its board meeting. Talking to The Pioneer, Dehradun

mayor Sunil Uniyal 'Gama' said that the sites have been identified for the construction of petrol pump, gas agency and other works approved by the MCD board.

The rest of the procedure for establishing the said facilities is underway. In the last board meeting, 'Gama' had

said that to increase the source of income for the corporation, MCD will build hotels, petrol pump and gas agency after finalising land for these projects which will help to make the corporation financially more secure.

Besides, he also talked about the construction of a

100-bed hospital, sports academy, open gyms in all the wards and skill development centre for the benefit of the dwellers of the city. For now, only the locations have been finalised by MCD for some of these projects and the construction is expected to begin soon after due procedure.

Dharchula and Roorkee. Informing about the ODF status, Sharma said that currently there are three categories;

ODF, ODF+ and ODF++. The ODF++ is the highest status among these three which is given to the city that besides

being free from open defecation also has well functional public toilets and well managed sewer system. The survey for

ODF++ was conducted by Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban under Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

Ganga Kayak Festival ends in Devprayag

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The three-day eighth edition of the Ganga Kayak Festival concluded in Devprayag on Wednesday. On the final day, Man Bahadur Chandel from Nepal and Elizabeth Heath from England were declared the overall champions in the men's and women's categories respectively.

Among the Indian kayakers, Ashu Rawat was presented the best peddler award. Jill of Australia won the first place in women's water cross while Rishi Rana was the best peddler in mass water cross. Priyanka Rana and Vikas Rawat were presented the best debut award in the women's and men's categories respectively.

The conclusion of the event was held in the presence of the Devprayag municipality chairman Krishnakant Kothiyal. The Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board and The Adventure Sports Society had jointly organised the Ganga Kayak Festival.

A total of 66 participants from various nations including Russia, Australia, Nepal and others along with the host



nation competed in different events. The Adventure Sports Society head Bhim Singh thanked the tourism department while also appreciating the skills and enthusiasm of all the participants. Stating that the

society organises this event every year with the support of

the tourism department, he said that attempt will be made

to organise this event on a larger scale next year.

Shooting for MTV Roadies to begin in Uttarakhand

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The scope for adventure tourism in Uttarakhand will soon be broadcast on the MTV television channel. Providing this information, the information and public relations department deputy director and Uttarakhand film development council nodal officer KS Chauhan informed that the shooting of the travel reality adventure show- MTV Roadies- season 18 will be held in Uttarakhand from February 20 to March 9.

The producers of the show have been granted the permission for shooting by the

state authorities. Chauhan further informed that apart from the 16 participants, noted actor Neha Dhupia along with Ranvijay and Raftar will also be present for the shooting. The major locations in Uttarakhand will be shown through this show.

This is expected to benefit the tourism business in the state. In the first stage, shooting for the show will be held at various locations in the state during a period of about 19 days. Shooting for this travel reality show will be held at the Rajaji national park, Rishikesh, Vikasnagar and other places. Chauhan also said that this

show broadcast on MTV has a considerable viewership, which is expected to benefit Uttarakhand. Places of natural beauty in the state which are still not known to people from India and abroad will be publicised through this show.

It is pertinent to mention here that the state government's film policy and conducive atmosphere to facilitate activities in this sector have attracted a number of producers and directors to arrive in Uttarakhand for shooting their movies.

A number of television serials and web series have also been filmed in the state so far.

Children must connect with social work: Guv

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Children should become connected to social work and societal concerns from childhood. The Governor Baby Rani Maurya said this while attending a programme organised by a society at the Mahatma Yogeshwar Saraswati Shishu Vidya Mandir inter college in Mussoorie on Wednesday. The governor talked to the youngsters about their future plans, career and ambitions.

Replying to the governor's question, class V student Anchal said that she wants to become a hotel manager. Another class V student Bharti said that she wants to become an engineer. While student Keshav said that he wants to join the army, another student said she wants to become a journalist. Addressing the children, Maurya exhorted them to

work hard on their studies and achieve their dreams. She said that in addition to the schools, the parents of the children also have a vital role to play in ensuring that the dreams of the children are fulfilled. Stating that children should connect with social work and societal concerns from childhood, she said that they should try to help those around them who are in need. The children should also participate in tree plantation campaigns. Addressing the women present on the occasion, the governor said that all women should also get involved in social service so as to develop their leadership capability.

The women should also come forward to help the poor and the needy. Stating that the



women in Uttarakhand are very dedicated and hardworking, she said that the women had a major role in the development of the State.

Mussoorie MLA Ganesh Joshi said that the cooperation of school children is very important for making Mussoorie free of single use plastic. The district Panchayat vice-chairman Deepak Pundir, event organiser Neha Joshi and students along with teachers were also present on occasion.

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Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India invites proposals to assist in "Review of Regulatory Philosophy and Approach in Economic Regulation: Revision of the Guidelines for Determination of Tariff(s) for Aeronautical Services provided by Airport Operators and Independent Service Providers at Major Airports." RFP can be downloaded from AERA website i.e. <http://aera.gov.in> or <https://eprocure.gov.in>. Last date and time of submission of proposals is 17th March, 2020, 1100 Hours. All future amendments/modifications will be published on AERA official website only.
davn 03112/11/0017/1920 **Director (Policy & Statistics)**

Budget session can get extended if required: CM

The five day session at Gairsain to start from March 3, hectic preparations on at Bharadisain for session

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Amid criticism on the short duration of the upcoming budget session of Uttarakhand Vidhan Sabha, the chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat has said that the session can be extended past the festival of Holi, if need arises.

The CM said this during his meeting with the speaker Premchand Agarwal at Vidhan Sabha in Dehradun on Wednesday. In the meeting the duo held discussions on extending the budget session. The budget session of Uttarakhand assembly would be held at Gairsain and it would commence on March 3. The session is expected to end on March 7. As per the plan, the governor Baby Rani Maurya would address the house on the opening day.

On March 4, discussions on the governor's address and vote of thanks would be passed. The government plans to table the budget of the state on the same date.

The Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat who also holds the finance portfolio would read the budget document. The remaining days are kept reserved for departmental budget presentation and

discussions. Meanwhile hectic preparations have started for the session. Apart from the Vidhan Sabha secretariat, the officials of departments like Public Works Department (PWD), drinking water, health, government estates and administration have started camping at Bharadisain near Gairsain where the Vidhan Sabha is located.

These officers are overseeing the arrangements at Bharadisain. The additional secretary Pradip Singh Rawat has already arrived in Bharadisain and he is overseeing arrangements. Incidentally Rawat holds the charge of the additional secretary PWD and government estates.

In the coming days many other senior officers are expected to land in Bharadisain for preparation of the session. Talking to The Pioneer over phone from Bharadisain, Rawat said that the roads of the area are being repaired and other arrangements are going on at a hectic pace. He said that staying facilities near assembly building have improved and more people can stay in Bharadisain itself during the session. It is pertinent to mention here that



Short session a mockery: Vijay Saraswat

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The general secretary, Organisation of the Uttarakhand Congress, Vijay Saraswat has said that Uttarakhand government's plan of organising a budget session of only four days,

shows that the government is trying to evade from the questions of the MLAs. He said that the chances are high that the budget session would turn out into a picnic session. Saraswat said that the MLAs have placed more than 500 questions for the session

but due to very short duration of the session it would be impossible to have discussions on these important questions. He said that the Budget session should be of at least two weeks so that a proper discussion on the budget takes place.

due to lack of staying arrangements at Bharadisain, administration used to make arrangements at Gairsain, Karnprayag and other areas during previous sessions.

India Drone Festival 2.0 launched in Doon



PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat inaugurated the India Drone Festival 2.0 here on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, he said that considerable progress had been achieved in the sphere of drone technology and application with the help of NTRO in Uttarakhand. The utility of drone technology has

increased in mountainous states like Uttarakhand. Drones can play an important role during natural disasters and in emergency health services. The use of this technology can lead a new direction to life, he said.

Referring to the youth as the future of the nation Rawat stressed on the participation of youth in such events. Stating that the nation's first drone application

training and research centre was established in Dehradun, he said that by using such modern technologies the youth can play a vital role in the development of the state and nation.

The youth will also be able to access employment opportunities through drone related technical education. The CM also inaugurated www.Uttarakhandmygov.in portal on the occasion. This portal enables any citizen to communicate directly with the government and give suggestions on any subject. Rawat also released the GIS based drone mapper software 'DARC Mapper' on the occasion. Prepared by the drone application centre, this software will enable photo capture, making of three dimensional models and data analysis.

The Information Technology secretary RK Sudhanshu said that about 1,500 schools from 13 districts of the state and about two lakh youngsters were directly connected to this programme in the India Drone Festival 2.0. Referring to the utility of drones, he said that considering the geographical features of the state, drones will be considerably useful especially in emergency situations.

The Dehradun mayor Sunil Uniyal 'Gama', MLA Ganesh Joshi, chief secretary Utpal Kumar Singh, director general of police Anil K Raturi, surveyor general of India, lieutenant general Girish Kumar, additional chief secretary Radha Raturi and ITDA director Amit Sinha were among those present on occasion.

Slew of developments launched in Bageshwar

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat laid the foundation for development works and inaugurated other development works totaling in cost to about Rs 158 crore in Bageshwar district on Wednesday.

These 44 schemes include 18 in Kapkot assembly constituency and 26 in Bageshwar constituency. Of these, the CM inaugurated 25 works amounting to Rs 121 crore and laid the foundation for 19 works costing about Rs 36 crore. Later the chief minister also inaugurated the bus station in Bageshwar.

While inaugurating the 132/33 KV substation in Bageshwar, Rawat said that this maintenance substation is connected with remote control enabling it to be controlled not only from Dehradun but also from Dehradun.

The technology will also enable the officials to ascertain where power lines are cut in the district, which will enable swift repair of the same. The operation of this

substation will resolve the low voltage problem in the district and also facilitate 24-hour power supply. Later, the CM inaugurated the newly made bus station in the district.

Along with the Transport minister Yashpal Arya, the CM flagged off buses from the new station. Rawat also launched the portal of the Jageshwar temple management committee prepared by NIC and the Almora district administration. The portal will enable devotees to make online donations and finalise the date and time for worship they wish to attend in the Jageshwar temple.

The online booking of bhandara will also be facilitated through this portal. Addressing the gathering on the occasion, the chief minister said that during the past three years,

the state government has been consistently focusing on balanced development with top priority being accorded to development in the remote and mountainous regions. Due to various public welfare schemes of the



government, the per capita income in Uttarakhand has reached upto about Rs 1.98 lakh. The government is making consistent efforts to bring about a further rise in the per capita income. Rawat also stressed on the cultivation of local medicinal herbs and fruits. Commending the

work of kiwi fruit cultivators in Bageshwar district, he exhorted other farmers to also use latest techniques to cultivate fruits like kiwi and apple. Stating that the production of apples in India is considerably less than the consumption, he said that all need to think on this so that

employment can be generated at the local level and the benefit to people can be maximised. Speaking on the occasion, Arya announced operation of five buses for Bageshwar district. These buses will operate between Bageshwar and destinations like Delhi and Dehradun.

GURUKUL CONTROVERSY

Yastishwaranand seeks action against Kaushik

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

The controversy regarding Gurukul college in Haridwar shows no sign of abating. Patron of the Gurukul Bachao Sangharsh Samiti and BJP MLA from Haridwar Rural, Swami Yastishwaranand is seeking a probe by the CBI into the entire case. He alleged that cabinet

minister Madan Kaushik is involved with those deteriorating the environment of the said institution. They want to close the Gurukul and make the land available for illegal construction which will not be tolerated at any cost, he averred.

On Wednesday, Yastishwaranand apart from being part of Haridwar's heritage, this Gurukul is also a

matter of Arya Samaj prestige. Demanding Kaushik's removal from the cabinet opining that it would be good for the BJP, he accused the cabinet minister of misusing his official authority in the entire episode.

Stating that this is denting the image of the party, he sought Kaushik's removal from the cabinet and a CBI investigation. He added that

if his allegations are proved wrong in the CBI probe, he will retire from politics. The MLA further alleged that those who had no connection to Arya Samaj or the Gurukul are repeatedly trying to usurp control of the college.

Swami Shivanand from Chetan Jyoti Ashram also extended his support to the Gurukul Bachao Sangharsh Samiti. He assured that the

fraternity members would also support the efforts to save the Gurukul.

Swami Ravi Dev Shastri from Garib Das Ashram also offered his support, stating that he had also graduated from the Gurukul.

Meanwhile, Yastishwarananda informed that they plan to give a memorandum to the district magistrate on February 23.

SC-ST SCHOLARSHIP SCAM

Return scammed money to Govt: HC

PNS ■ NAINITAL

Hearing on appeals filed regarding stay on arrest of managers of educational institutions involved in the Rs 500 crore SC-ST scholarship scam,

the high court of Uttarakhand has directed the managers to deposit the scammed money with the Finance department of the state government. The matter was taken up for hearing by the single bench of justice Lokpal Singh.

During the hearing on Wednesday, Manjunath TC, the head of the Special Investigation Team formed for investigating the scam and other police officers were also present in the court.

The SIT head presented the progress report on the investigation conducted in the scam so far.

The court was also informed that the managers of a number of educational institutions involved in the scam want to return the scammed amount to the government. According to the case details, among those allegedly involved in the scam, the manager of one educational institute in Dehradun, Amit Kapoor and others accused in the scam had filed various petitions seeking a stay on their arrest. The petitioners had also stat-



SC collegium recommends justice Malimath's transfer to U'khand

PNS ■ NAINITAL

The Supreme Court Collegium has recommended the transfer of justice Ravi Vijaykumar Malimath from the Karnataka high court to the Uttarakhand high court.

In its meeting held on February 12, the Supreme Court Collegium also recommended the transfer of justice S Muralidhar from the Delhi high court to the high court of Punjab and



Haryana, and justice Ranjit V More from the Bombay high court to the Meghalaya high court.

They had sought relief from arrest on s ground.

Edu dept to recruit 1400 Licenced Teachers

Recruitment requisition for 728 posts in Kumaon and 672 posts in Garhwal division sent to Uttarakhand Subordinate Service Comm

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The education department has sent a requisition to the Uttarakhand Subordinate Service Commission (USSC) for recruitment of 1400 Licensed Teachers (LT) for its schools. The USSC is now expected to release advertisement for recruitment of LTs.

The Joint secretary secondary education, Kavindra Singh said that 728 posts would be for Kumaon division while 672 posts are reserved for Garhwal region.

He said that the process of giving joining to the guest teachers on the vacant posts of

Lecturers and LTs is presently underway. It is worth mentioning here that 5034 candidates were selected by the department in the year 2018 for guest teachers but the legal tangles prevented the department to give them appointment letters.

The department is giving appointments to these teachers in accordance to the orders of the Supreme Court (SC) dated January 14 this year.

The SC in its order had allowed the education department to appoint guest teachers on vacant posts till permanent appointment are made. In its orders the SC had clearly said

that the appointment of guest teachers should be purely temporary. The guest teachers would be paid a monthly remuneration of Rs 15000 and would be removed once the permanent teachers either from direct recruitment or from promotion are appointed on these posts.

The education department has completed the process of promotion on 1949 posts of Lecturers and LTs but since the state government has issued a ban on promotion after the order of High Court (HC) on benefit of reservation in promotions, process is promotions is pending for long.

FOREST GUARD EXAMINATION

Cancel the examination to maintain its sanctity: Congress



PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand Congress has demanded that the governor should intervene on the complaints of large scale irregularities in the recently held examination of forest guards and direct the state government to cancel this examination since its sanctity has been violated.

A delegation of Congress leaders led by the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president, Pritam Singh met the governor Baby Rani Maurya at Raj Bhawan on Wednesday. The delegation told the governor that a high level inquiry should be conducted on the large scale irregularities that have occurred in the forest guard examination. The Congress leaders also submitted a memorandum to the district magistrate on February 23.

dum, the Congress party said that the manner in which the picture of the OMR sheet of the question paper was taken from a mobile phone and sent outside proves that the mobile phones were taken inside the examination halls.

The Congress leaders said that the rumors are rife that Rs 5 to 7 lakh were taken from some applicants for clearing the examination which clearly shows that the gang involved has some connection with government. Lakhs of the unemployed were waiting for the examination from last three years. In the memorandum, the Congress party alleged that the BJP government in the state is immersed neck deep in the corruption and news of scams are coming to fore with alarming regularity about the government which boasted of 'zero tolerance on corruption'.

The PCC president Pritam Singh said that the BJP had promised that it would bring Lokayukt within 100 days of assuming office but the BJP government has failed to bring Lokayukt even after three years. He said that dithering of the government on Lokayukt bill proves that it is not serious to take action on corruption.

The PCC president claimed that government is on back foot on the NH-74 land acquisition and compensation scam and the officials suspended in the infamous scam on the recommendations of the SIT have been reinstated. He said that the business of transfers is continuing in the garb of the Transfers act. The PCC President cited scholarship scam, SIIDCUL scam, NHM scam and the viral videos as glaring evidences of corruption in government.

Haryana Budget Session beginning today expected to be stormy

MANOJ KUMAR ■ CHANDIGARH

The Budget Session of Haryana Assembly commencing from Thursday is expected to be stormy with the opposition gearing up to corner the ruling coalition government of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) on issues related to farmers, traders, unemployment and other common issues.

The budget session is expected to continue till March 3. The proceedings of the House will begin with the address of Governor SN Arya at 11 am. As Finance Minister, Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar is expected to present his first budget on February 28. The budget session of the Assembly will be conducted for 13 days with five holidays. February 21 is Maha Shivaratri.

The House will not function on second Saturday and February 23 is holiday because of Sunday. Discussion on Governor's address is expected to begin on February 24 which is likely to last on February 27.

Each session will be of single session but if the Business Advisory Committee of the Legislative Assembly, desires, the sitting could be doubled on any day.

Meanwhile, the Manohar Lal Khattar-led coalition government of BJP-JJP has been busy preparing the budget. To include the legislators' suggestions in the budget, the chief minister organised three-day long pre-budget consultation meeting which concluded on Wednesday.

Talking to reporters, Speaker Gian Chand Gupta sought the cooperation of opposition in smooth conduct of the Budget session while

Kanwar Pal Gujjar, who the Parliamentary Affairs Minister, said that the government is ready to discuss and debate all issues to be raised by the opposition.

The Speaker will preside over a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee to approve the agenda of the House on Thursday morning ahead of Budget session.

Gupta said So far, about 500 questions have come to him to be asked by the legislators in the House during the session. Through lucky draw method, the questions of the MLAs are being selected so that no one can say that their questions are not selected. All the MLAs will be given the opportunity to speak, he added.

The opposition Congress will take on the ruling BJP inside the Assembly on issues related like unemployment, stray cattle menace, issues of

farmers, traders, rise in crime against women, law and order among others.

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Bhupinder Singh Hooda said, "We are prepared to take on the government on all issues." He said unemployment is the most serious issue in Haryana at this moment. "The government has not yet been able to present a road map in this regard, besides failure in providing relief to people through different welfare schemes would be the main issues that will be raised in the floor of Vidhan Sabha," Hooda said, adding that government's failure to draft Common Minimum Programme would be a prominent issue.

Hooda said we will seek answers on the issue of old age pension within the House. Apart from this, the paddy scam that has come to light in Haryana since last session will

also be raised. They will also question the government on issues related to government employees' during the session.

The Opposition leader said when BJP came to power in Haryana in 2014, Haryana had a debt of only Rs 61 thousand crores which has now increased to Rs one lakh 80 thousand crores. He alleged that the government is running the business only by taking loans. All these issues will be raised in the budget session of Haryana Vidhan Sabha, he added.

Former Minister and Congress MLA Geeta Bhukkal said, "we will expose the ruling during budget discussion in the Vidhan Sabha if suggestions made by us are not incorporated."

Senior INLD leader Abhay Singh Chautala said that he would raise the issue of farmers, unemployment and issues related to common people.



Pre-Budget consultation ends; suggestion of stakeholders to be incorporated: CM

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Wednesday said effort would be made to include maximum suggestions of the MLAs received during the 3-day Pre-Budget Consultations in the State Budget for year 2020-21 to be presented in the Budget Session of Haryana Vidhan Sabha commencing on Thursday.

Speaking in the valedictory session of 3-day Pre-Budget Consultations 2020-21 with MLAs in Panchkula, Khattar said work to prepare Budget would commence now and he has directed senior officers of Finance Department that viable suggestions received during the 3-day Pre-Budget Consultations with MLAs and in other meetings with different stakeholders held earlier should be adjusted in the Budget in consultation with Ministers and

Administrative Secretaries concerned.

On the final day of the meeting, Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala, Vidhan Sabha Speaker Gian Chand Gupta, Deputy Speaker Ranbir Gangwa, Ministers and MLAs were present.

Khattar, however, added that suggestions would be included keeping in view the limitation of the Budget.

He said that Pre-Budget Consultations with MLAs is a first-of-its-kind initiative wherein the MLAs representing different constituencies participated in the discussions considering the whole State as a unit and gave their suggestions by rising above the party lines to prepare such a Budget that would fulfil the aspirations of people of the State.

Describing the consultation meeting as a "Session of Thoughts and Ideas", Khattar said that it has provided a plat-

form to the MLAs to express their suggestions on the budget of the State without any debate unlike the Vidhan Sabha where the public representatives raise issues concerning their constituencies only. He appreciated that besides new suggestions, they also suggested measures to increase the State revenue.

He said that the decision to organize this 3-day consultation with MLAs was taken during the training programmes of MLAs held recently in Haryana Vidhan Sabha in which Speaker of Lok Sabha Mr Om Birla also delivered his address.

Earlier, Additional Chief Secretary Finance T.V.S.N Prasad said that a complete record of all the suggestions given by MLAs during the 3-day consultation would be maintained and effort would be made to include maximum suggestions in the State Budget for the year 2020-21.

Akali Dal leader held in 197 kg heroin seizure case

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Special Task Force (STF) of Punjab Police on Wednesday arrested former Subordinate Services Board (SSB) member and Akali leader, Anwar Masih, in connection with the massive drug haul from his house in village Sultanwind in January.

Masih had been under investigation since the January 31 seizure of 197 kgs of heroin, along with other intoxicant drugs and chemicals, from his house. Booked under the NDPS Act's Section 25 (liability of owner of the place where drug trade is being carried out), he was produced in court, which sent him to two days police custody, said STF chief Harpreet Singh Sidhu. Masih was appointed as a SSB member by the previous Akali-BJP regime. He had also been an active member of the Akali Dal and is said to be close to several party bigwigs.

The house in Akash Vihar, Sultanwind, near Amritsar, where the illegal drug factory and the contraband were seized, was registered in the name of Masih. Though Masih had claimed that he had rented out the house to the six accused, who were arrested from there, he had failed to produce any written rent agreement and the people of the area were also unaware of any tenants living there.

Investigations by the police had also revealed that Masih's house was used by the accused for refining and manufacturing drugs for over a month before the racket was busted. Despite being given time to prove the tenancy of his property, Masih could not come up with any documents to show that he had rented out premises after due diligence, as claimed by him.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

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One of my original sale deed registered in the office of Sub Registrar in favour of Lalpat Rai Gulati (buyer) vide Register No 01, Jild 633, page 98 A.D.F Book 1, Jild 1189 page 15 to 34, S.No 428 dated 29.01.2009 has been actually lost. If it is found kindly inform.
Kundan Singh
Mobile-8755995453

SANGRUR SCHOOL VAN ACCIDENT

Punjab Human Rights Commission seeks report

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Days after four innocent lives were lost in Sangrur school van accident, the Punjab State Human Rights Commission has taken cognizance of the same seeking report from the State Transport Department by March 18 — a week prior to the next date of hearing.

Notably, in a tragic incident, four school children were charred to death after a van, which is 30 years old, ferrying them caught fire on the outskirts of Longowal town in Sangrur district on Saturday. The driver of the school van and the school principal were arrested.

The Commission, comprising of PSHRC chairperson Justice Iqbal Ahmed Ansari and Member Justice Ashutosh Mohunta, took suo-moto cognizance of this matter while treating the news reports as complaint and called for report from the state through State Transport secretary before the next date of hearing, March 25, 2020.

"Keeping in view the gravity of the violation of human rights demonstrated by the fact that unfit and not road-worthy vehicles are being used for ferrying the children, in school in question, this Commission considers it a fit case for taking suo moto cognizance in the matter," observed

the Commission.

The Commission requisitioned a report from the State Transport Secretary regarding how many unfit and not road-worthy vehicles are being plied in every district in the state by the schools, and what steps are being taken by the State against the violators of the Motor Vehicles Act carrying school children in such buses, and what remedial steps will be taken by the State to avoid such incidents in future.

"The State shall reply as to how many motor vehicle inspectors are posted in the State of Punjab for granting fitness certificates," directed the Commission, adding that the report "be submitted, with three

extra copies, seven days prior to the next date of hearing".

The Commission observed that the kids who died were students of Simran Public School on Dhillwan road of Longowal. The school van violated almost all norms laid down by the Punjab and Haryana High Court mandated Safe School Vahan Scheme.

"According to reports, the 1990's model petrol vehicle, fitted with an LPG cylinder, was bought by the school authorities on Friday and deployed to ferry children for the first time on Saturday.

The vehicle caught fire soon after it exited the school premises to drop off the children," noted the Commission.

No talk on Shaheen, just dev: CM after Shah meet

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Days after taking oath as Chief Minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal called on the Union Home Minister Amit Shah and discussed several issues pertaining to development of Delhi. Soon after the meeting with Shah at his official residence, Kejriwal said the meeting with the Home Minister was cordial and positive.

"We discussed main development related issues in the meeting, there was no discussion on Shaheen Bagh," Kejriwal said. This was his first meeting with Shah after his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) swept Delhi Assembly elections in the national Capital, winning 62 of 70 assembly seats. The meeting went on for over 20 minutes at Shah's Krishna Menon marg residence. The meeting was earlier scheduled at North Block but the venue was changed to the Home Minister's residence.

Soon after meeting with Shah, Kejriwal tweeted, "Met Hon'ble Home Minister Sh Amit Shah ji. Had a very good and fruitful meeting. Discussed several issues related to Delhi. Both of us agreed that we will



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal greets Union Home Minister Amit Shah at his residence in New Delhi on Wednesday

work together for development of Delhi."

As per Delhi government officials, the meeting went on for over 20 minutes at Shah's residence which was scheduled at the Home Ministry earlier. Shah had led the BJP offensive against Kejriwal in the Delhi Assembly polls in which AAP emerged victorious with a landslide by bagging 62 of the 70 seats.

Arvind Kejriwal and his six ministers took oath of office and secrecy in a grand ceremony held in Ramlaila Maidan, which

was attended by a huge crowd. Kejriwal had invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi, all the seven Lok Sabha members of the BJP the eight newly elected BJP MLAs in his swearing-in ceremony but only Leader of Opposition Vijender Gupta attended it.

PM Modi, who was in his parliamentary constituency Varanasi on Sunday to inaugurate various projects had later congratulated Kejriwal assuring him to cooperation for the development of Delhi.

Multi-layered security for Trump: CP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Following the United States President Donald Trump's high profile visit in the national Capital next week, a multi-tier security arrangement will be put in place by the central security agencies, Delhi Police in consultation with US Secret Service that manages the security of the President. There was impregnable security apparatus at place in and around ITC Maurya hotel at Sardar Patel Marg where US president is likely to stay.

All the routes leading to the hotel and to the places of engagement of President Trump with Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be out of bounds. Delhi Traffic Police is likely to issue advisory to the people during the visit to avoid inconvenience.

Talking to *The Pioneer*, Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Ptanaik said along with other security agencies, Delhi Police is making all necessary arrangements. "The district and traffic units of Delhi Police will duly assist security units. The force will make elaborate arrangements at the place of stay and all venues where US President is likely to pay a visit," said the CP. "It will be a multi-layered security



arrangement with due assistance from the central armed police forces," the police chief added. A senior police official said that, at the ITC Maurya where US president is likely to stay, a three-layer security will be in place.

"The hotel, located in Diplomatic Enclave in Chanakyapuri, has 438 rooms and every floor of the hotel will have policemen in plain-clothes. The Delhi Police's security wing personnel will form part of the inner cordon that will work in close coordination with the United States

Secret Service," said the senior police official. The security wing of the Delhi Police is a specialised unit tasked with the security of VIPs and visiting foreign dignitaries.

"The second layer of security will be deployed around the lobby area, parking, lawn area and the pool area, while the third one will comprise police personnel from the district police," said the senior police official. There is a large stretch of green ridge area opposite the hotel and security personnel will be deployed there as well. Snipers of the

Delhi Police and National Security Guards will be stationed atop high-rise buildings near the hotel. In 2015, the then US president Barack Obama had come to India on a three-day visit, during which he was also the chief guest at the Republic Day event. Trump, who is scheduled to visit India on February 24 and 25, will be accompanied by a high-level delegation.

Prime Minister Modi will host a lunch for Trump, while President Ram Nath Kovind will host a banquet in honour of the visiting dignitary.

Visit Ghazipur landfill site, Gambhir urges CM Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

While garbage disposal has remained an issue in Delhi, East Delhi Member of Parliament Gautam Gambhir on Wednesday asked Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to visit the Ghazipur landfill site.

In his letter to Kejriwal, the BJP leader congratulated Kejriwal on being re-elected as the Chief Minister of Delhi and asked him to visit landfill site for the sake of people living near the huge garbage dump in a very plightful situation.

The BJP MP said the landfill site in his constituency is the "largest" in Asia and the ever-increasing size of the garbage mountain was a matter of great concern for public servants including him. "The people living nearby the landfill site are in a very plightful situation. As the



Representational image

chief minister of Delhi you should visit the site for their sake and see their condition," the letter read. "Also, you will get (to know) what all work is being done by the Central government and the BJP-led East Delhi Municipal Corporation," he wrote further. Gambhir offered to accompany Kejriwal on the visit.

On Tuesday, the BJP MP had inspected the landfill site, one of the three in the nation-

al capital and also met officers of various agencies. He had said that reducing the height of the garbage dump, currently towering at around 45 metres, was the biggest priority for him.

Ghazipur landfill site started in 1984 and is spread over 29 acres. Due to dumping of garbage generated in East Delhi over the years, it was saturated in 2002 and the civic body has been looking for an alternative site.

Capt Amrinder meets Pargat Singh

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

Hit by Congress MLA Pargat Singh's letter bomb citing "Government's failures", Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Wednesday held a detailed discussion with the sportsman-turned-politician who made it clear that the party had to perform else it would perish in the State.

The former Indian hockey team captain, Pargat Singh maintained that he had healthy discussion with the Chief Minister during which he asked him to break free from the "perception" that the top Congress leadership has joined hands with the Badals.

"I have told him that people have high expectation from you and they voted for Congress in Capt Amarinder's name as they have your image that of Capt Amarinder of 1984 when he resigned as MP in protest against Operation



Bluestar, of 2005 when you cancelled all water agreements. I told him that he lead the state on a positive path by resolving cases like PPSK scam...so people have expectation from you and we must come up to that," said the Olympian after the meeting.

In a word of caution to the Chief Minister, Pargat Singh said that if Congress failed to perform, the Hitler policy, that is being seen across the country presently, is ready to come to Punjab also which would ruin the State, and we have to

save it from that. "Being a sportsman, I have to always feel that we should do what we can, and if we cannot do something which we can do, it is our weakness. So we have to deal with it...No one can stop us from fulfilling our promises," he said while stressing that the Government should save every single penny for the State.

Notably, Pargat Singh had shot off a communiqué to the Chief Minister some two months back but the letter became public only few days back. Pargat Singh has reportedly also

In his letter, Pargat Singh had questioned the State Government's working and the alleged cover-up of major corruption cases, including the multi-crore irrigation scam.

The MLA had pointed out that the party promised to address issues of corruption and drug menace in the State but failed to fulfil promises even after three years of its

tenure. He noted that major cases of corruption were collapsing and raised concern over sand and liquor mafia. He also mentioned the Bargari sacrilege case.

He also advised the Punjab Government to take steps to plug revenue leakages that started during the previous Badal regime, besides laying emphasis on the need for fresh round of thinking on corporation for sand and liquor.

Considered close to former Cabinet Minister Navjot Singh Sidhu, Pargat Singh is the latest addition in the list of several party leader and MLAs to speak against their own government. Earlier, Congress leaders, including MLA Navjot Singh Sidhu, MLA Surjit Dhiman, MLA Randeep Singh Nabha, MLA Nirmal Singh, and MLA Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, Rajya Sabha MP Partap Singh Bajwa, among others, gone public against the government's functioning.

CORONAVIRUS Outbreak to hit drug supplies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With no let up in coronavirus cases in China, the Niti Aayog on Wednesday held a meeting with pharma industry to discuss the impact of disruption in supplies of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) while a Government panel has suggested a ban on export of the 12 APIs and formulations, including antibiotics, such as Chloramphenicol, Neomycin, Metronidazole and Vitamins B1, B12, B6 along with progesterone, among others.

India has a high dependence on China for fermentation-based APIs and intermediates.

In the meantime, the third and final batch of 406 inmates quarantined at the ITBP facility here after being evacuated from the coronavirus-hit Chinese city of Wuhan was discharged after being declared free of coronavirus by the doctors.

Sources said Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant had a meeting on Wednesday which was attended by Pharmaceutical Department Secretary PD Vaghela and Biocon Chairperson and Managing Director Kiran

● Niti Aayog held a meeting with pharma industry to discuss impact of disruption in supplies of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) while a Government panel has suggested a ban on export of the 12 APIs and formulations, including antibiotics, such as Chloramphenicol, Neomycin, Metronidazole and Vitamins B1, B12, B6 along with progesterone, among others



● The third and final batch of 406 inmates quarantined at the ITBP facility here after being evacuated from the coronavirus-hit Chinese city of Wuhan was discharged after being declared free of coronavirus by the doctors

● In a letter to the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), Deputy Secretary at Chemicals and Fertilisers Ministry MK Bhardwaj sought restricting exports of the 12 APIs and formulations

● There has been no supply from the neighbouring country for the past 20-25 days, mainly due to Chinese New Year holidays, sources had said. Companies have been maintaining 2-3 months inventory of these APIs and intermediates

Mazumdar Shaw, among others to discuss hosts of measures aimed at boosting domestic manufacturing of APIs to reduce dependence on imports of the APIs from China.

"Fruitful, constructive & positive meeting with captains of industry in pharmaceutical sector to discuss the options for domestic manufacturing of critical APIs on which India is import dependent. Consensus arrived at on a range of policy measures for creating ecosystem in India," Kant said in a tweet after the meeting.

According to the sources, Kant told industry captains that they should try to become globally competitive to beat China that accounted for 67.56 per cent of the total imports of bulk drugs and drug intermediates at USD 2,405.42 million to India in 2018-19.

Zydrus Group Chairman Pankaj Patel had on Tuesday said that the prices of the key pharmaceutical ingredients could rise if the coronavirus situation in China does not improve soon.

The Government commit-

tee formed to monitor supply of raw materials for drugs from China has recommended restrictions on exports of 12 APIs and formulations in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, according to an official communication.

In a letter to the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), Deputy Secretary at Chemicals and Fertilisers Ministry MK Bhardwaj sought restricting exports of the 12 APIs and formulations.

The Department of Pharmaceuticals had formed a

committee under the chairmanship of joint drug controller, Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) that has been closely monitoring supply of APIs and intermediates which are imported from China and effect of the coronavirus epidemic in the country on their supply to India.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had on Tuesday met the representatives of various sectors, including pharmaceuticals, textiles, chemicals, electronics and IT hardware, solar, auto, surgical equipments, and paints, to review the situation following the outbreak of the deadly virus in China.

She had said the Government would soon announce measures to deal with the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on the domestic industry.

There has been no supply from the neighbouring country for the past 20-25 days, mainly due to Chinese New Year holidays, sources had said. Companies have been maintaining 2-3 months inventory of these APIs and intermediates, Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA) Secretary General Sudarshan Jain had earlier said.

AHEAD OF SHAH'S VISIT Border guards prepare action plan to reduce threat along frontiers

As an outcome of Shah's visit, vital installations in the border areas are proposed to be brought under the coverage of anti-drone technology



The proposal for revamping the border security will also incorporate quality and number of manpower, technical requirements and budgetary provisions needed to securing the frontiers and reducing vulnerabilities

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Following the visit of Union Home Minister Amit Shah to the headquarters of various paramilitary forces, the border guarding forces are working on a proposal to conduct vulnerability mapping of the respective borders under their area of responsibility and prepare an action plan to reduce threat along the frontiers in the next five years.

As an outcome of Shah's visit, vital installations in the border areas are proposed to be brought under the coverage of anti-drone technology.

The proposal for revamping the border security will also incorporate quality and number of manpower, technical requirements and budgetary provisions needed to securing the frontiers and reducing vulnerabilities.

The Ministry has also invited suggestions for recruiting 50 per cent of the personnel in the border guarding forces from the States along the borders.

The border guarding forces have also been advised to identify groups of young officers who will cover the frontiers on motor bikes and identify loopholes in the security paraphernalia along the frontiers.

The plan to strengthen the borders also includes a proposal to train jawans in the languages spoken by people across the borders. A training scheme is proposed to train the jawans in such languages.

The forces have also been asked to identify vacant land in the bordering areas to settle former paramilitary forces' per-

sonnel to check migration of population from such areas. The forces have also been asked to seek suggestions from the jawans to check migration of population from bordering areas.

Officials said there is also a proposal to formulate a mechanism for reporting by the border guarding forces with their respective headquarters for holding institutional meeting by the forces with the district/state administration in the border areas.

The border guarding forces have been asked to tie up with the Border Security Force (BSF) to install Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) on a trial basis along the frontiers with Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar.

Two pilot projects covering about 71 km on India-Pakistan Border (10 km) and India-Bangladesh Border (61 km) of CIBMS last year. The next phases of CIBMS seek to cover about 1,955 km of the border which cannot be physically fenced. The CIBMS project will vastly improve the capability of BSF in detecting and controlling the cross border crimes like illegal infiltration, smuggling of contraband goods, human trafficking BESIDES and cross border terrorism smart fencing comprising an array of technological gadgets.

While the BSF guards the Indo-Pakistan and Indo-Bangladesh borders, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) secures the frontier along China. The Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) guards the frontiers along Bhutan and Nepal.

IN SHORT

GOVT DOES NOT ACCEPT 'SLOWDOWN': MANMOHAN

New Delhi: Attacking the Modi Government on the state of the economy, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday said the current dispensation does not acknowledge the word "slowdown" and the real danger is that if problems are not recognised, then finding credible answers to take corrective action is unlikely. He was addressing a gathering at the launch of Montek Singh Ahluwalia's book "Backstage".

VICE PRES CHAIRS MEET ON CHANGES IN RS RULES

New Delhi: Vice-President and Rajya Sabha chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on Wednesday chaired a meeting of the general purposes committee and briefed political leaders on proposed changes in rules and procedures and conduct of business in the Upper House. Rajya Sabha Secretary General Desh Deepak Verma briefed the panel on the Report of Rules Review Committee which contained 77 amendments to the existing rules, besides 124 new rules for consideration.

SC ON LOWER JUDICIARY MEMBERS RECRUITMENT

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday held that members of lower judiciary like magistrates and civil judges are not eligible for direct recruitment to posts of district judges, a route meant exclusively for advocates having seven years continued practice.

51 FABULOUS SMART CITIES LEADER AWARD

New Delhi: Associate Professor of e-Governance and ICT and cyber expert Dr Charru Malhotra, Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) faculty has been, among others, conferred with "51 fabulous global smart cities leader award" for innovative vision for tech-urban planning at an event on the 9th edition of the World CSR Day in Mumbai recently.

EXHIBITION ON INDIA'S ANCIENT FOOD BEGINS

New Delhi: An exhibition on India's ancient food going back to more than 5,000 years kick-started at the National Museum here on Wednesday. "Historical Gastronomia-The Indus Dining Experience" will conclude on February 25. The event curated jointly by the national museum and One Station Million Stories (OSMS) is based on archaeological research, museum artefacts and their characteristics.

Cabinet approves Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill which proposes establishment of a national registry and registration authority for all fertility clinics and medical professionals serving in the field. The Bill also proposes stringent punishment for those practicing sex selection and sale of human embryos or gametes. Giving details of the Bill, Union Minister Smriti Irani said sex selection and sex determination prohibited are under the proposed legislation.

"Ensuring confidentiality of the commissioning couples, women and donors will also be done under the aegis of this proposal of the Cabinet. The Bill also has a provision that those involved in trafficking and sale of embryos will be fined ₹10 lakh at first instance and in second instance the person could be imprisoned for up to 12 years," she said. Irani said the Bill also seeks to protect the reproductive rights of not only the commissioning couple but also the lady who will be part of this process.

"This particular decision of the Cabinet seeks a central database in the country through which details of all clinics and banks, including the nature, kind of services provided, outcome of the services provided will be obtained on a regular basis," she said. "The data generated from the national registry will also be used for research purposes in this particular segment of health," she added.

According to an official statement, the national board lays down code of conduct to be observed by persons working at clinics, to set the minimum standards of physical infrastructure, laboratory and diagnostic equipment and expert manpower to be

employed by clinics and banks. The States and Union Territories will constitute the State boards and State authorities within three months of the notification by the Centre. The State board shall have the responsibility to follow the policies and plans laid by the national board for clinics and banks in the State, the statement said.

The major benefit of the Act would be that it will regulate the assisted reproductive technology services in the country. Consequently, infertile couples will be more ensured/confident of the ethical practices in ARTs. The Bill follows introduction in Parliament of the Surrogacy Regulation Bill 2020, and the approval of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Amendment Bill 2020, said the Minister, detailing the provisions of the new Bill.

Cabinet gives nod to creation of empowered Technical Group and 22nd Law Commission

New Delhi: Union Cabinet also approved creation of empowered Technical Group and 22nd Law Commission. The term of the previous law panel had ended on August 31, 2018. With the Cabinet approval, the Law Ministry will now notify the new panel, which will have a term of three years. The panel will have a full-time chairperson, four full-time members (including a member secretary), and law and legislative secretaries in the law ministry as ex-officio members.

Cabinet approved constitution of a 12-Member Technology Group with the Principal Scientific Adviser to Government of India as its Chair. PNS



Information & Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar releases the India 2020 yearbook highlighting the flagship programmes of the Government and important events of the year in New Delhi on Wednesday

Climate change, harmful products impacting children: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ecological degradation, climate change and exploitative marketing practices that push heavily processed fast food, sugary drinks, alcohol and tobacco are fast taking a toll on the health and future of the children with no country taking adequate protecting measures.

Painting a gloomy picture on the status of the future of the children, the report, "A Future for the World's Children?", released on Wednesday by a Commission of over 40 child and adolescent health experts from around the world notes with concern that every child worldwide now faces existential threats from climate change and commercial pressures.

The experts have called for a new global movement driven by and for the children. While the poorest countries need to do more to support

their children's ability to live healthy lives, excessive carbon emissions — disproportionately from wealthier countries — threaten the future of all children, said the Commission convened by the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and The Lancet.

"Despite improvements in child and adolescent health over the past 20 years, progress has stalled, and is set to reverse," said former Prime Minister of New Zealand and Co-Chair of the Commission, Helen Clark. "It has been estimated that around 250 million children under five years old in low- and middle-income countries are at risk of not reaching their developmental potential, based on proxy measures of stunting and poverty. But of even greater concern, every child worldwide now faces existential threats from climate change and commercial pressures.

"Countries need to overhaul



their approach to child and adolescent health, to ensure that we not only look after our children today but protect the world they will inherit in the

A MANIFESTO FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION ON CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH

- Stop CO2 emissions with the utmost urgency, to ensure children have a future on this planet
- Place children and adolescents at the centre of our efforts to achieve sustainable development
- New policies and investment in all sectors to work towards child health and rights
- Incorporate children's voices into policy decisions
- Tighten national regulation of harmful commercial marketing, supported by a new Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

future," she added.

The report includes a new global index of 180 countries, comparing performance on child flourishing, including

measures of child survival and well-being, such as health, education, and nutrition; sustainability, with a proxy for greenhouse gas emissions, and equi-

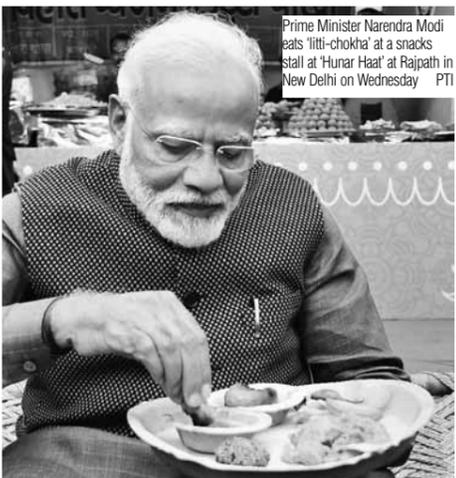
ty, or income gaps.

According to the report, while the poorest countries need to do more to support their children's ability to live healthy lives, excessive carbon emissions -disproportionately from wealthier countries - threaten the future of all children.

The only countries on track to beat carbon emission per capita targets by 2030, while also performing fairly (within the top 70) on child flourishing measures are Albania, Armenia, Grenada, Jordan, Moldova, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Uruguay, and Vietnam, shows the analysis.

"From heads-of-state to local government, from UN leaders to children themselves, this Commission calls for the birth of a new era for child and adolescent health. It will take courage and commitment to deliver. It is the supreme test of our generation," says Dr Richard Horton, Editor-in-Chief of The Lancet family of journals.

PM's surprise visit to Hunar Haat



Prime Minister Narendra Modi eats 'litti-chokha' at a snacks stall at 'Hunar Haat' at Rajpath in New Delhi on Wednesday

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

The ongoing 'Hunar Haat' at Rajpath here had a special guest on Wednesday. It was none other than Prime Minister Narendra Modi who paid a surprise visit to 'Hunar Haat', where he relished 'litti-chokha' and 'kulhad' tea and interacted with artisans. Minority Affairs Minister MA Naqvi accompanied the PM who headed to the Haat soon after chairing the meeting of the Union Cabinet.

Later, Naqvi told The Pioneer that the 'Hunar Haat', which is making the rounds of several cities in the country with the next destination being Ranchi, Jharkhand, has already given employment to over three lakh artisans in three years. "It is a revolutionary event," he insisted.

The Haat is organised by the Ministry of Minority Affairs. Works of artisans, food and music were in full play in different stalls as visitors streamed in and out, enjoying a balmy afternoon.

Officials of the Ministry at the event were surprised when they came to know about the Prime Minister's visit. Modi tweeted several photographs from his visit to the Hunar Haat in which he is seen interacting with the artisans and appreciating the traditional handicrafts at various stalls.

Modi, who stayed in the venue for over 50 minutes sat in a woven cot and 'mooda' (cane chair) and ate litti-chokha, a dough ball made of whole wheat flour and stuffed with sattu, and paid ₹120 for it. The dish is popular in Bihar, eastern Uttar Pradesh and

Jharkhand.

He also had tea served in kulhad with the Minority Affairs Minister and paid ₹40 for two cups. The Prime Minister along with Naqvi went round the Haat and stopped at several stalls to interact with master craftsmen and artisans and made queries on various fine artifacts.

Master artisans, craftsmen and culinary experts, including more than 50 per cent women, from across the country are participating at the Haat.

"Spent a wonderful afternoon at Hunar Haat on India Gate. It showcases the best of products including handicrafts, carpets, textiles and of course, delicious food! Do visit it," PM Modi tweeted. The participation of people from all across India makes 'Hunar Haat' a vibrant place, he said.

Relished litti-chokha, kulhad tea; interacted with artisans

"Had tasty Litti Chokha for lunch along with a hot cup of tea..." he said in another tweet.

The Prime Minister also picked up a traditional musical instrument at a stall and tried playing it.

Artisans participating in the event told Modi that traditional arts were dying, but the 'Hunar Haat' initiative had given a new lease of life to them.

Modi interacted with a specially-abled painter who benefited from the government's Hunar Haat initiative. The 'Hunar Haat', which will be open until February 23 in the national Capital, will move to Ranchi, Gurugram, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata, Dehradun, Patna, Bhopal, Goa, Kochi, Guwahati and Bhubaneswar, among other places in coming months.

Cong demands scrapping of CVC

New Delhi: Terming the process adopted for appointment of the next Chief Vigilance Commissioner (CVC) as "illegal, unlawful and unconstitutional", the Congress on Wednesday demanded its immediate scrapping. The party also said US President Donald Trump's remarks ahead of his India visit is an insult and affront to country's dignity.

The Congress said arbitrariness in top judicial institutions is fatal for democracy and alleged there is no place for transparency, accountability and constitutional processes in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'New India, which was fatal for democracy. Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala charged that appointments of CVC and CIC

are being made arbitrarily on the lines of 'khum ja sim sim' (open sesame). "The appointments of CVC and CIC are being made on the lines of 'open sesame'. Bring out names from the pocket and make appointments, that's it. There is no place left for transparency, accountability, constitutional processes and compliance of law in Modi ji's 'New India,'" he charged on Twitter.

Sanjay Kothari, the Secretary to the President, has been selected as the new CVC by a high-powered committee headed by the Prime Minister. The committee has also chosen by a majority decision, former Information & Broadcasting Secretary Bimal Julka, currently serving as an Information Commissioner, as the new CIC in the Central Information Commission. PNS

TAPAS PAUL'S DEATH Didi holds Centre, CBI responsible

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday slammed Narendra Modi Government for taking out his political revenge on the Opposition parties. Speaking at the funeral of Bengali cine star and former TMC MP Tapas Paul who died in Mumbai on Tuesday suffering a severe heart attack, Mamata said that Paul was a victim of BJP's vendetta politics. "Tapas Paul was a great actor who had to pay with his life for no fault of his. He had to die untimely because of Centre's political vendetta and tormenting psychological pressure brought on him by a Central Agency. He was put in jail for more than a year just because he worked as a Brand Ambassador of some company under investigation."

The Chief Minister was apparently referring to the CBI Investigation into the multi-crore Rose Valley chit fund case. "All the film personalities who work as Brand Ambassador's are at a risk of being framed by this Government.....Tapas was the third victim of this vendetta politics. Earlier our MP Sultan Ahmed and the wife of another MP Prasun Banerjee died a similar death" Banerjee said. Reacting to her comments, Congress leader of Lok Sabha Adhir Chowdhury and Senior CPIM leader Samik Lahiri said that Banerjee too followed similar vendetta politics in Bengal putting hundreds of Opposition workers in jail. Lahiri said Pal's death is a glaring example showing whosoever gets close to Mamata Banerjee is at a risk of facing similar faith.

Maoists blow up school building in Bihar, leave anti-CAA pamphlets

Gaya: Suspected Maoist rebels blew up a school building in Bihar's Gaya district and left behind pamphlets denouncing the CAA-NPR-NRC and the fascist BJP Government, a senior police official said on Wednesday.

Rajeev Mishra, the Senior Superintendent of Police of Gaya, said nobody was injured in the blast that razed the empty school building in Banke Bazaar police station area late Tuesday night. A CRPF contingent was stationed there till recently.

"A team of 153 Battalion of CRPF had been camping in the area since March 18 last year when naxals had carried out an attack ahead of the Lok Sabha polls. They had been putting up at Sonedaha High School and shifted to their own camp in the thick of the jungle nearby on February 08," Mishra said.

Hand-written pamphlets have been recovered from the site which bear slogans against "Brahminvadi, Hindutvavadi fascist BJP Government," and question "occupation" of school buildings by security forces.

The pamphlets also urge people to "unite against draconian measures like CAA, NPR and NRC", the SSP added.

We have inputs about Maoists active in the area lending their support to the protests against CAA-NPR-NRC. On Sunday last, nine



women suspected of naxal links were rounded up in the area while they were on their way to Shanti Bagh where a round-the-clock demonstration has been under way," he said.

The SSP claimed that during interrogation one of the women confessed to being an active member of the banned CPI (Maoist) and others said they had received Rs 300-400 each for attending the Shanti Bagh protest. Joint search operations by CRPF, Combat Battalion for Resolute Action (COBRA) and STF of Bihar police were on to track down the perpetrators, Mishra said. **PTI**

Anti-CAA rally by Islamists pass off peacefully in Chennai

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

A massive demonstration held by Federation of Tamil Nadu Islamic and Political Organisations in Chennai on Wednesday against the CAA concluded peacefully without any untoward incident reported from anywhere in the city.

Thousands of people belonging to the Islamic community marched through the streets of Chennai, shouting slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and the Citizen Amendment Act.

More than 5,000 police personnel have been posted along the route to Fort Saint George (Tamil Nadu Secretariat) and unmanned aerial vehicles were deployed to monitor the movement of people.

Though the Madras High



Court on Tuesday had denied permission to representatives of various Islamic organisation to lay siege to the Secretariat, the FTNIPO, claiming to represent 23 Islamic organisations undertook the rally demanding the scrapping of CAA. They also demanded the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly to pass a resolution demanding the negation of the CAA.

Since the police had barricaded the one kilometre stretch from Anna Salai to Secretariat, the demonstrators called off the rally after the community leaders delivered the routine speeches. The rally

came to an end at 12:45 pm with the participants singing the National Anthem.

MH Jawahirullah, leader of Tamil Nadu Muslim Munnatra Kazhagam, who addressed the rally said that the demonstration was for the entire Indians because the CAA would make it difficult for all Indians to survive in the country. "Had MGR (former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu) been alive today, it would not have been possible for him to live in Tamil Nadu because his birth place was Kandy in Sri Lanka," said Jawahirullah.

Elsewhere in the State, members of Islamic community staged rallies condemning the CAA. But all rallies and demonstrations were peaceful as no untoward incidents were reported. The sit-in at Washermenpet area in Chennai continued for the fifth day without any unpleasant experience.

PAN card, land & bank documents no proofs of citizenship: Gauhati HC

Guwahati: PAN card, land and bank documents do not prove one's Indian citizenship, the Gauhati High Court has observed while dismissing a woman's plea against a tribunal order that rejected her citizenship claim.

A division bench comprising justices Manojit Bhuyan and PJ Saikia dismissed Jabeeda Begum's plea as the documents submitted by her could not establish her linkage to her projected father or brother.

Begum submitted 14 documents, including her PAN card and ration card, two bank pass-books, the NRC details of her father Javed Ali, voter lists where the names of her grandparents, parents and her along with her husband were published and several land revenue receipts.

The Foreigners Tribunal in Baksa district had earlier issued a notice to her on the basis of a ref-

erence made by the Superintendent of Police (Border) to prove her Indian citizenship.

She appeared before the tribunal and filed her written statement along with the 14 documents, claiming to be a citizen of India by birth.

The tribunal held that village headmen are not entitled to issue certificates supporting the citizenship of a person and also rejected the bank documents as these adequately do not prove to be her's.

The tribunal held that the petitioner failed to file documents linking herself with her projected parents.

She appealed against the tribunal's ruling in the high court, which observed that it has carefully gone through the direction of the tribunal and found that she could not file any documents to link herself with her projected par-

ents. The high court had already held in another case in 2016 that PAN card and bank documents are not proofs of citizenship, the division bench observed.

Certificates issued by a 'Gaon Bura' or village headman also cannot be the proof of citizenship as such a certificate can only be used by a married woman to prove that after her marriage she had shifted to her matrimonial village, the court ruled.

The court observed that the tribunal has correctly appreciated the evidence placed before it and there was no perversity in the decision of the tribunal.

The judges ruled that the petitioner has failed to prove her linkage with her projected father and her projected brother and as such this writ petition is devoid of merit and disposed of accordingly. **PTI**

CAA, media freedom come under scrutiny at Difficult Dialogues

NAVIN UPADHYAY ■ DONA PAULA (GOA)

From Citizenship Amendment Act to freedom of speech, from Uniform civil code to judicial accountability, a wide range of constitutional and legal issues, which have rocked the country for some time, were debated by India's best known legal experts, academicians and civil right activists at a three-day conference at International Centre, Goa between February 14 and 16. International legal experts also shared their insights and experiences so that the benefits of global best practices could be dovetailed into the proceedings.

The conference-the fifth edition of Difficult Dialogues-came out with series of recommendations for improving the State of the law in the country. The policy recommendations would be published in the form of actionable white papers that could make a difference.

The highlight of the engagements was a panel discussion on Free speech, censorship, and the media

attended by Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan, Supreme Court advocate Geeta Luthra and two retired judges.

The panelists agreed that dissent was a key element of any democracy and diversity of opinion has to be respected. The Governor, who seemed to reluctantly endorse this view, insisted that right to dissent didn't mean any one has the right to impose his views on others.

Later, in an interaction with the media persons when the Governor was asked for his reaction on tendency to brand traitors those dissenting against the Government's policy, the Governor referred to a report by a Pakistani NGO that more than 1000 Hindu women were kidnapped and forcibly converted in that country. "When such things happened across the border, these are bound to find an echo in India, too," he said.

When asked what it has to do with the right of the citizen's dissent against the Government, the governor virtually lost his cool and said most of those out on the streets are following "fatwas" issued by their

masters. While CAA remained a topic of discussion, both formally and informally, at the conference, the panelists also went at length into others issues such as: After the Aadhar judgment: Do individuals have right to privacy in India? Accountability vs independence of Judiciary: Is the balance right? Reforms in the administration of justice: What can help? Discrimination law and minorities: Is justice done? Making environmental laws effective: How to achieve sustainability?

Commenting at the conclusion of the three day summit, Surina Narula, Founder & CEO of Difficult Dialogues said, "In the fifth edition of Difficult Dialogues this year, we were able to discuss the State of Law in the country, identify the various issues and problems that exist, and come up with action points that could help in the speedy and equitable dispensation of justice to all. As an outcome of the Difficult Dialogues 2020, we will be documenting all the recommendations that were tabled in the form of actionable white papers for

the benefit of all." This year the Knowledge Partners for Difficult Dialogues include the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, University of Oxford, (CSLS, Oxford), Bar Association of India (BAI), O P Jindal Global University, Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University (CSLG, JNU), the Goa University (GU), and the International Centre Goa (ICG).

The conference concluded with 'Daring Debates' - a platform for the students-in which eight finalists from different colleges from across the country took part. The regional winners were invited for the grand finale where the topic was 'Environment Protection: A Case for State Surveillance or Individual Discipline?' The debate was moderated by wildlife film-maker Malika Vaz. Erenbeni Humtsoe of St. Anthony's College, Shillong was declared the winner with Manish Kumar Jha of IMS Law College, Delhi adjudged as the first runner-up and Sasha D'Souza of Dnyanprasarak Mandal's College and Research Center, Goa adjudged as the second runner-up.

Didi likely to attend Shah's Bhubaneswar meet

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is likely to attend the Eastern Zonal Council meeting on February 28, on internal security to be chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah at Bhubaneswar, State Government sources said.

The meeting will be attended by all the Chief Ministers of the eastern states.

Sources at State secretariat Nabanna said that the Chief Minister has been invited by the Union Home Ministry on February 28. "There will be an EZC meeting on internal security where Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has been invited," sources said adding "the Chief Minister is likely to attend the meeting."

Sources also said that if the Chief Minister got preoccupied in other engagements then State Finance Minister Amit Mitra could be sent to attend the meeting.

Apart from Banerjee Chief Ministers of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and Sikkim have also been invited and all the Chief Ministers are likely to remain present in the meeting.

With Banerjee taking the centre stage in her consistent

anti-Narendra Modi and anti-BJP campaigns galvanizing the other parties in one place with particular reference to the ongoing struggle against the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register for Citizens (NRC) all eyes are likely to be on the outcome of the Bhubaneswar summit.

While the top TMC leaders refused to make open comment on any likelihood of Mamata-Shah parley in the sidelines of the main meeting critics said the Chief Minister might hold talks with Shah on a number of issues like the State's financial dues.

"She even met Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the peak of anti-CAA movement when he came to Kolkata in January," said BN Chakrabarty a professor of political science and political analyst.

After his meeting with the Prime Minister the Chief Minister told the media that she had met him as it was the tradition to welcome a guest adding how the talks between the two leaders remained confined to the financial demands of the State Government.

If the meeting between

Shah and Banerjee takes place at Bhubaneswar it will be the second such meeting in the past five months or so as the two leaders met in Delhi late last year when Banerjee went to the Capital to meet the Prime Minister and the Home Minister leading the opposition parties to attack the Chief Minister for her double standards.

Incidentally Banerjee's Delhi visit had coincided with the CBI's relentless pressure on the then ADG CID Rajiv Kumar who was allegedly gone underground with the Agency sleuths hot in pursuit.

Kumar was wanted by the CBI for his role in the investigation of the multi-crore Sharada chit fund case. Even as in subsequent hearing Kumar got reprieve in Calcutta High Court which provided shield to him from arrest the State Opposition cried foul alleging the CBI once again withdrew into its shell following Banerjee's urgent visit to Delhi.

Reacting to the February 28 summit State Congress leader Manoj Chakrabarty said "whether this meeting in Bhubaneswar is really on internal security or the TMC leaders' security will only be revealed subsequently."

K'taka: Poet, journo held over recital of anti-CAA poem at Govt function

Bengaluru: A poet and a journalist have been arrested in connection with recital of a poem against CAA and NRC at a Government sponsored function in Koppal district of Karnataka last month, police said on Wednesday.

The arrests were made based on a complaint from a BJP functionary alleging that Siraj Bisaralli, a poet had recited an anti-CAA poem at 'Aneundi Utsava' in Gangavathi town of Koppal district in January and Rajabaxi, editor of an online news portal uploaded it on social media.

Police had registered a case against them under section 505 of IPC (statements conducing to public mischief).

On Tuesday, Bisaralli and Rajabaxi surrendered before a court in that district, which rejected their bail plea and remanded them to police custody for investigation into the matter.

"Siraj had recited the poem and Rajabaxi had shared it on

Police had registered a case against them under Section 505 of IPC (statements conducing to public mischief)

the social media. Based on a complaint by a BJP leader the case was registered under section 505 of the IPC. They went absconding after that and surrendered before the court on Tuesday," a police officer told **PTI**.

The duo sought an interim bail, which the public prosecutor objected to and sought police custody to conduct inquiry.

The court granted sent Bisaralli and Rajabaxi to police custody till Wednesday afternoon.

"We may not seek further extension of their custody until some fresh evidences surface. We have seized their mobile phones to ascertain whom they had shared the details with," police said. **PTI**



Members of various Muslim outfits and political parties take part in the anti-CAA rally, in Chennai on Wednesday **PTI**

BJP's defeat in Delhi signals beginning of change: Pawar

Lucknow: NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Wednesday said the defeat of the BJP in the Delhi Assembly elections signals "beginning of the change".

"The BJP is tasting defeats - be it in the elections in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan or Delhi. In Delhi, the BJP had put all its strength and even Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah campaigned there," Pawar said at a party workers' meeting here.

"UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and chief ministers of other BJP-ruled states also campaigned in Delhi. But people of Delhi showed that the beginning of change has started," he said.

(AAP) stormed back to power in Delhi by winning an impressive 62 seats, while the BJP could work its magic only in the remaining eight seats in the national capital.

On the Ram temple issue, Pawar said, "We accept the construction of Ram temple. The way in which a trust was set up for it, there should be a similar body for mosque. The country and the government belong to everyone and every religion."

Noting that the atmosphere in the country was "different" now, the NCP leader lamented, "Those in power are ignoring problems of common man. Uttar Pradesh gave many leaders to the country, so the state has an important role in

politics. The state has the capacity to bring the country on the right track". Senior NCP leader Praful Patel said his party has decided to strengthen its organisation in Uttar Pradesh. "We have started establishing party organisation at every district and village level in the state," he said, adding people were disappointed by the politics of SP and BSP in Uttar Pradesh, which was capitalised by the BJP and it came to power in the state with a majority.

Patel later told reporters that there was no difference of opinion among the NCP, Congress and Shiv Sena over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC). **PTI**

GFP: Like Goa CM, Centre should remove anti-people policies

Panaji: Goa Forward Party (GFP) chief Vijai Sardesai on Wednesday said the Centre should learn from Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and withdraw its 'anti-people' policies.

He was referring to the Sawant-led Government's recent decision of withdrawing section 144 of the CrPC in North Goa and the roll-back of the order notifying 56 villages in the state as urban areas.

Speaking to reporters in Margao, Sardesai congratulated Sawant for withdrawing the notifications that had met with Opposition from various quarters.

"I appreciate the Chief Minister for rolling back anti-people decisions," the Fatorda MLA said.

The Centre should take cue from Sawant and withdraw the anti-people laws, he added. "The Union Government and the national leadership of the BJP should learn from Sawant and roll back their anti-people policies," he said. **PTI**

Prashant Kishor defends 'pichhlagu' jibe at Nitish, linking BJP with Godse

Patna: Defending his 'pichhlagu' (underling) barb at Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, poll strategist-politician Prashant Kishor on Wednesday said he was upset with the JD(U) chief's 'surrender' before the BJP just to cling to power without extracting any benefit for the State.

Facing flak for linking the BJP with (Nathuram) Godse, while having worked with the party in the past, Kishor asserted that public praise of Mahatma Gandhis assassin by a mainstream political outfit was "a recent phenomenon, seen in the last six to eight months".

He said in the seven decades since Independence only fringe elements extolled Godse here and there. "It has been only after the last Lok Sabha polls that we have seen workers of a mainstream party

chanting slogans in his praise, even a Member of Parliament doing the same on the floor of the House," he told a news channel here, referring to the incident involving Bhopal MP Sadhvi Pragya Thakur.

The expelled JD(U) vice president lamented the pity was that, "those aligned with the BJP, did not muster the courage to even condemn the outrageous act".

Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi had on Tuesday taken a swipe at Kishor, saying the man who had cut his teeth as an election strategist for Narendra Modi in 2014, was now accusing the BJP of following "Godse".

"As regards the controversy over pichhlagu remark, I have been expressing my reservations about people of the state accepting a leader who appears to be playing second

fiddle (to the BJP). I might be wrong, but that is my view," the election strategist said.

"However, I was ready to accept the surrender before the BJP had it been for extracting benefits for the state from the party in power at the Centre. If the capitulation is just to ensure continuance in power in the state, that might be detested by the people", he added.

Former BJP president and Union Home minister Amit Shah has already announced that Kumar would be the face of the NDA in the Bihar assembly polls to be held later this year. During his press conference the previous day, Kishor had referred to denial of special status to Bihar by the Centre and Prime Minister Narendra Modi not entertaining Kumar's request for grant of central status to Patna University. **PTI**

Three HM terrorists killed in Pulwama

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Three dreaded terrorists of pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) terror outfit were eliminated by the joint team of security forces in Sherabad area of Tral in South Kashmir's Pulwama district early Wednesday morning.

Director General of Jammu & Kashmir Police, Dilbagh Singh, in Srinagar said, "in the ongoing anti-terrorist operations, three Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists were gunned down by the security forces in Sherabad area of Tral early Wednesday morning".

He said since January 2020, a total number of 23 terrorists have been eliminated by the security forces in 10 operations across the State.

DGP said, "the three terrorists killed during the operation were identified as Jahangir Rafiq Wani, Raja Umer Maqbool and Uzair Bhat. He said two of them were residents of Tral and the third one was native of Bijbehara. He said, Jahangir had taken over the command of Hizbul Mujahideen in the area after the elimination of another top commander Hamad Khan in January 2020."

"Jahangir along with Raja Maqbool were involved in at



least eight terrorism related incidents and had spread reign of terror in the area. They were involved in civilian killings, torching religious places, chemist shop, trucks and targeting security personnel", DGP added

Referring to the security measures to prevent any terror strike in the run up to the visit of US President Donald Trump to India, DGP said, "We are taking all necessary measures...we are hopeful that this visit (of the US president) will pass off peacefully."

Singh said foreign dignitaries visited Jammu and Kashmir recently and their visits passed off without any incident. "Two groups (of ambassadors) visited Jammu & Kashmir and they left without any incident taking place here," he said.

The DGP said Pakistan was trying its best to keep the militancy going in Jammu & Kashmir by sending in militants from across the Line of Control (LoC) and the inter-

national border under the cover of ceasefire violations, especially after the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, which gave a special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir, on August 5 last year.

"The number of ceasefire violations has increased after August 5, 2019. Pakistan is trying to keep the borders hot in order to push in as many terrorists as possible. While some attempts of infiltration have been successful, many have been foiled," he said.

Singh said a Pakistani drone recently flew over a BSF picket in the Ghagwal area of the Jammu region for around 10 minutes, but was pulled back after the troops of the border-guarding force opened fire.

In response to a question, the DGP said he would not be able to give the exact number of militants waiting to infiltrate into Jammu and Kashmir from across the LoC, but maintained that terror launchpads were active during the winter months as well.

"Normally, there would not be much activity at the launchpads during the winter months as snow would cover the passes. This winter, however, the movement at the launchpads did not reduce," he said.

UP BJP MLA among seven booked for raping woman

PTI ■ BHADODHI (UP)

An FIR was lodged against local BJP AMLA Ravindra Nath Tripathi and six others here on Wednesday for allegedly raping a woman repeatedly for a month in 2017, police said.

The 40-year-old woman, who is a widow, had lodged a complaint on February 10, they said.

The woman alleged that she was first raped by Tripathi's nephew Sandeep Tiwari, who has also been named in the FIR, in 2016. She said she did not lodge a complaint back then as Tiwari had promised to marry her, Superintendent of Police (SP) Ram Badan Singh said.

She has alleged that in the run-up to the 2017 Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, she was kept at a hotel for a month by Tiwari. All the seven accused would visit the hotel and repeatedly rape her, the officer said.

She also claimed that she got pregnant and was forced to undergo abortion.

A probe in this regard was handed over to Assistant Superintendent of Police Ravindra Verma. On the basis of his report, an FIR was registered against the seven men at the city police station, the SP said. Singh said the woman's statement will be recorded before a magistrate and further action will be taken in the matter as per law.

Man gets death penalty for rape-murder of minor girl

Mumbai: A court in Maharashtra's Parbhani district has awarded death sentence to a man for raping and brutally killing a five-year-old girl, observing the crime was 'more cruel' than the act of the most dreaded animal.

Special Judge (POCSO cases) S G Inamdar in his order on Tuesday pronounced the accused, Vishnu Gore (30), guilty under Indian Penal Code Section 302 for murder and provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

According to the prosecution, the girl lived with her grandparents, who worked as farm labourers, at a village in Parbhani, located around 500 km from here.

On October 27, 2016, when the grandparents returned home from work, they did not find the girl at home. After unsuccessful attempts to locate her, they filed a missing person's complaint at Sonpeth police station two days later.

During the course of investigation, the police found the girl's body in a well near a field in the village on October 31, 2016 following which they arrested the accused, who worked as a labourer and resided in the same district.

As per the prosecution, the accused kidnapped the victim from outside her house, sexually assaulted her and then strangled her to death with a nylon rope. He then wrapped the body in a gunny bag and threw it into the well.

While there was no direct evidence, the prosecution relied on circumstantial evidence to prove its case.

They examined 23 witnesses, including the victim's grandfather and the person who had last seen the girl with the accused.

Additional Public Prosecutor S D Wakodkar told the court that the case was proved beyond all reasonable doubt, and sought death sentence for the accused.

"This falls under the ambit of the 'rarest of rare' case. It is a case of aggravated penetrative sexual assault on the minor girl and killing her," Wakodkar told the court while praying for capital punishment.

Finding merit in the prosecution's arguments, the court awarded death sentence to the accused, observing that he acted in a manner "highly repugnant to the morals and committed diabolic, premeditated, brutal, pre-planned aggravated penetrative sexual assault and cold-blooded murder". PTI

Dalit girl alleges sexual harassment by three youths

Muzaffarnagar: A 16-year-old Dalit girl has alleged she was sexually harassed by three youths when she was on her way to a brick kiln at a village in Shamli district, police said on Wednesday.

They said the incident happened at Bhabisa village under Kandhla police station on Tuesday when the girl was going to the brick kiln site with lunch for her kin.

Station House Officer SK Dube said the girl's brother had filed a complaint, alleging the three youths allegedly sexually harassed her on the way to the brick kiln.

Dube said the three accused, one of whom has been identified as a 23-year-old man, have gone absconding.

An investigation in the matter is underway. PTI

Karate instructor gets 4 years RI for sexually harassing girls

Mumbai: A special court here has sentenced a martial arts instructor to four years of rigorous imprisonment for sexually harassing his 13-year-old girl student during a camp in suburban Borivali in 2015.

Special Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act court judge, S U Baghele, convicted the man and awarded the sentence on Monday.

The accused knew the victim and her family for eight years before the incident, the prosecution told the court. He used to run martial art classes,

which the girl would attend. In February, 2015, the man had organised a karate training camp at the Sanjay Gandhi National Park in Borivali, which was attended by the girl and five other students, the prosecution said.

After the camp got over, the accused asked other students to proceed to their homes. Thereafter, he asked the victim to accompany him on his motorcycle.

As she was pillion riding, he stopped his two-wheeler at a secluded place and sexually harassed the girl, the prosecution said. PTI

MARIA BOOK REVELATIONS ROW

Congress says BJP using book to mislead people

BJP demands reprobe into 26/11

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

As they exchanged charges and counter charges over the revelations in Mumbai's former Police Commissioner Rakesh Maria's book "Let Me Say It Now", the ruling Congress on Wednesday rubbished the BJP's efforts to use contents of book to mislead the people and the BJP demanded re-investigation into the 26/11 terror attacks.

On a day when State BJP leader and senior MLA Atul Bhatkalkar shot off a letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray demanding re-investigation into the 26/11 attacks, Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee Secretary Sachin Sawant

said: "Here is a party (BJP) that has shielded accused in the terror acts like Malegaon blasts and Samjota Express blasts and put pressure on the public prosecutors to water down the charges and seek the release of the accused from the cases. Its demand for re-investigation into the 26/11 sounds like Ulta chor kotwal ko daante."

"It was the Congress Government that caught 26/11 attack accused Abdul Ajmal Kasab alive and executed him after a proper judicial process due to which real face of Pakistan and its support for terrorism got exposed internationally, whereas the tacit support of the BJP helped the accused in Malegaon bomb-blast go scot-free," Sawant said.

Reacting to the BJP leaders' claim that the phrase 'Hindu terror' was coined post 26/11 attacks, Sawant tweeted: "The book of Rakesh Maria

hypothetically discusses if Kasab was not found alive, media would have projected him a Hindu. It doesn't mention any conspiracy. #BJP can stoop to any level because of its dirty mindset"

"Pragya Thakur in failed attempt to pull wool over people's eyes is using Rakesh Maria's book with a false pretense. Book mentions nothing that's not included in Kasab's chargesheet. Crime of Kasab is same as to what she is charged for. Unfortunately that Anti-India BJP gave her ticket," Sawant said in another tweet.

In his letter to the Chief Minister, BJP's Bhatkalkar made a strong case for the re-investigation into the 26/11 attacks. "After the 26/11 attacks, the Congress leaders indulged in a false propaganda that it was not Kasab but the Hindu terrorists who killed like Hemant Karkare and Ashok Kamte

who were among the senior police officers martyred in the 26/11 attacks".

"In view of the revelation made by Maria who investigated the 26/11 attacks that Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI attempted to depict Kasab as the Hindu terrorist, it is essential for the Maharashtra Government to order a comprehensive re-investigation into the Mumbai terror attacks. The re-investigation is essential as it involves national security," Bhatkalkar said.

Bhatkalkar claimed that former Union home secretary in the Rajiv Gandhi Government and former chief secretary of Maharashtra, Ram Pradhan, who headed a two-member committee appointed by the then Congress-led DV Government, had in a media interview said that there was "local connection" to the 26/11 attacks and that then Union Minister and senior Congress P Chidambhar had

asked Pradhan not to reveal the "local connection".

Contesting Bhatkalkar's claim, Sawant said: "Nowhere in the interview cited by Bhatkalkar, Ram Pradhan has said that Chidambaram told him to withhold information about the purported local connection. Hence, Bhatkalkar's claim is baseless".

Alluding to senior BJP leader and Union Minister Piyush Goyal's claim about "Hindu terror" conspiracy hatched allegedly at the behest of Chidambaram, Maria's statement in his book that LeT wanted to pass off the 26/11 attacks as a case of Hindu terrorism and reference to "red thread" around Kasab's wrist, Sawant tweeted: "The confessional statement of Terrorist Ajmal Kasab mentions following clarification about his Identity card and red thread on his wrist. This exposes Anti-India #BJP"

SC wants to hear Gadkari on electric vehicles policy

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday expressed a desire to interact with Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari in open court on the Centre's plan for introduction of electric vehicles (EVs), noting he has been making statements on this subject for reducing vehicular pollution.

The top court, however, did not seek Gadkari's presence after the law officer, appearing for the Centre, raised objections, saying there could be a "political issue" if the minister makes a court appearance.

The court, hearing a PIL seeking implementation of National E-Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP), 2020 said it would like to interact with the minister as he has been talking

about the use of alternative fuels in private and public transport vehicles modes. The plan recommended gradual conversion of public transport and government vehicles into EVs.

Your minister talks about it. We would like to hear him. Somebody responsible should come," Chief Justice S A Bobde, who headed a three-judge bench, told Additional Solicitor General ANS Nadkarni, who was representing the Centre.

The bench, which also comprised justices B R Gawai and Surya Kant, then asked the minister come and explain the proposal to introduce non-polluting vehicles that can run either on electricity or hydrogen. PTI

BSES
BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi

CORRIGENDUM
EXTENSION OF LAST DATE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF OFFER

It is intimated that the last date of submission of tender against NIT No. Head (PMG)/BRPL/Tender/2019-20/385, dated 30.01.2020 for Banking of Power by BRPL has been extended till 03.03.2020 and the revised schedule is as follows:-

A. Due date & time of Submission 03.03.2020 at 15:00 HRS.
B. Date & Time of Opening 03.03.2020 at 15:15 HRS.

Vice President (PMG)
BSES Rajdhani Power Limited.

For further details please log on to <http://www.bses.co.in>
Regd. Off: BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, SSES Bypass, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019
Corporate Identification No: U40109DL2019PLC111527
Telephone No: +91 11 3997225 Fax No: +91 11 3997980
Website: www.bses.co.in

WESTERN RAILWAY
PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL 18 MOBILE CHARGING POINTS IN NON-AC & AC COACHES

TENDER NOTICE NO: EL/WAPL/2018-19/74. Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer (W), Western Railway Carriage Repair Workshop, N. M. Joshi Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai - 400 013, invites e-bids through e-Tendering method from experienced contractors for the following works: Name of work with location: Provision of Additional 18 Mobile Charging Points in Non-AC & AC Coaches as per scope of work and Schedule of Rates. LOCATION: Carriage Repair Workshop, Western Railway, Lower Parel, Mumbai - 400 013. Approx. Cost of the work: ₹. 15,41,506.36. EMD: ₹. 50,700/-.

Date and time for Submission of tender: 20.03.2020 up to 12.00 hours, and opening of tender: 20.03.2020 up to 12.30 hours. Website particulars: www.reps.gov.in. The tenders to ensure that any corrigendum is uploaded subsequently on website and care be taken by them prior to submission of tender online.

Like us on: [Facebook.com/WesternRly](https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly)

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF N.C.T. OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (NW) II
H-BLOCK, SECTOR-15, ROHINI, DELHI-110089
PH: 27851040 (E-MAIL: eenw2.djb@gmail.com)

PRESS NIT No. 59 (2019-20) Press Notice Tender

S. No.	Name of Work	Amount put to Tender	Earnest Money/ Tender Fee	Date of release of receipt of tender/ I.D. No.	Last date/time of receipt of bid through e-procurement solution
1.	Augmentation of water supply system at Phari road near NDDL office to Aggarwal sweet Pehladpur village in AC-07 Bawana constituency under EE(NW)-II (Re-invite)	Rs. 32,63,680/-	Rs. 65,300/- Rs. 500/-	17.02.2020 2020_DJB_188125_1	03.03.2020 Upto 3.00 PM

The verification of details of NIT published in leading news papers may be sent to undersigned for record please.

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
Advt. No. J.S.V. 833/19-20

Sd/-
Executive Engineer (NW) II

4 Bangla nationals held

Erode (TN): Four Bangladeshi nationals have been arrested at nearby Perundurai for not having proper travel documents, police said.

They were later sent to Puzhal prison in Chennai, the police said.

The four were standing near a Magaliamman temple near Perundurai in Erode district of Tamil Nadu on Tuesday and were interrogated by the police on routine rounds.

On inquiry, one of them identified himself as Farroq Haji (38) employed in SIP-COT as a casual labourer, they said.

The remaining three were Hemul Islam (22), Siraj Haji (45) and Rafiul Islam (35). None of them had proper documents, they said.

So, the police arrested them and checked the premises where the four were residing on rent. PTI

SOUTH DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

HORTICULTURE DEPARTMENT(HQ)
E BLOCK, 3RD FLOOR, DR. S.P.M. CIVIC CENTRE
J.L. NEHRU MARG, NEW DELHI-110002
NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Open Online Item Rate Tenders are invited under two bid system (Technical & Financial) from reputed, experienced and financially sound Manpower Companies / Firms / Agencies for "Hiring of agency for supply of manpower (Un-skilled Labour to work as Mali) against vacant posts of Mali in Horticulture Department in South Delhi Municipal Corporation" in respect of Tender No. 318455 issued vide No. DDH/ (HQ)/ SDCM/2019-20/1810/NIT No.9 Dated 19.02.2020. After getting themselves registered, if not registered earlier, the Bidding Documents with detailed terms & conditions can be downloaded online from the website: <http://mcdetenders.com> OR visit SDCM website www.mcdonline.gov.in / South Delhi Municipal Corporation /Tenders/e-tendering. For online tender the helpdesk Nos. are 011-23227413 & 011-23227414 or mail to: mod-ihelpdesk@mcd.gov.in Pre-bid meeting 03.03.2020 at 02.00 P.M. Download, Bid Preparation and Hash Submission is w.e.f. 20.02.2020 at 10.00 AM to 12.03.2020 upto 3.00 PM. Re-encryption of Online Bid 12.03.2020 from 5.01 PM to 13.03.2020 upto 3.00 PM. Opening of Technical Bids 13.03.2020 at 3.30 PM. All detail of Revisions, Clarifications, Corrigendum, Addendum, Time Extension etc., if any, in respect of above tender(s) will be uploaded on SDCM website <http://mcdetenders.com>, www.mcdonline.gov.in / South Delhi Municipal Corporation /Tenders/e-tendering only and will not be published in newspaper(s) separately. Bidders should regularly visit the website to keep themselves regularly updated in respect of these tenders.

Ro No. 161/DPI/S/2019-20
011-23225334

WTI: Whale shark population declined by 63% in 75 years

Gandhinagar: The population of whale sharks, one of the endangered migratory species, has declined by 63 per cent in last 75 years in the Indo-Pacific region, a nature conservation body has said while urging the Government to intensify steps and train enforcement agencies to conserve the species.

Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) said whale sharks, the largest living fish in the world, are vanishing from the face of the earth due to factors like climate change, rampant fishing and ocean pollution.

However, a senior official from the Union Environment Ministry said efforts were on to revive the number of whale sharks and if needed, the Government will spend around ₹2-3 crores annually for its conservation.

Whale sharks have been classified as endangered in the red list of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and are also called 'Gentle Giants' with maximum aggregation off the Gujarat coast.

Sajan John, marine expert from WTI, said these giants are mainly targeted for their meat but ocean pollution and warming were also affecting them.

"India needs to have a stronger dialogue with countries to protect this mega fauna



Whale shark population has declined by 63 per cent in last 75 years in the Indo-Pacific region, a nature conservation body has said while urging the Government to intensify steps and train enforcement agencies to conserve the species.

Top court directs Raj Govt to Stop illegal sand mining

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday took strong note of rampant illegal sand mining in Rajasthan and directed the State Government, collectors and SPs to take immediate steps to stop it and file an action taken report (ATR) within four weeks.

"We find that it is not disputed by anybody that illegal sand mining is rampant in the state of Rajasthan and this cannot be allowed to continue," the top court said, coming down hard on the authorities.

"Therefore, we direct the state of Rajasthan, District Collectors and Superintendent of Police (of each district) to take immediate steps to stop illegal sand mining as there was no doubt that...Illegal sand mining is likely to damage the environment irreparably," it said.

A bench comprising Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justices B R Gawai and Surya Kant also directed the apex court-appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) to look into the issue of illegal sand mining in Rajasthan and submit a detailed report including suggesting measures to deal with the issue within six weeks.

The apex court, which had stopped the sand mining in the state by its order in 2017, said that the CEC was empowered



to go into the issue of illegal sand mining and the problems faced by the traders, transporters and other stakeholder.

"It will be necessary for the CEC to also go into the question of illegal sand mining and suggest measures for stopping the illegal sand mining," the bench said.

It said that CEC shall have the power to summon any person including Government officials for the purposes of its inquiry and will be authorised to receive the copy of court records for this purpose. PTI

SC directs CBI to file report on probe against ex-CBI chief

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the CBI to file fresh status report within four weeks on probe into the charges of 'abuse of official position' by former agency chief Ranjit Sinha and the progress made in over 50 coal scam cases.

A bench of Chief Justice S A Bobde and Deepak Gupta granted time to the agency after it sought time.

Sinha is accused of trying to impede the CBI's investigation into the cases, which emerged in 2012 after a report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) was leaked to the media. The apex court dismissed the plea filed by lawyer M L Sharma seeking a direction to the CBI to take coercive steps against Naveen Jindal, allegedly main beneficiary of coal scam cases. PTI

UTTAR HARYANA BIJLI VITRAN NIGAM PUBLIC NOTICE

S.R. NO.	NAME OF DEPTT/ ENT/ BOARD/ CORP/ UNIT	NAME OF WORK/ NOTICE / TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / EMD (Approx.) (Rupees)	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NOCDL OFFICER/ CONTACT DETAILS/ EMAIL	TENDER REF. NO. / TENDER NO.
1	UTTH Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited	Banking of power during June 2020 to March 2021 where in 500 MW FT/ 500 MW during 00:00-04:00 & 13:00-24:00 hrs. Power shall be supplied to HPPC for the period June 2020 to Sept 2020. HPPC shall return this banked power during Nov 2 020 to March 2021.	Start time: 15.02.2020 (10.00) hrs Last time: 27.02.2020 (17:00) hrs.	Rs. 1.00 Crore only	ubvnl.org.in etenders@ubvnl.org.in	9357286789 etenders@ubvnl.org.in	NIT No.85/14/PC

RO NO. 79949 Dt. 18-02-2020

Short Notice Inviting e-Tender

No. SSA/Pre-Primary/Procurement/36/2020/839 Date : 18.02.2020

Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission (Samagra Shiksha), Kahilpara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites Short tender through e-Tendering process from reputed supplier of stationery for supply of TLM Kit for Ka-Sreni.

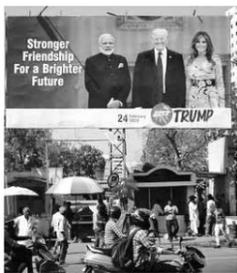
To participate in this tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of class-II (minimum) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable tender fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilpara, Guwahati-19, Assam 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,
Kahilpara, Guwahati-19

Bending backwards

Over-the-top preps for Trump visit invite criticism. Do the poor need to be swept under the carpet?



At one end, there is the propagandist accusation that we do not own our Indianness enough as a people or aren't proud of it. On the other end, there is this relic of a colonial obsession, rather subservience, to please the White world. What else explains our bending backwards to roll out the red carpet for US President Donald Trump? To begin with, the Yamuna will be flowing as it should, clean and swirling, for the day that Trump is going to be here. The Uttar Pradesh Government will be releasing 500 cusecs of water to clear the river

of contaminants and toxic waste, making what usually is a smelly canal look like a river. On other days, Delhiites only deserve the sewage drain avatar. The one-day wonder is supposed to make us feel proud of living in a waterfront city. Poor monkeys are being chased off the Taj Mahal stretch. And in Ahmedabad, where the POTUS will be landing first, masons are hastily finishing a half-a-kilometre wall along the stretch between the Ahmedabad airport and Gandhinagar to shut off our putrid slums from the eyeline of a speeding limousine. While authorities defend the social barrier as one prompted by security concerns, the real intention is not lost, ensuring pleasing visuals of Indian exotica and a *swachh* Bharat to one of the most important men on the planet. As if that would soften his stand on trade ties with India. Apparently eviction notices have been served to 45 families living in another slum near the biggest cricket stadium that Trump is gushing about. Following the mantra of *Atithi Devo Bhava* is one thing but disowning our truths is quite the other. Yes, India as an emergent economy with a massive population has its own warts, inequities and dualities to live with. But why deny our composite existence or be insensitive to the lesser privileged? For in the end by walling off our imperfections into ghettos, we end up reinforcing old stereotypes instead of changing them and perpetuate Western biases. By acknowledging the existence of the underlings, we give them dignity, prize their contribution to society and mainstream them as a reality that has to be dealt with, not hidden away. Of course, other than the very Indian affliction of undervaluing ourselves while putting our best foot forward, there is the other problem of sustaining the myth of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's development work in his own State as Chief Minister. And a gaping slum certainly wouldn't be a glorious ode to his helmsmanship in that capacity for 12 years. So the Modi Government is going all out to strengthen its leadership credentials even if possibilities of a trade deal with the US look remote, particularly over the thorny issue of dairy exports.

The Modi Government has gone to the extent of pulling out all stops to reinforce a crafted image of the country and promote its leadership credentials before Trump. Contracts worth ₹85 crore, from the construction of the stadium, which supposedly has the maximum seating capacity, to the beautification of cities, have gone out to various agencies. The depreciation has already begun with Trump tweeting dissatisfaction over the way India-US ties have shaped up over trade, a clear indication that war on that front will be hard-nosed no matter what the trimmings. Questions are also being raised about Gujarat being chosen simply because it is the Prime Minister's home State. Others are wondering if it wasn't better for the makeover funds to have been diverted to slum cluster improvements instead. Simply on qualifiers, there were other "better-looking" States. Gujarat was ranked 22nd among Indian States in the human development index for 2018. The Maternal Mortality Rate was 91 per 1,00,000 live births in 2016 as compared to 66 in Tamil Nadu and 88 in Telangana in the same year. According to crime data, the suicide rates there due to poverty increased by 162 per cent in 2018. Last year, the UK, too, rolled out the red carpet for Trump for a formal State visit, provoking protests from none other than the London mayor who said that such treatment shouldn't be extended to someone whose "behaviour flies in the face of the ideals America was founded upon — equality, liberty and religious freedom." He had even highlighted Trump's endorsement of far-Right nationalism, picking on minority groups and the marginalised to manufacture an enemy. Perhaps, there's a commonality of perception here that doesn't make Trump look like so much of an oddity in the first place. One would have understood if the "good friend" vibes resulted in friendly deals. But other than "feel good" vibes, which have been around anyway because of improved diplomatic ties of the last couple of years, this gush seems a tad too obsequious.

Gross indignity

When teachers and spiritual leaders endorse myths around menstruation, policies don't mean anything



For a Government which is prioritising menstrual health and hygiene as part of policy, its loyalist followers are harming it by perpetuating medieval myths around a biological process. And it comes as a huge shock when educators of a modern society — women at that — subject others to the cruellest form of mental and emotional trauma over something as natural as menstruation as was done recently in a college in Gujarat. Sixty eight students at a hostel in Bhuj were made to strip before teachers to prove that they were not

menstruating. What led to this outrage was the fact that the girls, who are undergraduate students at the Shree Sahajanand Girls Institute (SSGI), run by the Swaminarayan sect, were flouting a set of preposterous rules set by the college for them to follow during their periods. The discriminatory and utterly humiliating diktat bars students from entering the college temple, kitchen or touching other girls. In the classroom, they are expected to sit on the last bench and at meal time they have to sit away from others like pariahs and clean their own dishes. Not just this, the hostel keeps a register on when the students get their periods over a two-month cycle. Quite understandably not one girl had entered her name in it. Ironically, after the traumatised students raised a hue and cry over this nightmarish incident, the Principal squarely blamed the students for not following the rules and thus bringing the outrage upon themselves. What made matters worse was the statement by Krushnaswarup Dasji, a religious leader, that menstruating women, who cooked for their husbands, would be reborn as dogs and men consuming such food would be reborn as bullocks! This beats all evolutionary theory and entrenches the worst superstition.

Such words, coming from people who wield influence over the minds of others, particularly in rural India, are disturbing due to the sheer lack of sensitivity and violation of human rights, apart from the fact that they perpetuate illogical beliefs. Myths and taboos surrounding menstruation have to be broken down and a scientific temper has to be developed before Government schemes, incentives, health workers and social organisations succeed in their efforts to improve the lot of women. Over 60,000 cases of cervical cancer deaths are reported every year, mostly due to poor menstrual hygiene. A whopping 23 million girls drop out of school annually. This in a country that has a temple dedicated to fertility.

opinion 08

New dawn for the military

With the apex court ruling in favour of equality for women, the armed forces will have more candidates to choose from. In defensive engagements, they could well be superior to men



PRAFULL GORADIA

Women soldiers would be a serious problem if and when they happen to be taken prisoner. But as commanding officers, they would seldom be in the first line of infantry fighting. Nor are cavalry officers acutely vulnerable. This question of prisoner of war possibly confused the entire issue of command qualities. The question of strength and stamina has fortunately been resolved as infantry weapons have become light and fire-efficient. There is no comparison between the .303 and today's assault rifles. Even this writer found the former heavy to lift and carry for long.

For the rest, the issue of women as jawans or officers was highly relevant, dominated by the bias of tradition and mindset. Until firearms came into existence, prospects for women were indeed not that bright as the "sword" or the "lance" was heavy and needed strong arms. Women were also weaker due to the quality of diet and the number of childbirths. Mumtaz Mahal, queen of Shah Jahan, who was possibly the wealthiest man in the world of his time, bore 14 children, of whom only seven survived. Imagine the waste of female stamina and strength; how could they be soldiers? She, who cannot be a soldier, cannot be an officer and in turn a commander. To add to this was the patriarchy that refused to see women as anything else, except as householders and mothers.

The invention of the musket in the 16th century sprouted the first ray of hope for the woman as a soldier. The gender of an individual pressing the trigger makes no difference to the target. Early models, however, were very heavy and were often operated by two soldiers resting the weapon on a portable table. This innovation by itself limited chances for women. As the weapon became better and lighter, the lesser was the muscle required. The better and stronger the vehicle, the lesser was the stamina needed. The lesser the child-bearing, the stronger the woman remained. We have arrived so far through four to five centuries.

There has been a new dawn for the military. The armed forces have many more potential candidates to choose from now. Women can make equally good fighting stock whether on land, air or sea. In fact, in defensive engagements, they could well be superior to men. For instance, a tigress or any female animal protects her young, quite ferociously. Arguably, the male may not be so determined while defending even his own house. When a woman defends her homeland, this writer believes, she would be equally committed to saving her progeny. A brave man would defend his country with equal zeal but when he finds his situation hopeless, he is likely to retreat or even surrender. A woman is less likely to give up on protecting her own people, like her own children. An order like "victory or



death" is less difficult for a woman to obey than for a man. Apparently, the braver the commander, the more courageous should be the battalion.

The recent doubt, which the Supreme Court had to clear about whether women officers would make equally effective commanders, is unusual. The male ego fattened since the beginning of time, which, it is widely believed, could find it difficult to obey a woman in public. In private, it is different and even a stronger, wiser person has been listened to readily. Shorn of such mindsets, the issue is one of leadership. In the 1960s, who could have believed that former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi would have made a leader superior to say, Morarji Desai? This question is one of leadership and neither of statesmanship, nor prime ministership.

Indira Gandhi retained the leadership of her party, the Congress, until her death. True, she had the advantage of being former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's daughter, which gave her an enviable start. After that, she had to rely on her own wit and resources in order to survive and succeed. The problem hitherto is that women do not get the exposure and opportunity to be able to perform on the right platform and at the right level; at least in most fields. Kanshi Ram, the founder of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), gave a start to Mayawati and she came up to be the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief Mamata Banerjee has risen exclusively on her own initiative; she has demonstrated eloquently the qualities needed to make nine crore people of West Bengal to follow. For some time, maybe some years, women commanders would have to develop superior qualities such as military knowledge, bold initiatives and quick decision-making. Leaders must be superior to their followers. Once that is demonstrated, there should be no difficulty. There is a phenomenon generally not remembered and at times not known. This writer can communicate it through his experience during physical training in college. The Elphinstone College in Mumbai had no ground and, hence, its physical training (PT) classes were occasionally held at the neighbouring Oval maidan. The entire class of 110 students would together move to this ground. There were less than 25 boys, the rest were girls. The latter were given light exercises,

which could be done while wearing sarees (this is what most girls wore 65 years ago). However, boys had to sprint, do sit-ups, push-ups *et al*. This writer was neither strong nor practised and by himself, could do no more than 15 to 17 sit-ups and push-ups. At the Oval, however, in the presence of girls, he could go up to 50 of them. The only explanation for this was gender pride. How could he let his pride down? If this gender pride could percolate to the armed forces, we can expect extraordinary performance from our sailors, soldiers and airmen in an inclusive atmosphere.

When we move from the commander to the level of a senior general, the situation would change. The progress from tactics to strategy is a big leap. The former is adequate for a skirmish or a limited battle. Anything bigger or more on-going would call for greater military imagination to be able to visualise what is neither visible nor obvious. And women make for good strategists. A well thought-out strategy must ensure that the war plan is not upset even if the future brings forth enemy action that is surprisingly different. World War II German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel

is probably the most famous General. But when compared with Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, Rommel is considered an exceptional tactician. Whereas Manstein, by his defence and in-depth strategy, delayed the Russian Army from reaching Germany by a whole year. The Manstein brilliance lay in retreating faster than the Russians could move, then wait on the sidelines until the Reds had arrived, only to be surrounded and taken prisoners in thousands.

France has six borders beginning with the North Sea in the west, then Belgium, then the German border, which was defended by a chain of fortresses called the Maginot line. The Ardennes forest was considered impassable as it would have led to Germany, then Switzerland and finally Italy. Berlin was in search of a point of utter surprise attack. Manstein suggested the presumably impassable Ardennes forest. France had left it undefended; his idea was accepted. It took only 40 days to compel France to surrender. That was gem of a strategy. An integration of generals would mean that many evolved minds are at play.

(The writer is a well-known columnist and an author. Views expressed are personal)

SOUNDBITE

Every Congress worker desires that Priyanka Gandhi should be a RS member. She is an undisputed leader and any State would want to recommend her name for nomination.



Congress leader —Avinash Pandey

The audience is intelligent. They recognise that as actors, our job is to convincingly tell stories. We don't have to showcase our personal lives and belief systems on camera.



Actor —Sara Ali Khan

When a national law is changed, statelessness must be prevented. Because when basic right of anyone is to have a country that a person calls his, then everything should be done to avoid statelessness.



UN chief —Antonio Guterres

Donald Trump is visiting India to propagate upcoming US presidential election. They are using Indian Government for the US election.



Congress leader —Nawab Malik

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

More power to women

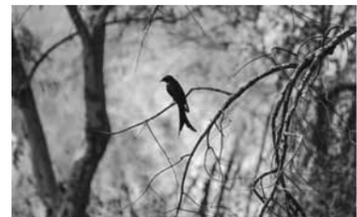
Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Lead from the front" (February 18). India has a history of women commanders, who fought wars against formidable adversaries. The name of Rani Lakshmbai tops this list. While we often cite the protective-destructive capabilities of Shakti, Durga and Kali, it is ironical that it took a Supreme Court order for female officers in the Army to get the same status as their male counterparts.

The top court's order, upholding the right of women to equal opportunity in the Indian armed forces, is landmark. It has paved the way for all serving Short Service Commission (SSC) women officers to be eligible for permanent commission at par with their male colleagues. They will now get the same kind of promotion, rank, benefits and pension as that of their male counterparts but in non-combat support services only.

Women are still excluded from combat roles. This should change. Women should not just have the right to permanent

Act now to save our birds

A recent report, titled *State of India's Birds 2020*, has revealed that the count of the house sparrow, the Indian peafowl and certain other avian species in India has increased. Though the fact remains that sparrows have disappeared from most big cities, their numbers have remained stable over a period of 25 years. This factoid is some relief. What is concerning, however, is the fact that several other kinds of birds such as the red-necked falcon, the Indian cuckoo and the blue rock thrush have decreased in number and are struggling to survive. Several reasons such as habitat loss, the use of pesticides, hunting and trapping have pushed them to the edge. Despite earlier calls to end the use of pesticides, its usage continues to plague the environment. Habitat loss, too, continues unabated and a rapidly-growing population isn't going to ease pressures any time soon. Rising temperatures, changing vegetation and extreme weather conditions have played their own role in deteriorating conditions of the birds.



Now that we have comprehensive data, which was compiled on the basis of observations made by over 15,500 bird watchers, we must make the best use of it. It is up for the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to secure a future for the birds by taking urgent steps to save threatened species. Resolute steps taken to protect forests and tree cover can offer multiple benefits.

Megha
Via email

China leads the way

Sir — Whereas the US dictates monetary transactions globally, China has usurped the manufacturing sphere so much that its transient, if extended, disruption will make every nation feel the chill. Over the past three decades,

China leads the way

China has quietly become the axis of the global economy. Even as it rules heavy industries such as coal, steel, cement and rare-earths among others, it holds equal strength on items as varied as electronic components, solar cells, clothing and air conditioners, to name a few. High volumes of production have brought down

costs of items to such a level that advanced nations have been forced to wind down their own capacities. We may find fault with China's autocratic nature but the fact is, its politics was made to subscribe to the economy. Yet, when it came to combating Coronavirus, China did not give a second thought to the perils of an economic plunge. It went on to take unprecedented and peremptory steps to contain the virus. It is this singular goal clarity that has made it what it is today.

R Narayanan
Navi Mumbai

Listen to the Mahatma

Sir — Supreme Court judge Justice DY Chandrachud recently expressed his views on "dissent", calling it a vital ingredient of a vibrant democracy. One needs to take inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi, who had the courage and fortitude to express his dissent in a peaceful manner.

Ashish
Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Right to liberty reaffirmed

The apex court in a recent decision said that anticipatory bail once granted cannot have an expiry date until specified by the court



MADHAVI KHANDLWAL

SHAKEIB NARU

The Supreme Court in its recent decision in the Sushila Aggarwal and Others vs. State (NCT of Delhi) case declared that anticipatory bail once granted to an accused under Section 438 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) cannot have an expiry date until explicitly specified by the court. This verdict is indeed a cornerstone in reaffirming the right to life and liberty of citizens as guaranteed by our Constitution. Authored by Justice MR Shah and Justice SR Bhat, this verdict has resolved the controversies created mainly by two judgments viz., Salauddin Abdulsamad Shaikh and Siddharam Sattingappa Mhetre, with both of them taking completely opposite views. Salauddin narrowed the scope and jurisdiction of the courts under Section 438 by mandating imposition of strict conditions while granting anticipatory bail. However, Mhetre ruled that grant of bail for a limited period or with any such conditions is contrary to the legislative intention and settled tenets of criminal law. These seemingly incongruent strands of reasoning, stemming from the two distinct lines of precedents and spawning divergent approaches to the scope of jurisdiction under Section 438, impelled a reference to the larger Bench. Before going into the nuances of this verdict, we must understand the meaning and definition of anticipatory bail and its governing parameters. The CrPC, 1973 does not define anticipatory bail and rather provides only the mechanism for availing it through Section 438. However, the apex court defined anticipatory bail as "bail in anticipation of arrest" in the case of Balchand Jain for the very first time. Further, it was also laid down that the power to grant anticipatory bail rests only with the Sessions Court and the High Court. Here, it is interesting to note that the old code of criminal procedure, 1898 did not contain any provision for anticipatory bail and it was adopted only after the recommendations from the 41st Report of the Law Commission of India. Now coming back to the recent judgment in Sushila, the Constitution Bench decided upon a bunch of controversies, cleared some major confusions and passed some landmark orders, which are as follows:

Reiterated the law laid down by the Constitution Bench in Gurbaksh Singh Sibbia and others vs State of Punjab (Sibbia case): There is nothing in the CrPC to indicate that the grant of pre-arrest/anticipatory bail should be time-bound. However, the court concerned has the discretion to impose conditions for the grant of anticipatory bail, including a limited duration of protection, on a case-to-case basis, depending on the stage at which the application for anticipatory bail is moved. As a rule, there should be no time-limit imposed in granting pre-arrest protection. The duration of an anticipatory bail order does not normally end when the accused is summoned by the court. However, it is up to the court to impose additional restrictions if there are peculiar circumstances warranting the same.

The life of anticipatory bail does not end when the accused is summoned by court: The court found that ordinarily, the protection given through anticipatory bail would not automatically come to an end if the person is summoned as an accused in the case by a court. However, if there are special or peculiar circumstances necessitating the same, the court has the power to limit the tenure of anticipatory bail.

Time-limits may be imposed by courts but not as a rule: All the same, the court further noted as per the Sibbia case, the competent court still retains the discretion to impose time-limits or other conditions, on a case-to-case basis, if required. However, it added that such limits should not be ordinarily imposed. The Supreme Court, therefore, has answered the first issue in the following terms, "The protection granted to a person under Section 438 of the CrPC should not invariably be limited to a fixed period; it should inure in favour of the accused without any restriction on time. Normal conditions under Section 437(3) read with Section 438(2) should be imposed; if there are specific facts or features in regard to any offence, it is open for the court to impose any condition..."

Guidelines on grant of anticipatory bail: Before parting with the matter, the Bench also issued some more guidelines on the grant of anticipatory bail. It ruled that the anticipatory bail applications should be based on concrete facts, not vague or general allegations, relating to a specific offence. It is advisable that the court, depending on the seriousness of the threat of arrest, issue notice to the public prosecutor to obtain facts. Nothing in the CrPC compels or obliges a court to impose conditions limiting the grant of anticipatory bail. The need to impose restrictions during grant of anticipatory bail would have to be judged on a case-to-case basis. Such special or other restrictive conditions may be imposed if the case or cases warrant but should not be imposed in a routine manner, in all cases. The gravity of the offence and the applicant's role should guide the court in deciding whether or not to grant anticipatory bail in its discretion. Anticipatory bail granted can (depending on the conduct of the accused) continue after filing of the chargesheet till end of trial.

(Khandelwal and Naru are legal researchers to Supreme Court's Justice MR Shah and Justice NV Ramana)

IF I AM GETTING *SUNDER KAAND* RECITAL DONE, IT DOES NOT MAKE ME LESS PROGRESSIVE. BEING PROGRESSIVE DOES NOT MEAN YOU ARE AN ATHEIST.

—AAP MLA

SAURABH BHARDWAJ

POINT COUNTERPOINT



THE AAP'S ATTACHMENT TO LORD HANUMAN IS NOT A MATTER OF FAITH, BUT A POLITICAL MELODRAMA.

—DELHI BJP SPOKESPERSON
PRAVEEN SHANKAR KAPOOR

Sustainability is your business

Sustained activity, both in words and actions, backed by strong leadership is the need of the hour to achieve the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050



HIMA BINDU KOTA

Climate change is a grim reality faced not just by mankind but everyone who inhabits the Earth. The rising global temperatures are affecting seasons, so winters have become shorter and spring is early to arrive. These shifting seasons impact many life cycle events which in turn have a major impact on agriculture and global food production. What is challenging is that the changes are happening too fast and many species may not be able to adapt to these unprecedented fluctuations. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has reported a global warming of 1.5 °C, which is enough to put 20-30 per cent of species at the risk of extinction. Sadly, many of us are not even aware of it, let alone work towards mitigating them. And this goes for individuals, societies and businesses. Of the three, businesses all around the world are the biggest contributors to global warming since they are responsible for at least 70 per cent of all carbon emissions. So, on humanitarian grounds, there should be an extreme urgency by businesses to slow down and reverse climate change. Sustained activity, both in words and actions, backed by strong leadership is the need of the hour to achieve the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. This can only be done by being a part of the solution rather than a part of the problem. And this is how some companies are doing it:

Investments in renewable energy sources: Several big firms are investing in renewable energy sources to reduce their greenhouse gas targets. McDonald's is leading the way with the large-scale purchase of virtual power that will support wind and solar energy. This renewable energy generation can be equated to taking 140,000 cars off the road for one year. In the furniture industry, IKEA has invested \$2 billion into renewable energy projects and is planning to build 416 wind turbines. It has already installed around 750,000 solar panels on its stores. One of the most powerful corporations in the world and Google's parent company, Alphabet Inc, has also been named as one of the most eco-friendly firms. All offices and company buildings, including Google headquarters in Silicon Valley, are powered by 100 per cent renewable energy, which removes an estimated five million tonnes of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere each year. By purchasing a 1.6-gigawatt renewable energy package, Google has made its clean energy portfolio large enough to power a country of the size of Uruguay. Similarly, Microsoft boosted its renewable energy portfolio to more than 1,900 MW, which is enough to power 1.5 million homes. Swiss fragrance and flavour manufacturer Firmenich is one of the most sustainable companies in the world, operating on 78 per cent renewable energy and working with other CEOs and politicians to help limit global warming to above pre-industrial levels. Apart from Firmenich, L'Oréal was the only other firm to receive an 'A' (the highest score) across all three areas of the CDP's (formerly Carbon Disclosure Project) rankings — climate change, deforestation and water security. It is committed to zero deforestation by this year-end and has revamped more than one-fifth of its entire product range to reduce dependence on petrochemicals and encourages the use of plant-based, renewable resources. Johnson & Johnson has taken several steps to ensure that all packaging is recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025. Its operations are currently powered by 31 per cent renewable energy and it plans to increase this to 100 per cent by 2050.

“ COMPANIES IN 35 COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE US, HAVE EXPERIENCED GROWTH IN THE LAST 15 YEARS WHILE REDUCING THEIR EMISSIONS. ACCORDING TO THE NEW CLIMATE ECONOMY REPORT, THE DECISION TO REDUCE EMISSIONS WILL BE GOOD FOR THE JOB MARKET AS IT WILL CREATE 65 MILLION NEW LOW CARBON EMISSION JOBS WHILE GENERATING ENTERPRISE VALUE WORTH \$26 TRILLION TILL 2030 ”



Collaborating for saving the environment: Earth cannot be saved without proper collaboration among different actors in society. One of the major efforts towards this is found in the collaboration between Walmart, several environmental groups and over 1,000 suppliers, known as project Gigaton, to overhaul the company's supply chain worldwide by reducing greenhouse gas pollution by about a billion tonnes by 2030. Nearly 94 million metric tonnes of emissions have already been reduced since its launch. Another global corporate leader and a champion for environmental sustainability is Unilever that is collaborating with farmers worldwide to reduce harm to the environment. It is aiming to procure its agricultural materials from sustainable sources by the end of this year and eliminating single-use plastic packaging in the UK by 2025. It also plans to become carbon positive by 2030 by reducing or totally eliminating the use of fossil fuels and generating more renewable energy than it consumes. Several food companies have also collaborated with sustainable management consultants to assess the deforestation risk developed due to their operations and take steps to create a sustainable food system. Nestle, the largest food company on Earth, uses satellite technology to ensure that no deforestation is taking place in its supply chain. It has also committed to using 100 per cent responsibly-sourced palm oil by 2020. It has been severely criticised in the past for using palm oil that led to deforestation. Danone, a company producing yogurts, water and plant-based food and drinks, is working in collaboration with farmers to reduce soil degradation and water usage, in the process reducing the company's carbon footprint by 25 per cent.

Say "no" to plastics: In India, the Philippines and Indonesia, Unilever has found itself under pressure over plastic packaging. Earlier this year, the company was named by the "Break Free From Plastic" campaign as one of the firms most responsible for plastic pollution in these countries. On its part, to help the environment, IKEA plans to ban single-use plastic products from its shops and restaurants by 2020. The company wants to purchase 100 per cent renewable energy by 2020 and use only renewable and recycled materials in its products by the same year. It plans to make its deliveries emission-free by 2025.

Innovation to save the environment: As it is rightly said, "Necessity is the mother of all invention." Stopping and reversing climate change is the necessity to save our planet now. However, organisations lack awareness on specific technologies that can help them reduce emissions and boost sustainability. Several entrepreneurs globally are trying to bridge this gap and start-ups are being funded to help companies solve sustainability challenges and make progress toward the 2025 climate goals. Danish shipping company Maersk is using biofuels to help it achieve a carbon-neutral status by 2050. It piloted biofuel made from cooking oil to run its cargo ship from Rotterdam to Shanghai and in the process reduce an estimated 1.5 million kg of carbon emissions. Tesla, the electric-car maker, has a holistic environment protection policy where they make sure that the suppliers work without harming the environment, responsibly manage all waste and efficiently use water and energy resources. Microsoft, on the other hand, is using new age technology like artificial intelligence for several sustainability initiatives, fore-

casting wildfires and risks related to them, minimising the environmental costs of farming, planting trees and protecting endangered species. The Nike Air range of trainers uses at least 50 per cent recycled materials and diverts more than 95 per cent of waste from landfills. Plus the company is soon to release a range of trainers coloured with plant-based dyes, which reduces pollution of waterways.

Accepting climate change at the policy level: Voluntary efforts are good but not enough to tackle the real threat of climate change. Businesses should be open to developing climate policies and governments should support companies in implementing the same. This trend had started now with CEOs of several companies like Dow Chemical, BASF and Lafarge Holcim stressing on bringing about new regulations that check and penalise higher carbon emissions and incentivise lower carbon footprints.

This brings us to the question whether trying to protect the planet is also economically viable? Data suggests so. Companies in 35 countries, including the US, have experienced growth in the last 15 years while reducing their emissions.

According to the *New Climate Economy* report, the decision to reduce emissions will be good for the job market as it will create 65 million new low carbon emission jobs while generating enterprise value worth \$26 trillion till 2030. By reducing emissions, companies will witness two-pronged benefits — a higher economic value and a boost to reputation value, from the point of view of the entire stakeholder group, including employees, investors, suppliers and customers. It is a win-win for all.

(The writer is Associate Professor, Amity University, Noida)

The huge human cost of stress in mining sector

A survey observed a strong connection between unemployment due to mining closure and mental distress across States. Workers exposed to the negative labour demand shock are facing very low chances of re-entering the job market



CHARUDUTTA PANIGRAHI

Recently, we celebrated 71 years of India's existence as a Republic and thus it would be pertinent to remember Article 21 of the Constitution, which deals with fundamental rights without which a republic would mean nothing. The fundamental right to life as enshrined in Article 21 includes the right to work. It is time for civil society to start talking collectively about livelihood which is recognised as a human right in many communities.

We need to get a more inclusive understanding of what we mean by livelihoods: Life engagement with land, water, forest, right to food, income, food security and the like. So, the first step in building up a narra-

tive is building up a common understanding of what we mean by right to livelihoods.

As we know, livelihood encompasses issues of productive resources and access to resources and involves concerns in labour and goods markets. Work conditions in all sectors are central to the discourse and in particular recognition of work, generating employment, job security and wages.

The mining sector in India has witnessed largescale loss of livelihoods in recent times. On one hand India is aiming for a \$5 trillion economy and on the other we are now finding it difficult to compete with emerging economies like Vietnam and Egypt. It is imperative to focus significantly on the mining sector with concerted efforts to regain its three per cent share and more in the GDP by 2024-25. The sector's GDP share in 2018-19 was 2.6 per cent, down from three per cent in 2011-12. Ever since the Supreme Court cancelled 88 mining leases in Goa on February 7, 2018, life has come to a grinding halt for more than 3,00,000 mining depen-

dents. The State, once the richest economy in India, is now sluggish and the complete closure of mining activities has devastated families and brought about unimaginable misery in the lives of people. In neighbouring Karnataka, too, the ban on ore exports, e-auctions and quota systems in ore production have led to a floundering economy, severely denting the State's development and growth.

The recently-published sourcebook of FIDR, *Mining: A Prudent Perspective*, is based on a survey of 2,415 people from five major States whose economies are mainly mining-driven, namely Goa, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Karnataka. It would not be an exaggeration to say that this is the first-ever such report about the people's perception and attitudes toward the mining industry. The study has clearly brought out the impact of the uncertainties due to the ban on mining in these States. The social set-up and the families of miners are in the doldrums due to joblessness and deprivation of livelihoods.

In Goa, the closure of mining has

resulted in a State-wide economic crisis of sorts. Karnataka has witnessed similar economic plight in the wake of the curbs. The FIDR survey indicates that in the five States, mining contributes to over 12 per cent (on an average) of the State's GDP. In Goa, stoppage of iron ore mining has impacted revenues worth ₹34 billion and the livelihood of several dependent segments as it has left stakeholders without an alternate source of income. This repeated stoppage of mining in Goa, Odisha and Karnataka has also led to loss of investor confidence which would have a long-term impact on their economies.

Almost all the respondents (over 90 per cent) agree that the mining sector has brought significant economic benefits for their communities and generated fiscal revenue, export earnings, relieved constraints to investment, spurred economic growth and created jobs. It has also contributed to infrastructure building. However, they also opine that realising and enhancing these benefits require action, primarily from the Government, but also

from mining companies, local communities, employers and businesses in the country. Fiscal revenues from the extractive industry — taxes, royalties and other payments — are the major reasons why governments seek to promote its growth in their States. However, revenues from mining and benefits from them do not flow in automatically. To translate fiscal revenues from the extractive industry into sustainable development benefits, governments need to design and institute fiscal regimes that ensure a fair share of benefits to the States/country, which are also attractive for investors.

About half of the respondents believe strongly that mining drives economic growth through its linkages with the rest of the economy, such as by buying goods and services from suppliers (backward linkages) and by supplying minerals (forward linkages). Barring about 13 per cent, a majority (about eight of 10 stakeholders) describe mining as beneficial as long as the industry works to mitigate its impacts or it is properly regulated.

The findings from the survey suggest that the more the participants felt that mining created economic, employment and community benefits, the greater was their acceptance of it. This sounds obvious but should be viewed in relation to the unshakable faith these communities repose in nature, the ecology and the environment. Like in Odisha, all the mines are located in the remote, low-income, tribal-inhabited geographies. The forest dwellers have deep faith in nature, the flora and fauna which they revere. Hence social licence to operate in these areas would directly relate to how community perceptions of mining associated impacts and benefits relate to its endorsement.

It is clear, that the closure of mines has spiked vulnerability of the community. The survey observed a strong connection between unemployment due to mining closure and mental distress across States. Workers exposed to the negative labour demand shock are facing very low chances of re-entering employment. Either they lack the required skill set appropriate for other

industries and line of work or there are no available employment opportunities. This is leading to long unemployment spells resulting in spiralling of large-scale mental health problems. One in every five persons is suffering from depression and other forms of mental issues.

The survey also discovered that the psychological cost of parental unemployment has been higher on children, leading to general despondency, while teenagers are starting to feel pressured to take on more responsibility in the family. Many have become more aware of the social stigma associated with having jobless parents. It is imperative that the judiciary, legislature and the executive take cognisance of the grim livelihoods scenario threatening all of us. Necessary remedial measures need to be taken at the earliest to help these States, particularly Goa, tide over a catastrophe of inconceivable ramifications — social, economic and intergenerational.

(The writer is an author and TED speaker)

DoT still working on final calculation of AGR dues

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Department of Telecom is still working on final adjusted gross revenue dues that service providers have to pay as it has detected variation in accounting practices adopted by different circle offices, according to official sources.

The licence finance wing of the telecom department (DoT) on February 3 issued a letter with guidelines to all controller General of Communication Accounts to reconcile AGR dues and asked them to give 15 days time to

operators for the submission of appeals and documents related to deductions they make in the final payment, sources said.

The letter was a follow up to a previous note sent by the licence finance wing on December 4 and a follow-up on December 13 to the circles for re-verification of debit voucher reports (DVR).

"The department has been facing a challenge in carrying out the revised assessments due to various issues related to DVRs. Telecom operators, including Airtel and Vodafone Idea, have challenged many DVRs.

"Also, circle offices have not adopted uniform practice in accounting. The DoT has asked them to re-verify DVRs at the earliest in the light of Supreme Court judgement," an official source said.

Telecom operators have been submitting two separate audited details of deduction towards interconnection usage charges and roaming fee to the DoT. In one set, deductions have been claimed by telecom operators on a paid basis while on an accrual basis on the other.

"DoT noticed that many

Controllers of Communication Accounts have been cherry picking the figures claimed by telecom operators in their final DVRs. In some cases, DoT guidelines regarding deduction verification issued in 2014, 2015 and 2016 have not been followed. There have been cases where one CCA has allowed one kind of deduction and another has disallowed," the source said.

According to estimates prepared by the DoT, Airtel owes nearly ₹35,586 crore, including licence fee and spectrum usage charges, to the government.

Vodafone Idea is staring at dues worth ₹53,000 crore, which includes up to ₹24,729 crore of spectrum dues and another ₹28,309 crore in licence fee. Tata Teleservices owes around ₹13,800 crore, BSNL ₹4,989 crore and MTNL ₹3,122 crore.

While the deadline to make AGR payment ended on January 23, 2020 as per Supreme Court order, the DoT has been following up with circle offices to verify DVRs of 10 years starting from 2006-2007 which involve around millions of entries in a quarter and then

start verification for 2017-18 and 2018-19.

The DoT on December 13, 2019, gave 15 days time to submit the re-verified accounts but the same could not be done in absence of uniform guidelines.

"The headquarters will also need time to check DVRs once they are submitted by the circle office. Thereafter notice will be sent to telecom operators for submitting appeals and documents related to claims that are not admissible," the source said.

The apex court on

BUSINESS CORNER

DILER APPOINTS YOGESH AS HIS REPRESENTATIVE

Sasni: Lok Sabha member from Hathras Rajveer Diler has appointed senior leader Yogesh Sharma Advocate son of Roshanlal Sarpanch resident Nagla Hari Majra Samamahi Ruhel Tehsil Sasni as his representative. The letter has been issued by the MP. Yogesh Sharma Formerly MP Kishanlal has been a representative of Diler. Will represent the MP in all Government meetings in the district like before. Issuing the letter, the MP said that in my absence they will be present in all the meetings.



DESI SEMI-HIGH SPEED TRAIN COMPLETES FIRST YEAR

New Delhi: India's first indigenous Semi-High Speed Train completes first year of Glorious Service without cancellation of any trip. The first rake was inaugurated and dedicated to the Nation by Prime Minister of India. Narendra Modi on February 15, 2019 as New Delhi-Varanasi



Vande Bharat Express. The train started its commercial run from February 17, 2019 and responsibility of maintenance of train has since been proudly and successfully shouldered by the Delhi Division of Northern Railway. India's First Semi High Speed Train, fondly called T-18 and later officially christened as Vande Bharat Express was built by Integral Coach Factory, Chennai in October 2018. The train is equipped with numerous technological initiatives and modern passenger amenities.

Voda Idea shares surge over 38%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Vodafone Idea's shares on Wednesday closed over 38 per cent amid reports that the government is unlikely to invoke the company's bank guarantees as of now.

On the BSE, the stock gained as much as 48.18 per cent to ₹4.49 during the day. It closed 38.28 per cent higher at ₹4.19.

On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), the scrip rose 48.33 per cent to touch a high of ₹4.45. Later, after shedding some gains, it settled 40 per cent up at ₹4.20.

The stock has ended the day in green after declining for seven consecutive sessions.

The NSE saw an exchange

of more than 100 crore shares of Vodafone Idea, and over 14 crore units were traded on the BSE. In this regard, the BSE sought a clarification from the telecom service provider about the sudden movement in the stock price.

The company said all the information furnished by it is in public domain and there is no price-sensitive information pending which is to be disclosed to the stock exchanges.

"There is no such announcement or price-sensitive information, which is pending to be intimated by the company to the stock exchanges.

"All the information furnished by the company is in public domain and the com-

pany will comply with the Sebi Regulations, 2015, and duly keep the stock exchanges informed of all the price-sensitive information," the company said in its clarification to the BSE. According to the latest media reports, the government is unlikely to invoke bank guarantees of Vodafone Idea as of now.

Encashing of the bank guarantees may sound the death knell for companies such as Vodafone Idea which has been struggling to garner the dues.

A financial bank guarantee is equal to two quarters of licence fee and other dues. This amount could be in the range of ₹5,000 crore each for Airtel and Vodafone Idea.

Mittal, Birla meet Finance Minister as AGR crisis looms over telecom sector

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With the Supreme Court-mandated liability pushing telecom companies to the brink, industry honchos Sunil Bharti Mittal and Kumar Mangalam Birla on Wednesday met Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman as their firms scrambled to meet payment deadlines.

While the two refused to comment on discussions they had with Sitharaman, Mittal said the telecom sector has been under stress for the last three-and-a-half years and the government should focus on its sustainability.

Mittal, who heads mobile service major Bharti Airtel, first met Telecom Secretary Anshu Prakash before going for the meeting with the finance minister. Birla, who is the chairman of Vodafone Idea Ltd, had met the telecom secretary on Tuesday.

It was not immediately clear if the two telecom tycoons met Sitharaman together or separately. Emerging out of the North Block after meeting Sitharaman, Mittal told reporters that the issue of pending dues arising out of the Supreme Court ruling on Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) was not discussed.

The telecom industry, he said, is vital to India's digital agenda.

"This industry is very vital to the nation's digital agenda, and many other industries that ride on it... Employment, government taxes... The only thing government needs to focus on is how to ensure sustainability of the sector," Mittal said.

Mittal -- whose company Bharti Airtel is confronted with over Rs 35,000 crore of statutory dues -- did not elaborate on the relief mechanism that the telco is pitching for. The industry as such has been battling for reduction in levies like licence fee and spectrum charges.

No end in sight for auto slump: Fitch

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The slowing economy and weakening consumer sentiment will continue to weigh on auto sales and the marginal improvement seen in December quarter, driven by festive discounts, is unlikely to sustain, a report said on Wednesday.

The GDP growth slowed down to 6.1 per cent in 2018-19 and is projected to hit a 10-year low of about 5 per cent in 2019-20, primarily due to falling consumer demand and poor financing options for high-value items like automobiles.

"Slowing growth and weak consumer sentiment will continue to weigh on auto sales and the marginal improvement seen in the December quarter driven by festive discounts is unlikely to sustain," Fitch said in a report, without stating when the volumes will begin to pick up or how long the slump will persist.

Vehicle sales have been

hampered by weak consumer sentiment and still-weak availability of financing following tighter liquidity at non-banking lenders since the middle of 2018. The sector also faces additional challenges from the adoption of stricter emission standards from April 1, the report said.

Automakers could also face production disruptions if the novel coronavirus outbreak in China leads to a prolonged halt in supply of required auto components, as the industry sources as much as 27 per cent of its demand from China worth around \$5 billion, according to many analysts.

Many auto original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) like Mahindra have warned that if the Chinese epidemic lasts beyond February and if the supplies don't normalise by early March, the transition to BS-VI will be a challenge and they may have to move the Supreme Court to get some concession to sell BS-IV models beyond April 1 deadline.

India should capture apparel market ceded by China: Textile Secy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The textiles ministry on Wednesday said the domestic industry should take advantage of the huge \$20-billion space vacated in the global apparel market by China, which is going through a tough time following outbreak of the deadly coronavirus.

Addressing a symposium on emerging opportunities for Indian textiles, Textiles Secretary Ravi Capoor said domestic textile exports have plateaued during the past 5-7 years, which is a "very worrying proposition for the government."

"India should step in at this stage to take the advantage although not a good way to project ourselves but every crisis has its own silver lining and I think while we are with China with all our emotions and financial, political and diplomatic help but still there appears to be a big economic opportunity which is coming up our way," he said.

In this background, Capoor said it would be the right time to bring the industry together and have a small dialogue to "see how the industry associations are prepared for this opportunity."

As the exports have plateaued, he said the government understood that one of

The secretary said \$20 billion worth of apparel space, mostly in the man-made fibre, has been vacated by China in the past three years and taken away by Vietnam.

"Now is a situation where we are in a position and the (textile) minister has just spoken to Finance Minister (Nirmala Sitharaman) also this morning. We are working towards seeing that the GST inversion on man-made fibre is also taken care of.

"With all the efforts, if we are able to succeed in the removal of the inversion, then man-made fibre itself becomes a huge opportunity wherever China cedes space. India should step in a very big way," Capoor said.

Textile minister Smriti Irani was also present at the symposium.

Coronavirus to hit global growth; to have limited impact on India: RBI Gov

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The coronavirus outbreak in India has a limited impact on India but the global GDP and trade will definitely get affected due to the large size of the Chinese economy, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has said.

Only a couple of sectors in India are likely to see some disruptions but alternatives are being explored to overcome those issues, he said.

The deadly virus has brought a large part of the world's second-largest economy China to a standstill and its impact has been felt across industries. India's pharmaceutical and electronic manufacturing sectors are dependent on China for inputs and they may be impacted, Das told PTI in an interview here.

"It is definitely an issue which needs to be closely monitored by every policymaker whether in India or any other country. Every policymaker, every monetary authority needs to keep a very close watch. So coronavirus issue needs to be closely watched," he said.

First 5G handset in India likely to be priced at ₹50K

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The first 5G-enabled handset in India to be launched by Chinese smartphone maker, realme, is likely to cost around ₹50,000, a company official said on Wednesday.

The 'realme' that came into existence in 2018 is all set to become the first brand to unveil 5G ready smartphone in India on February 24, even though the "network is not available in the country," he claimed.

"realme 5G handset will be powered with 865 Snapdragon chipset and available at around ₹50,000," an official, who did not wish to be identified, told PTI. A leading website, which compares mobile phones, estimates that the price of 5G smartphone handset with a lower chipset version could be available at ₹25,790 per unit.

The company wants to offer future-ready products and people, who travel abroad, can use the handset as the technology is available in many developed countries, the official said. The X50 Pro 5G handset will be launched simultaneously in Spain and India by realme after the world's largest mobile trade show

Moving towards a Cleaner Future

APR 1 India will switch to **Bharat Stage-VI (BS-VI)**

BS-VI is the most advanced emission standard for automobiles

In order to reduce vehicular emissions that are one of the reasons for the choking pollution in major cities

About **₹35,000** crore spent to upgrade plants that could produce ultra-low sulphur fuel by state-owned oil refineries

Stage	Roll-out Year	Sulphur Content parts per million
BS-III	2010	350
BS-IV	2017	50
BS-VI	2020	10

Reduction in NOx in BS-VI compliant vehicles

Petrol Cars **25%** ↓

Diesel Cars **75%** ↓

It was a conscious decision to leapfrog to BS-VI as first upgrading to BS-V and then shifting to BS-VI would have prolonged the journey to 4 to 6 years. Besides, oil refineries, as well as automobile manufacturers, would have had to make investments twice - first to producing BS-V grade fuel and engines and then BS-VI. *Sarjiv Singh, Chairman of IOC*

PTI GRAPHICS

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will switch to the world's cleanest petrol and diesel from April 1 as it leapfrogs straight to Euro-VI emission compliant fuels from Euro-IV grades now - a feat achieved in just three years and not seen in any of the large economies around the globe.

India will join the select league of nations using petrol and diesel containing just 10 parts per million of sulphur as it looks to cut vehicular emissions that are said to be one of the reasons for the choking pollution in major cities.

Sanjiv Singh, Chairman of Indian Oil Corp (IOC) - the firm that controls roughly half of the country's fuel market, said almost all refineries began producing ultra-low sulphur BS-VI (equivalent to Euro-VI grade) petrol and diesel by the end of 2019 and oil companies have now undertaken the tedious task of replacing every drop of fuel in the country with the new one.

Govt to frame rules to implement Consumer Protection Act

New Delhi: The Government will frame rules and set up an authority to implement the new Consumer Protection Act by April this year, Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said on Wednesday while stressing on the regulation of the e-commerce sector with a rise in online transactions.

Parliament last year approved 'The Consumer Protection Bill 2019', replacing the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. The law seeks to revamp the process of administration and settlement of consumer disputes, with strict penalties, including jail term for adulteration and misleading ads by firms.

PTI

Liquor industry urges Govt not to yield to Trump on duty cuts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of US President Donald Trump's visit to India next week, the Indian alcoholic beverage industry has urged the government not to reduce customs duty on wine and spirits.

The US President has been pushing for reduction of customs duty on American liquor, particularly bourbon whiskey, and Indian liquor manufacturers fear that any tinkering with customs duty vis-a-vis US imports would have a domino effect as European Union would also push for slashing of customs duty.

केन्द्रीय विद्यालय

शालीमार बाग / सैनिक विहार / केशवपुरम / पीतमपुरा

प्रवेश साक्षात्कार / WALK IN INTERVIEW

शैक्षिक सत्र 2020-21 के लिए सविदा के आधार पर अभ्यर्थियों की नियुक्ति की एक नाम वरीयता (Common Panel) बनाने हेतु केन्द्रीय विद्यालय शालीमार बाग / सैनिक विहार / केशवपुरम / पीतमपुरा में दिनांक 25/02/2020 को साक्षात्कार हेतु संज्ञाकरण के लिए प्रवेश समारंभ प्रातः 8.00 बजे से 11 बजे नीचे दिए गए विवरण के अनुसार संपन्न होगा।

क्र.	के.वि.(केंद्र) का नाम	साक्षात्कार की तिथि	साक्षात्कार हेतु विषय व पद
1.	पीतमपुरा https://pitampura.kvs.ac.in PH No. 011-27325296	25-02-2020	बीजीटी (हिन्दी, अंग्रेजी), टीजीटी (हिन्दी, अंग्रेजी), संस्कृत, प्राथमिक शिक्षक, संगीत व नृत्य, कला व शिल्प शिक्षक, जर्मन व फ्रेंच शिक्षक
2.	शालीमार बाग https://shalimarbagh.kvs.ac.in PH No. 011-27477494	25-02-2020	पीजीटी (गणित, वाणिज्य), टीजीटी (गणित), चिकित्सक, स्टाफ नर्स काउन्सिलर (स्नाइकर), Special Educator
3.	केशवपुरम https://keshavpuram.kvs.ac.in PH No. 011-27395361	25-02-2020	पीजीटी(रसायन, भौतिक, जीव-विज्ञान, बायो टेक), टीजीटी (विज्ञान), स्प्रेड कोच, योग शिक्षक
4.	सैनिक विहार https://sainikvihar.kvs.ac.in PH No. 011-27022979	25-02-2020	बीजीटी (इतिहास, अंग्रेजी, अर्थशास्त्र, राजनैतिक विज्ञान, समाज शास्त्र, कम्प्यूटर साइंस एवं आई आई पी) और कम्प्यूटर शिक्षक एवं टीजीटी (सामाजिक विज्ञान), डाटा एंट्री ऑपरेटर

सभी पद विज्ञापन रूप से आंशिक/अनुबंधित हैं तथा अभ्यर्थी किसी भी प्रकार की नियमित नियुक्ति के अधिकारी नहीं हैं। सभी से अनुरोध है कि बायो डाटा के लिए फार्म विद्यालय की वेबसाइट से डाउनलोड करें। इस साक्षात्कार में सम्मिलित होने के लिए कोई भत्ता देना नहीं होगा। अरे हुर आवेदन पत्र के साथ मूल प्रमाण पत्र एवं सत्यापित प्रतिलिपियां जलाना आवश्यक है कम्प्यूटर का ज्ञान बांधनीय है। आवेदन पत्र एवं अन्य आवश्यक जानकारी के लिए विद्यालय के वेबसाइट देखें। सभी पदों के लिए योग्यता तथा मान्यता के वि.स. के नियमानुसार होगा।

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a girl namely Pooja, D/o Girdhari Lal, R/O H.No. J-23, Shiv Vihar karala, Delhi is missing since 01.02.2020 from the area of P.S. Kanjhawala, Delhi. In this regard, FIR No. 47/2020 dated 04.02.2020 has been registered at P.S. Kanjhawala, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the missing girl but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the missing girl is as under:

Name: Pooja, **Gender:** Female, **Age:** 17 years, **Height:** 5'2", **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Round, **Wearing:** Green colour kurta, golden colour pajama and slippers in her feet.

If anyone has any information regarding this missing girl, kindly inform SHO/Kanjhawala, Delhi.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
 Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641
 Fax : 011-24368639

SHO
P.S. Kanjhawala, Delhi
Ph. No.: 011-25952485, 25951486

DP/3722/RD/2020

WESTERN RAILWAY

BULK ADVERTISING RIGHTS FOR DISPLAY OF ADVERTISEMENTS

Sr. No.	e-Tender/Bulk No. & Date	Work & Location	Approx. Cost of ₹.	EMD
1	CA11-NFR-OOH-BAROB-IV-45 dated 14.02.2020	Bulk advertising rights at Banda ROB-South West Location (Group-IV) at Bridge No. 20, A/Kms. 14/2B-3B for display of advertisements by dismantling existing hoarding structures of size 120'x40' (1) & replacing with erection of new hoarding structure of size 60'x40' (1) facing west, for a period of five years.	₹45,16,492/- (excluding taxes etc.)	₹9,02,400/-
2	CA11-NFR-OOH-LC-VR-ST-44 dated 14.02.2020	Bulk advertising rights for erection & display of Hoardings at Level Crossing gates between Virar-Surat section for 42 hoardings of size 20'x10' for total display area 8400 sq. ft., for a period of five years.	₹1,50,51,590/- (excluding taxes etc.)	₹3,01,100/-

Executive: Sr. DCM, Date & Time of closing of online submission: upto 15.03.2020. Date & time of opening of e-tender: At 15.30 hrs. on 16.03.2020. NOTE: Please visit our website www.irps.gov.in to download the tender document, corrigendum and further details. Cost of tender and EMD shall be accepted only through online net banking or E-payment gateway. Bidder should regularly visit website to keep themselves updated.

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ADITYA BIRLA CAPITAL

PROTECTING INVESTING FINANCING ADVISING

Aditya Birla Finance Limited

Registered Office: Indian Rayon Compound, Veraval, Gujarat - 362 266
CIN: U65990GJ1991PLC064603

NOTICE OF DEMAND U/S 13 (2) OF THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 READ WITH SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002 AS AMENDED.

- M/S Saket Industries, Shop No. 3 in House No. 2, C-57, Lajpathi Nagar, Part-2, New Delhi-110024
- Mr. Feroz Mohammad, 18, Hauz Rani, New Delhi-110017. Also at: Plot No. 50, 2nd Floor, Block-E, Sector- 48, Gurgaon, Haryana-121001.
- Mrs. Noor Jahan, 18, Hauz Rani, New Delhi-110017.
- Mrs. Farzana Hasan, 18, Hauz Rani, New Delhi-110017
- Javed Mohammad, 18, Hauz Rani, New Delhi-110017. Also at: Plot No. 50, 2nd Floor, Block-E, Sector- 48, Gurgaon, Haryana-121001.
- Mrs. J.K. Enterprises, B-67, Basement, Lajpathi Nagar-2, New Delhi-110024

REFERENCE: LOAN ACCOUNT NO. ABFLND_LAP000003531

Whereas Aditya Birla Finance Limited, a Company incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956, having its registered office at Indian Rayon Compound, Veraval, Gujarat 362 266 and having one of its offices at 2nd Floor, UCO Building, 5, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001, (hereinafter referred as "ABFL") had extended credit facility to you, the Addressee. The said credit facility is secured inter alia by way of mortgage over the immovable Property/Independent Floor admeasuring 136.47sq.meters (1469 sq.ft.) of super area on Ground Floor of Plot No. 57, Block-E, in the Colony, Vipul World, Sector-48, Sohna Road, Gurgaon, Haryana - 121001 and also the Property/Independent Floor admeasuring 136.47sq.meters (1469 sq.ft.) of super area on Second Floor of Plot No. 50, Block-E, in the Colony, Vipul World, Sector-48, Sohna Road, Gurgaon, Haryana-121001 (hereinafter referred to as "Secured Assets"). The said secured asset are owned by Mr. Feroz Mohammad and Mr. Javed Mohammad respectively.

That you, the Addressee have failed to maintain financial discipline in the loan account as mentioned above and as per the books of accounts maintained in the ordinary course of business by ABFL there exists an outstanding amount of Rs. 1,19,61,990/- (Rupees One Crore Nineteen Lakhs Sixty one Thousand and Nine Hundred ninety Only) by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 5th Feb, 2020. In addition to the said outstanding dues, you are also liable to pay interest and penal interests and/or other charges due in future till the entire outstanding dues are paid. Due to persistent default on the part of you the addressee the loan account has been classified by ABFL as Non-Performing Asset on 15-Jan-2020 within the norms stipulated by the Reserve Bank of India. In view of the above default, ABFL hereby calls upon you the addressee to discharge in full your liabilities towards ABFL by making the payment of the entire outstanding dues including up to date interest, costs, and charges within 60 Days (Sixty Days) from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, ABFL shall be entitled to take possession of the Secured Asset and shall also take other actions as is available to ABFL in law.

That please be informed that you are hereby restrained from alienating (including by way of transfer, sale, lease or otherwise) or creating third party interest or dealing with the secured asset in any manner except with specific prior written permission from ABFL. Be informed that any contravention thereof shall be punishable with imprisonment upto a period of one year or with fine or with both.

That please note that this is a final notice under Section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. Needless to say that ABFL shall be within its right to exercise any or all of the rights referred to above against you the Addressee entirely at your risk, responsibility and costs.

ADITYA BIRLA FINANCE LIMITED
Sd/-
AUTHORIZED OFFICER

PLACE : New Delhi
DATE : 20-02-2020

Sensex soars 429 pts; RIL, HDFC sparkle

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity indices clawed back most ground on Wednesday after a four-session falling spree as investors took heart from a decline in new coronavirus cases in China and the Indian government's assurance on tackling the economic impact from the epidemic.

Starting off on a strong footing, the BSE barometer gained strength during the session to touch a high of 41,357.16. The index finally settled at 41,323, clocking a gain of 428.62 points or 1.05%.

Likewise, the NSE gauge Nifty shot up 133.40 points or 1.11% to close at 12,125.90. Market heavyweight Reliance Industries spurred 2.60%, accounting for the majority of the Sensex gains. Other winners included Bajaj Finance, HUL, ONGC and HDFC, rising up to 2.79%. On the other hand, Sun Pharma, TCS, Bharti Airtel, L&T and IndusInd Bank shed up to 1.33%.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday met representatives from various sectors, including pharmaceuticals, textiles, chemicals, electronics and IT hardware, solar, auto, surgical equipment, and paints, to review the situation following the outbreak of the deadly virus in

Gold jumps ₹462 on global cues, silver soars ₹1,047

New Delhi (PTI): Gold prices on Wednesday jumped ₹462 to ₹42,339 per 10 grams in the national capital on positive global cues, according to HDFC Securities. Silver prices also surged ₹1,047 to ₹48,652 per kg, from ₹47,605 per kg on Tuesday. The yellow metal had closed at ₹41,877 per 10 grams in the previous trading session.

"Spot gold of 24 karat in Delhi crossed the ₹42,000 mark, gaining ₹462 with strong international prices. The strong demand from wedding season and rally in global gold prices pushed spot prices higher for the day," HDFC Securities senior analyst (commodities) Tapan Patel said.

Besides, gold also witnessed safe-haven buying after Apple Inc warned of missing its revenue forecast in the March 2020 quarter due to the coronavirus outbreak, Patel said. In the international market, both gold and silver were trading higher at USD 1,606.60 per ounce and USD 18.32 per ounce, respectively.

China. She said the government would soon announce measures to deal with the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on the domestic industry.

"Positive cues were witnessed in the market on hopes that the government is planning to consider some relief measures for the ailing telecom players. On the global front, there is a decrease in new virus cases and close to 80% of the Chinese enterprises are back to work indicating a possible economic recovery," said Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services.

Sectorally, BSE energy, healthcare and oil and gas rose as much as 2.37%. All 19 sectoral indices closed in the green on the BSE. In the broader market, BSE smallcap and midcap indices jumped 1.41% and 1.34% respectively, outperforming the benchmark.

The forex market was closed on account of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti.

In Asia, markets closed higher following reports that China saw fewer fresh coronavirus cases. Bourses in Europe too were trading higher in opening deals.

ICRA: Indian auto industry to be negatively impacted, supply chain disrupted if coronavirus persists

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's automobile industry is likely to be negatively impacted and supply chain disrupted if the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in China and South-East Asia persisted longer, according to ratings agency ICRA.

These countries play a critical role in automotive supply chain and domestic OEMs source critical components and sub-components including fuel injection pumps, EGR modules, electronic components, turbochargers from these markets which in turn directly or indirectly depend on China.

China accounts for 27% of India's auto component imports valued at USD 4.8 billion and, the impact is estimated to be higher for high value-add and customised components, while commoditised products could shift to alternative suppliers, ICRA said in a statement.

Commenting on the development, ICRA Ltd Vice-President (Corporate Sector Ratings) Shamsher Dewan said India's automotive supply chain could get disrupted if the manufacturing activities in China continue to remain impacted owing to coronavirus outbreak.

Dewan further said, "Moreover, given that OEMs are currently in the period of

transitioning to BS-VI production, disruption in supply of critical components required for the same has the potential to impact smooth transition to new emission norms."

ICRA said disruption in supply of certain critical components sourced from China will have differential impact.

OEMs sourcing components such as electronic components, fuel injection pumps, turbo charger, meter sets, LEDs, magnets, airbag components, steering system components and electric vehicle components will be affected the most.

In particular, the impact will be more profound on commercial vehicle (CV), passenger vehicle (PV) and two-wheeler (2W) segments, it added.

Tractor segment which has high localisation levels with limited dependence on imports will have much lesser impact.

In terms of sectoral outlook on domestic automotive industry, ICRA said it has a negative outlook on the CV segment due to surplus capacity in system, existing financing constraints, weak macro-economic scenario and industrial output which is likely to keep demand subdued.

For the PV segment too the outlook is negative and demand recovery is expected to be gradual.

Solar capacity addition down 12% to 7,346 MW in 2019: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's solar energy capacity addition dipped 12% to 7,346 megawatts (MW) in the calendar year 2019 from 8,338 MW in 2018, according to a report by Mercom India Research.

While 2019 was a lost year for the country's solar sector, Mercom India Research expects solar installations to rise by 17% year-on-year (y-o-y) to about 8,500 MW by the end of 2020.

"The country installed 7,346 MW of solar in 2019, a 12% decline year-over-year (YoY), compared to 8,338 MW installed in 2018," according to the report titled 'Q4 & Annual 2019 India Solar Market Update'.

It also estimates solar installations in the range of 65-70 gigawatt (GW) by 2022, based on the current market conditions. The government has set a solar installation target of 100 GW by 2022. The large-scale solar projects accounted for 85% of installations with 6,242 MW in 2019 and saw a 7% y-o-y fall, and rooftop solar made up the remaining 15% adding 1,104 MW, a 33% drop y-o-y.

Karnataka was the top state for solar in 2019 with 1.8 GW, followed by Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. Together, these three states accounted for almost 70% of solar installations in 2019.

"The demand outlook for 2020 looks better with a stronger

project pipeline, and we should see the solar market resume y-o-y growth again," said Raj Prabhu, CEO of Mercom Capital Group in a statement.

He also said that a lot would depend on the economy and lending situation getting back on track, the impact of coronavirus, and the outcome of the 20% basic customs duty announced in the recent Budget.

At the end of 2019, cumulative solar installations reached almost 35.7 GW. Large-scale projects accounted for 31.3 GW (87.6%), whereas rooftop solar installations accounted for 4.4 GW (12.4%). The large-scale solar project development pipeline stands at 23.7 GW, with 31.5 GW of projects tendered and pending auction at the end of the fourth quarter of 2019.

The Indian solar market added 1,897 MW in the October-December 2019 period, a 12.8% fall as compared with 2,177 MW installed in the preceding quarter. However, installations were up by 15.6% compared to 1,641 MW installed in the fourth quarter of 2018.

In the fourth quarter of 2019, large-scale solar projects came to 1,593 MW, while rooftop solar installations came to 304 MW, an increase of 24.1 per cent compared to 245 MW in the third quarter of 2019, it added.

Multiple reasons led to the

fall in large-scale solar additions in 2019 including elections, a slowing economy, liquidity issues, tariff caps, lack of financing, curtailment, payment delays, and power purchase agreements renegotiations in Andhra Pradesh.

Rooftop installations declined for the first time in five years. The report pointed to the slowdown in the economy in 2019 as a significant factor, along with liquidity issues in the market following the NBFC crisis that made it difficult for installers to finance rooftop projects in a tough economy.

"There are several challenges facing the industry but a few fixes, that could immediately turn around the sector, would be to remove tariff caps in reverse auctions, getting government agencies to make timely payments and facilitate lending to get the solar market moving in the right direction again," added Prabhu.

After five consecutive years of decline, coal accounted for a majority of the power installations with 7.8 GW and made up 44.1% of the installed capacity, followed by solar with 7.3 GW. Wind energy accounted for 2.4 GW followed by small hydro and other renewables with 154 MW and 82.5 MW, respectively. Even with coal installations rising, renewables collectively still made up a majority of the installations in 2019.

NIFTY 50

Table with columns: SCRIP, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists various stocks and their performance metrics.

NIFTY NEXT 50

Table with columns: SCRIP, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists various stocks and their performance metrics.

BSE 500

Table with columns: Script, Open, High, Low, LTP. Lists various stocks and their performance metrics.

All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers DECEMBER 2019



Table with columns: DABUR, GRAPHITE, CANBK, MIDHANI, GRANULES, etc. Lists various stocks and their performance metrics.

Table with columns: CADILAH, VINATORGA, APOLLOPOL, TORNTPOWER, APOLLOTYRE, SUNTECH, FORTIS, NATIONALUM, etc. Lists various stocks and their performance metrics.

Table with columns: IBULISL, JCKEMENT, IEX, RESPONIND, GILLETTE, etc. Lists various stocks and their performance metrics.

Table with columns: COROMANDEL, LAXMIMACH, DALBHARAT, GICHSFIN, etc. Lists various stocks and their performance metrics.

DEATH TOLL FROM CHINA VIRUS SURGES PAST 2,000

Beijing: The death toll from the coronavirus epidemic in China crossed the 2,000-mark on Wednesday with the death of 136 more people, while the overall confirmed cases climbed to 74,185, authorities said.

The National Health Commission said in its daily report that 2,004 people had died of the disease known as COVID-19. NHC said 1,749 new cases of novel coronavirus infection have been confirmed.

Of the new deaths, 132 were reported from the worst-hit Hubei Province and one each from Heilongjiang, Shandong, Guangdong and Guizhou.

Another 1,185 new suspected cases have been reported. On Tuesday, 236 patients

became seriously ill, while 1,824 people were discharged from hospital after recovery.

The commission added that 11,977 patients remained in severe condition, and 5,248 people were suspected of being infected with the virus, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

By Tuesday, 62 confirmed cases including one death had been reported in Hong Kong, 10 confirmed cases in Macao and 22 in Taiwan including one death. China's daily number of newly recovered novel coronavirus patients has surpassed that of new confirmed infections for the first time, according to NHC.

So far, 14,376 patients infected with the novel coronavirus had been discharged from hospital after recovery, NHC said.

On Tuesday, Dr Liu Zhiming, president of Wuhan Wuchang Hospital in Hubei, died of the novel coronavirus pneumonia highlighting the risks posed by virus to the medical staff.

Liu was a leading neurosurgeon in Wuhan.

Last Friday, the NHC said a total of 1,716 medical workers had been confirmed contracting the infection. As of February 11, six medical workers were killed while treating patients. This included the whistle-blower ophthalmologist, Dr Li Wenliang who was reprimanded by police for alerting about the virus over the social media in December. **PTI**

China expelled three Wall Street Journal correspondents, the largest expulsion of overseas media men from the country in more than three decades, after the newspaper declined to apologise for a column which Beijing criticised as "racist" and tarnishing its efforts to combat the coronavirus epidemic. Chinese spokesman said China made repeated representations to the US newspaper over the opinion piece which had the headline: "China is the real sick man of Asia," but regretted that it had not offered a public apology. **PTI**



A man wearing a mask looks out from a decoration promoting a movie in Beijing, China on Wednesday **AP**

Passengers leave Japan virus ship

Yokohama: Relieved passengers began leaving a coronavirus-wracked cruise ship in Japan on Wednesday after testing negative for the disease that has now claimed more than 2,000 lives in China.

The Diamond Princess has proved a fertile breeding ground for the virus with at least 542 positive cases, and there is mounting criticism of Japan's handling of quarantine arrangements as passengers ready to disperse into the wider world.

The ship is the biggest

cluster outside China, where new figures showed the death toll surging beyond 2,000 with more than 74,000 infected. Hundreds more cases have been reported in two dozen countries.

For some 500 passengers allowed to disembark after testing negative, a difficult 14-day quarantine period has come to an end after their dream cruise turned into a nightmare of fear and crushing boredom confined in many cases to small windowless cabins. **AFP**

Coronavirus reaches Iran

Tehran: Two people in Iran tested positive on Wednesday for the deadly new coronavirus, the Health Ministry said, in the Islamic republic's first cases of the disease. Kianoush Jahanpour, a Ministry spokesman, said the cases were detected in the holy city of Qom, south of the Iranian capital. "In the past two days, some suspect cases of the new coronavirus were observed in Qom city," he said, quoted by state news agency IRNA. **AFP**

XI CALLS FOR PROTECTION OF MEDICAL STAFF

Beijing: Chinese President Xi Jinping called for greater protection of medical workers fighting the coronavirus after casualties among them showed an upward trend as the death toll from the epidemic crossed the 2,000-mark on Wednesday, authorities said.

China's National Health Commission (NHC) in its daily report said that 136 people died on Tuesday taking the total death toll to 2,004 so far due to the virus also called COVID-19. **PTI**

China expels three Wall Street Journal correspondents

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South Korea coronavirus cases jump by two-thirds in one day

Seoul: South Korea reported 20 new confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus on Wednesday — increasing its total by nearly two-thirds — including a cluster of at least 16 centred on the southern city of Daegu.

The trade-dependent nation has been hit by the economic fallout from the virus outbreak in neighbouring China, but until Wednesday's

jump, its own case numbers had hardly changed for several days.

The Korea Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) said in a statement that 20 new coronavirus cases had been confirmed, raising its total from 31 to 51. Of those, 18 were in Daegu and neighbouring North Gyeongsang province, with 15 of them believed to be

linked to a single patient, a 61-year-old woman.

Fourteen of them attend the same church as the woman, the KCDC said, while the other one had come into contact with her at a hospital.

She had first developed a fever on February 10 but reportedly refused to be tested twice for the coronavirus on the grounds that she had not recently travelled abroad. **AFP**

HK REPORTS SECOND FATALITY

Hong Kong: An elderly Hong Kong man who contracted the new coronavirus died on Wednesday, authorities announced, the second fatality from the outbreak in the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

"A 70-year-old male patient who was infected with the novel coronavirus deteriorated and succumbed in Princess Margaret Hospital this morning," the Hospital Authority said in a statement.

Officials said the man was taken to hospital on 12 February after a fall at home. He had a fever and tested positive for the virus, dying a week later. **AFP**

CHINA TURNS TO INTERNET FOR FOOD SUPPLIES

Beijing: Wang Feng, housebound by China's virus outbreak, counts on the parka-clad delivery drivers of e-commerce giant JD.Com to keep her kitchen stocked. Demand for online food vendors has surged since China's Government told the public to stay home as part of the most sweeping anti-disease controls ever imposed.

On Tuesday, Wang's phone buzzed with a text message that a delivery had arrived. The retiree bundled up against the winter cold, put on a face mask and emerged from her apartment complex to collect walnut milk and other goods. **AP**

GLOBE TROTTER

AFGHAN AIR RAIDS KILL 12 TERRORISTS

Jalalabad: A total of 12 militants were killed as fighter planes struck Taliban hideouts in Mohmandara district of Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province, an army statement said on Wednesday.

EX SOUTH KOREAN PREZ LEE SENTENCED TO 17 YR IN JAIL

Seoul: A South Korean Appellate court on Wednesday sentenced former President Lee Myung-bak to 17 years in jail over multiple corruption charges, including bribery and embezzlement.

AFGHAN PRESIDENT ASHRAF GHANI WINS SECOND TERM

Kabul: Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has secured a second term as President of Afghanistan, the country's independent election commission has announced, more than four months after polls closed.

43 ARRESTED IN ANTI-CHILD PORN OPERATION IN BRAZIL

Brazil: Brazil police have arrested 43 people in a large-scale operation against child pornography which involved four other countries.

EGYPT FOILS SMUGGLING OF 3,900-KG ILLICIT DRUGS

Cairo: Egyptian authorities thwarted on Tuesday an attempt to smuggle a large number of illegal drugs into the country, the Egyptian Interior Ministry said in a statement.

Bloomberg would sell business interests if elected president

Sacramento (US): Mike Bloomberg would sell the financial data and media company he created in the 1980s — which bears his name and made him a multibillionaire — if he is elected US president, a top adviser has said.

Bloomberg would put Bloomberg LP into a blind trust, and the trustee would then sell the company, adviser Tim O'Brien said Tuesday. Proceeds from the sale would

go to Bloomberg Philanthropies, the charitable giving arm that funds causes from climate change to public health and grants for American cities.

The only restriction Bloomberg would put on the sale is that it not be sold to a foreign buyer or a private equity company, O'Brien said. Bloomberg, a Democrat, is currently chief executive of the company.

"We want to be 180 degrees apart from Donald Trump around financial conflicts of interest," O'Brien told The Associated Press.

"We think it's one of the biggest stains on the presidency, and Trump's record is his refusal to disengage himself in his own financial interests. And we want to be very transparent and clean and clear with voters about where Mike is on these things." **AP**

Boeing finds new issue with Max, debris in fuel tanks

Paris: Boeing said on Tuesday that it found debris contaminating the fuel tanks of some 737 Max jets that it built in the past year but was unable to deliver to airline customers.

A Boeing official said the debris was discovered in "several" planes but did not give a precise number. Boeing built about 400 undelivered Max jets before it temporarily halted production last month.

The fuel tank debris was discovered during maintenance on parked planes, and Boeing said it immediately made corrections in its production system to prevent a recurrence. Those steps include more inspections before fuel tanks are sealed.

A Boeing spokesman said that the issue would not change the company's belief that the Federal Aviation Administration will certify the plane to fly again this summer.

An FAA spokesman said the agency knows that Boeing is conducting a voluntary inspection of undelivered Max planes.

The FAA "increased its surveillance based on initial inspection reports and will take further action based on the findings," said spokesman Lynn Lunsford.

Metal shavings, tools and other objects left in planes during assembly can raise the risk of electrical short-circuiting and fires. **AP**

Chance of a deal with Taliban: Trump

Washington: Ahead of his visit to India next week, US President Donald Trump has reiterated that he sees "a chance" of a peace deal with the Taliban to withdraw troops from Afghanistan.

The US has been negotiating with the Taliban and Trump earlier, too, suggested there had been progress between the two sides to reduce violence in the war-torn country and end America's longest war, for 19 years.

"We are negotiating with the Taliban. We've been negoti-

ating with them for a while. We will see what happens. There's a chance of making a deal. There's a chance," Trump told reporters at Joint Base Andrews Tuesday afternoon local time.

Marvin G Weinbaum, Director for Afghanistan and Pakistan Studies at the Middle East Institute, has said the US appears well on its way to signing an agreement with the Taliban later this month. Trump is scheduled to visit India on February 24 and 25. **PTI**

Blagojevich released from prison after Trump pardon

Chicago: Rod Blagojevich walked out of prison Tuesday after President Donald Trump cut short the 14-year prison sentence handed to the former Illinois Governor for political corruption.

The Republican president said the punishment imposed on the Chicago Democrat and one-time contestant on Trump's reality TV show "Celebrity Apprentice" was excessive. "So he'll be able to go back home," Trump told reporters. "That was a powerful, ridiculous sentence in my opinion and in the opinion of many others."

Blagojevich landed at Chicago's O'Hare airport on Wednesday a free man, promising judicial and criminal justice reform while maintaining his innocence. "I didn't do the things they said I did and they lied on me," Blagojevich told WGN-TV as he walked through the airport shaking the hands of travelers who welcomed him home. **AP**

EU to target stolen artefacts in post-Brexit talks

Brussels: Europeans could include the issue of stolen cultural artefacts, especially Greek or Roman antiquities, in negotiations on their future relationship with Britain, according to the draft of the EU negotiating mandate. The mandate, seen by AFP, sets out the EU's objectives and red lines and now includes a call on the parties to "return unlawfully removed cultural objects to their countries of origin".

Early reports, denied by officials on Wednesday, said the mention pertained to the Parthenon marbles, the ancient sculptures commonly known as the Elgin marbles that are on display in the British Museum in London. **AFP**

No visas for low-skilled workers: UK

London: Low-skilled workers would not get visas under post-Brexit immigration plans unveiled by the British government. It is urging employers to "move away" from relying on "cheap labour" from Europe and invest in retaining staff and developing automation technology, the BBC reported on Wednesday.

The Home Office said EU and non-EU citizens coming to the UK would be treated equally after UK-EU free movement ends on December 31.

Labour said a "hostile environment" would make it hard to attract workers. **IANS**

Trump will have a triumphant visit to India: Top former US diplomat

Washington: Donald Trump will have a triumphant visit to India, a top diplomat in the previous Obama administration has said, asserting the US president has energised the Indian-Americans as a result of which Democrats might not be able to hold on to this community as they did in the past.

"My expectation will be — my guess is that President Trump will have a triumphant visit in Delhi," Kurt Campbell, a former assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, said.

Currently the chairman and CEO of Asia Group, Campbell said Trump's prima-

ry interest is not about America's role in the world. "His primary interest is his reelection. It's how that will manifest in terms of his potential reelection in November," he said in response to a question at an event at the Brookings Institute think-tank last week. **PTI**

THE HONGKONG AND SHANGHAI BANKING CORPORATION LTD.
K-14, Sector-18, NOIDA - 201301.

NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002

We, the HSBC Bank, has issued Demand Notice U/S 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, through our Mumbai branches/through the Authorized Officer. The contents of the same are the defaults committed by you in the payment of instalments of principal, interest, etc. The outstanding amount is as mentioned below:

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower	Loan A/c No.	Date of 13(2) Notice	Limit	NPA Date	Demand Amount as per Sec. Act Notice	Mailing Address	Mortgaged Property
1	Jugal Makwana and Vrinda Makwana	166298 174220	23/01/2020	₹99,72,225/-	15/03/2019	₹86,28,085.09	203, 2nd Floor, Okhla Industrial Estate 3, New Delhi-110020	Flat No. T6/g02, Ground Floor, Parsvnath Prestige 2, Sec 93A, Noida-201301
2	Amta Dev and Rajeev Paul Dev	166357 905222	30/01/2020	₹1,14,00,000/-	15/07/2019	₹1,01,70,237.81	23/39, Old Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi-110060 New Delhi-110041	1. Square Yards Part Of Kharsa No. 77/19, Residential Colony Greenfields, Ravanua Estate of Village Sarai Khawaja, Tehsil & Distt. Faridabad, Haryana 2. Bhai Parmanand Institute Of Business, Govt of NCT Delhi, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092
3	Aditya and Sudarshan Mahajan	499388 627001	23/01/2020	₹48,80,000/-	16/11/2016	₹30,96,456.75	Samsung India Electronics Pvt Ltd., Vipul Tech Square, Golf Course Road, Sector 43, Gurgaon, Haryana-122009	Plot No. 2325, Sector 09, Urban Estate, Faridabad, Haryana-122006

Further with reasons, we believe that you are evading the service of Demand Notice. Hence this publication of demand notice. You are hereby called upon to pay HSBC BANK LTD. within a period of 60 days of date of publication of this Demand Notice the aforesaid amount alongwith further interest, cost, incidental expenses, charges etc., failing which HSBC BANK LTD. will take necessary action under all or any of the provision of Sec 13 (4) of the said Act against all or any one or more of the secured assets including taking possession of this secured assets of the borrower/s. Further you are prohibited U/S 13(13) of the said Act from transferring either by way of sale/lease or in any other way the aforesaid secured assets. Please note that no further demand notice will be issued.

Sd/-
The Authorised Officer
For The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation

DIRECTORATE OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS' WELFARE, HARYANA
agrisharyana2009@gmail.com
0172-2570662, 2563242 (Fax)

E-TENDER NOTICE FOR SELECTION OF INSURANCE COMPANIES AS IMPLEMENTING AGENCY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PRADHAN MANTRI FASAL BIMA YOJANA FOR THE SEASON KHARIF 2020 AND RABI 2020-21.

Dated:- 14th February 2020 (Tender No. 1983/Stat.)

The Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Haryana invites e-tender for selection of insurance companies as implementing agency for Implementation of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana for the Season Kharif 2020 and Rabi 2020-21 as per details given in e-tender document.

Insurance Companies empaneled by Department of Agriculture Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India will be eligible to participate in this tender. Detailed e-tender notice indicating instructions, specifications, terms and conditions & critical schedule of e-tender may be downloaded from e-procurement portal i.e. <https://etender.hry.nic.in>

E-tender will be accepted up to 1700 Hours on 11th March 2020. The Financial Bids will be opened at 11.00 Hours on 12th March 2020 at the same venue as mentioned above in the presence of bidders who may wish to be present. The Director General Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Haryana reserves the right to accept or reject any / all offers without assigning any reason thereof.

Director General
Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department,
Haryana, Panchkula

RO NO. 79960 Dt. 19-02-2020

VIRIDIAN CAPITAL AND FINANCIAL SERVICES PVT. LTD.
CIN: U74899DL1994PTC056723
Regd. office: Plot No. 8, Pocket 1, Jasola, New Delhi 110025
Email: compliance.nbc@viridian.co.in, Phone: 011-49614000

NOTICE

Pursuant to RBI Circular No. DNBS (PD) CC.No.82/03.02.02/2006-07 dated October 27, 2006 and DNBR (PD) CC. No. 065/03.10.001/2015-16 dated July 09, 2015 and any other relevant regulations issued by Reserve Bank of India ('RBI'), notice is hereby given that Viridian Capital and Financial Services Pvt Ltd, a company registered under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1956, having its registered office at Plot No. 8, Pocket 1, Jasola, New Delhi-110025 ('Company') and registered with RBI as Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) vide Registration No B-14.01655, wishes to appoint Mr. Kamta Nath Pandey (DIN: 00694714) and Mr. Binod Kumar Jaiswal (DIN: 08616724) as the Directors of the Company. Further, the Company has also obtained the approval from RBI for the abovementioned changes in management of the Company vide RBI Letter No. PD (NBFC) ND No. 2683/CMS-IX/05.22.123/2019-20 dated February 12, 2020.

Any person including any creditor having any objection to the proposed changes in management of the Company, may promptly write to the company at its abovementioned registered office address and/or to the concerned Regional Office of the Department of Non-Banking Supervision, Reserve Bank of India, at New Delhi.

By order of the Board
For Viridian Capital and Financial Services Pvt Ltd
Sd/-
Director
DIN: 07628898
Mundamuka Venkateswaran Subramanian

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -II, DELHI
4th FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001

OA NO 217/19 Date: 10.01.2020

CANARA BANK APPLICANT **VERSUS** **Mr. Ajay Solanki & Anr.** RESPONDENT

To, Defendant,

1. **Ajay Solanki** S/o. Satyapal Solanki, R-276, 4th Floor Gali No.3, Joga Bai Ext., Jamia Nagar, Okhla, New Delhi-25 Also At: C/o M/s Mainframe Engineering Solution Pvt. Ltd. IE/5 Jhandewalan Ext., New Delhi. Also at: House No. 65, Jharera Village 75, Parade Ground, Delhi-Cantt

Whereas the above named applicant (s) has / have instituted a case for recovery of **Rs 27,10,341/-** (Rs. Twenty Seven Lakh Ten Thousand Three Hundred And Forty One Only) against you and where as it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on **17.03.2020 AT 10.30 A.M.** Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before the mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in your absence.

By Order Of The Tribunal
Section Officer, DRT-II, DELHI.

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY STORES DEPARTMENT E-AUCTION
Auction Programme March-2020

On line auction sale through www.ireps.gov.in for disposal of scrap Ferrous, Non-Ferrous Scrap comprising of Rails on line, other P/Way Scrap, M.S. Sheet, Axles, Machines and condemned wagons/coaches will be held as per schedule programme given below:

Dept/ Division	Ajmer Depot	Ajmer Division	Jodhpur Depot	Jodhpur Division	Jaipur Division	BKN-depot/ Division
March 2020	06.03.20	02.03.20	05.03.20	04.03.20	03.03.20	06.03.20
	12.03.20	11.03.20	11.03.20	13.03.20	12.03.20	13.03.20
	17.03.20	16.03.20	18.03.20	19.03.20	18.03.20	20.03.20
	23.03.20	24.03.20	24.03.20	26.03.20	24.03.20	27.03.20
	30.03.20	30.03.20	30.03.20	30.03.20	30.03.20	30.03.20
	31.03.20	31.03.20	31.03.20	31.03.20	31.03.20	31.03.20
	31.03.20	31.03.20	31.03.20	31.03.20	31.03.20	31.03.20

Note: The amendments regarding the date of auction can be seen on IREPS site only. No publication will be done in news paper in future. 1. Indian Railway is selling all the scrap through e-auction. Bidders are requested to get registered for E-auction with www.ireps.gov.in at an early date. 2. Bidders should obtain class-III digital certificate with firm's name before registration. For payment, bidders will have to open an account with SBI (Sarasal/Yyapari) with net banking Rights for depositing earnest money etc. For any detail please contact concerned officers of depot. **193-AM/20**

Please join us on www.nwrailways.com

Trend Blazer

Deepika shares her first look of 83

Actor DEEPIKA PADUKONE unveiled her look as Romi Dev, wife of cricket legend Kapil Dev, in the forthcoming film 83.

She says the film is an ode to every woman who puts her husband's dream before her own.

She captioned it: "To be able to play a small but significant part in a film that captures one of the most iconic moments in sporting history has been an absolute honour. I've seen very closely the role a wife plays in the success of her husband's professional and personal aspirations in my mother and 83 for me in many ways is an ode to every woman who puts her husband's dream before her own."



'Portraying a young girl from Bombay who saved the lives of the 359 passengers was not only challenging but also a great honour. As the film completes its fourth anniversary, I would want people to recall how fear gave courage to the young Neerja Bhanot. She was the true icon of bravery, strength, and sacrifice for our country. She continues to be an inspiration to everyone.'

—Sonam Kapoor

Actor DIA MIRZA loved playing the character of someone who makes choices on her own in the new film Thappad.

Sharing her experience on how she prepared for her role in the film, Dia said: "Playing any character is a combination of both, preparation as well as spontaneous emotions. Many years ago, one of my friends told me that one must meet opportunity with preparedness, one should understand the story from all the perspectives and not just the character's side."

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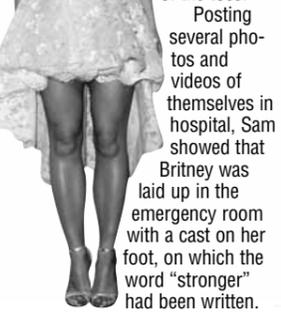
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Britney gets injured while dancing

Singer BRITNEY SPEARS was hospitalised after a dance move went wrong.

The 38-year-old was left with a fractured metatarsal bone and her foot in plaster. Her boyfriend, Sam Ashghari, shared photos of the star in a hospital on his Instagram page. He revealed that the singer had fractured one of a group of five long bones in the foot, located between the tarsal bones of the hind and mid-foot and the phalanges of the toes.

Posting several photos and videos of themselves in hospital, Sam showed that Britney was laid up in the emergency room with a cast on her foot, on which the word "stronger" had been written.



WHEN VICKY WAS TRICKED

The actor tells CHAHAK MITTAL that working for *Bhoot: The Haunted Ship* not only compelled him to face his worst fears but also taught him how a horror film requires an artiste to give a lot of calculated expressions

What would it be like to react to something that is not even present in front of you? Confused? Well, now you can imagine what actor Vicky Kaushal's situation might have been when he was acting for *Bhoot: The Haunted Ship*. Be it romance, comedy, thriller or biopic, other drama genres hold a lot of facts from real life for actors to abide by. However, the expression of horror follows no grammar. Acting for a horror film is like acting for something that's not even real. And for Vicky, this was the trickiest part.

He tells us, "I was purely following Bhanu's (Pratap Singh, director) orders and vision. Everyday I would come on set and just ask him a number of questions. 'What are we exactly doing?' 'What does he want and how?' 'How are we going to create that fear?' The actor had very little to work with. There were no props on the set, neither was there any sound track which is overlaid later.

He says, "There were times when I would find myself looking at the monitor, which I don't usually do. I would ask Bhanu what the background music would be like and what effects are going to be added in the post-production. It would require a lot of focus from all the departments together and then with myself to create that kind of atmosphere for the audience in the theatre. Hence, the grammar was very new to me. But there was a lot of conviction and clarity in Bhanu's narration, which made me think and act the way he wanted me to. I think! (Laughs)"

Vicky explains how he worked on the process. He says, "When you're doing a scene for a drama or comedy film, in your heart, you know that you've hit the right emotion. But with fear, it is always the planned emotion. It doesn't come to you naturally, especially if there is nothing around you. I am walking in a haunted ship and there's something I hear from the back. But that is only something that I have to imagine. It hasn't happened in reality. It is going to be added later. Yet I have to react, imagine the intensity of it and then come to an intensity of fear that can be visible from my facial expressions and body language. All of that is a very calculated process. You know that you are going to react in this way. You don't leave it to the

moment. So this planning of reactions and still making it seem natural is very tricky!"

He accepted the film because Dharma Productions was in charge. "I was called by the production house when *Raazi* was going to be released. They wanted to have a discussion with me about doing another film with them, which was, surprisingly, a horror one. I was intrigued. I wondered 'kuch toh baat hogi'. My mind was blown after I the script. I thoroughly enjoyed it."

The film, also starring Bhumi Pednekar, revolves around the real-life haunted ship which was washed ashore on Mumbai's coast. The strange part of it was that when it hit the sand barrier, there was nobody on it, including the crew members. The mystery was undetected and alarmed the people when it went aground off the coast one day. For Vicky, the script was written in a way that it stuck to the genre authentically. There wasn't any Bollywoodisation of the theme. "It was fresh and had no unnecessary subplots or dance. I was very happy doing that. Aesthetically, it was rich. The geography, which plays a very important part in a horror film, was able to perfectly define the seriousness of the situation that was being created. There have been abandoned homes or a cemetery to showcase a horror element. But this one was a ship, which I thought was quite fresh and gave a lot of scope to explore the genre. In that container ship, there are about a hundreds rooms — engine room, pump room, staircases, lifts, which are all worn out because it's a dilapidated, old ship. And there's nobody inside. So I thought it became a great setup, which was properly exploited too."

With films like *Masaan*, *Love Per Square Foot*, *Raazi*, *Uri*, and now *Bhoot*... there has been a whole range of genres that Vicky has explored — arthouse, romantic comedy, action, drama and horror. So how has such a variety of roles transformed him? He says, "Every film does that in some way or the other. *Masaan* just gave me a new perspective about life. Spending so much time in those ghats, where dead bodies are burnt, one realises the finality of life. Whatever you do or achieve, this is the real truth, where we all are going to end up one day. When I was shooting for



'A HORROR FILM IS AN EXPENSIVE ONE, WHICH REQUIRES A LOT OF POST-PRODUCTION WORK. WE HAVE TRIED TO NOTCH UP THE AESTHETIC SENSE OF THE FILM AND GIVEN IT ELEMENTS TO CONNECT ON AN INTERNAL LEVEL SO THAT THE HORROR ENTHUSIASTS AND NON-HORROR ENTHUSIASTS CAN WATCH IT TOGETHER'

Uri, it gave me such a new understanding about the lives of military personnel and their families. I realised what they go through. *Aap kitna hi kitaabo mei padhle*, but to actually live their stories, changes you."

Vicky hasn't been a fan of horror films himself and like most, also flinches at the thought of it. So how was it working for one? "When you do a horror film, being that person from the audience who is very scared to watch such films, you kind of overcome that fear. You face it while being a part of it directly. I am very afraid of water. And in this

film, there were a lot of underwater sequences. I had to literally face my fear in a very genuine way. It hit me very personally. But yes, eventually, it also becomes a very liberating process. And that experience changes you, slightly."

Horror as a genre hasn't been explored in India much. Like *The Conjuring*, *Annabelle*, *Paranormal Activities*, there are no Hindi equivalent. Why? For Vicky, it's because a horror film does not comply with the entertainment needs of the majority. He says, "There are people with nine to five jobs. They are not willing to watch a serious rather tension *vaali* film after a tiring day. Not everyone is able to enjoy a horror film. That's why producers do not want to invest in such a film. And even when such films are made, they are made on such a low budget because of the fear of not earning enough. Eventually, it looks tacky. A horror film is an expensive one, which requires a lot of post-production work. We have tried to notch up the aesthetic sense of the film and given it elements to connect on an internal level so that the horror enthusiasts and non-horror enthusiasts can come and watch it together."

Well, the film's trailer looks promising and certainly makes one feel that this could be India's *The Conjuring*. It is certainly no cliché 'mehlon vaali bhootiya kahaani' (haunted house story) anymore." We are trying to give the audience a feel that it's fresh. Give us a chance, the ship will sail! (Laughs)"

The class satire

Filmmaker BONG JOON-HO feels happy as *Parasite* succeeded despite exposing the brutality of disparity in modern society

Oscar-winning *Parasite* director, Bong Joon-ho said that the film's "biggest pleasure and the most significant meaning" to him is that it succeeded even though the audience might feel uncomfortable with his explicit description of bitter wealth disparity in modern society.

Bong's dark comic thriller about two families on the opposite ends of South Korea's social spectrum is a history-making film. It won best picture at this month's 92nd Academy Awards ceremony, becoming the first non-English-language film to get the top honor. Bong and his film clinched three other Oscars.

He told reporters that the film's story has not only "funny, comic" elements but also "bitter, painful natures" of the disparity between the haves and have-nots in modern society.

"I didn't want to avoid such a part even a little," Bong told a nationally televised news conference. "Audience might hate that or feel uncomfortable to watch it... but I thought the only option I can have for this film is depicting the world we live as frankly as possible, though that might be risky commercially."

Noting that *Parasite* was already commercially successful in North America, France, Vietnam, Japan, the United Kingdom and his native South Korea even before his Oscar triumph, Bong said, "Regardless of the (Oscar) wins, the biggest pleasure and the most significant meaning was the fact that the audience around the world of our times responded to the film."

The class satire tells the story of how a family of four poor, unemployed people living in a slum basement apartment comically infiltrates a wealthy family residing at a luxurious mansion before things unravel violently and tragically.

Bong already had commercial and critical success with his 2013 sci-fi film *Snowpiercer*, which starred Chris Evans and Tilda Swinton along with South Korean *Parasite* actor Song Kang-ho. But nothing that's come before has been remotely as successful as *Parasite*, a profoundly South Korean film shot in the Korean language.

Along with the best picture award, Bong was also named best director and co-shared another Oscar title, best original screenplay,



with *Parasite* co-writer Han Jin Won. The film won best international feature film as well.

The film, which is also the first South Korean film to win an Oscar, has made Bong a national hero. Ahead of April's parliamentary elections in South Korea, some politicians even proposed setting up a Bong statue, establishing a street named after him and rebuilding the house where he was born. Asked about such proposals, Bong joked, "I hope people will talk about such things after I die."

He said that he will leave it to

critics, journalists and fans to analyse the film's commercial appeal and that he'd fully focus on working on this next film.

At the same news conference, actor Lee Jeong-eun, who plays a live-in housekeeper for the wealthy family in *Parasite*, said the film portrayed universal problems such as unemployment "in a very interesting yet an in-depth manner." Han said he believes audience sympathised with the film's 10 main characters, who "have their own dramas and have their own reasons to live," Bong said he was ready for a

break after a successful yet exhausting Oscars campaign. But he said prominent American director Martin Scorsese pleaded that he get back to work quickly. "I just read his letter a few hours ago and it was an honour," Bong said. "He said I did a good job and should rest but only a little because he and everyone else was eagerly waiting for my next film."

He had mentioned his admiration of Scorsese while receiving the directing Oscar, inspiring an impromptu standing ovation from the crowd. He said he was discussing with HBO making a TV adaptation of *Parasite*, with American director and screenwriter Adam McKay agreeing to be a writer on the series, which could run five or six episodes. "We have smoothly taken the first step with HBO," said Bong, while denying reports that Mark Ruffalo and Swinton have been finalised as cast members.

"The TV adaptation of *Snowpiercer* is planned to air in May, but since we started talking about it in 2014 or 2015, it took about five years. (The TV version of *Parasite* might take quite a while too," he said. —AP



Women power drives Karan Johar's *Guilty*

Filmmaker-producer Karan Johar, whose digital content production wing Dharmatic has collaborated with streaming giant Netflix for a venture named *Guilty*, has said that his forthcoming edge-of-the-seat thriller film has intrigue, resonance and relevance, combined by some terrific performances. *Guilty* is led by women in all departments — be it in acting, direction, writing and production — and Johar declares he will continue collaborating with female talent in future, too.

At the trailer launch, Johar was accompanied by the film's director Ruchi Narain, writers Kanika Dhillon and Atika Chohan, and cast members Kiara Advani, Gurfateh Singh Pirdada, Akansha Ranjan Kapoor and Taber Shabbir. Srishti Behl Arya, director, International Original Film, India, Netflix, was also present, as were Apoorva Mehta, CEO, Dharma Productions, and Somen Mishra, head of creative development at Dharma Movies.

On the female-centric cast and crew, Johar said, "It's quite interesting that it is such a strong female-led narrative, led by a mainstream female

actor, directed by a woman, creatively nurtured by a strong woman and all of us at Dharma are such strong feminists including Somen (Mishra), Apoorva (Mehta) and me. We feel proud to tell this story."

In *Guilty*, Kiara essays a musician's girlfriend. The story explores the different versions of truth that emerge when a small town girl accuses her college heartthrob of rape.

"The film has a strong narrative and storytelling along with terrific performances," said Johar. After her grand web debut with Karan Johar's segment in the anthology *List Stories* (2018), Kiara returns to the digital space with this one. Talking about his collaboration with Netflix, Johar said, "This is the first time that Dharmatic and Netflix has come together. All of you know that Netflix is a tremendous global platform and they really encourage and nurture strong content, so to collaborate with them was an honour and also a privilege to be able to tell stories we really want to with the abundance and the craft and creativity."

Guilty will stream on Netflix from March 6. —IANS

JAIPUR TO HOST 48TH DAIRY INDUSTRY CONFERENCE



Rahul Saxena, Secretary General, 48th DIC and Secretary, RSC

The 48th Dairy Industry Conference is being organised by Indian Dairy Association (North Zone) in association with Indian Dairy Association (Rajasthan State Chapter) during February 20 to 22 at Birla Auditorium, Jaipur.

The conference will include dairy experts from the country and abroad, who will share cutting edge technology and experience in the field of dairy development.

The theme for this year's conference is *Dairying for Health and Wealth*. In addition to dairy experts, professionals associated with dairy industry, central and state government officials, representatives of private and cooperative dairies, researchers, entrepreneurs, milk producers and more than five thousand participants including students.



Director of the 48th Dairy Industry Conference, Dr Himmat Singh, said that a grand exhibition will also be organised in the Birla auditorium, which will have stalls of prestigious brands like Amul, Mother Dairy and REEL and IDMC will also display their products.

The Pink city was founded in 1727 by Maharaj Jai Singh II, who ruled from 1699 to 1744. Initially, his capital was Amber, which lies at a distance of 11 km from Jaipur. He felt the need of shifting his capital city with the increase in population and growing scarcity of water. Jaipur is the first planned city of India and the king took great interest while designing this city of victory. He consulted several books on architecture and architects before making the layout of the city.

It holds a distinct position among popular tourist places in India due to the immortal royal vibes that are an inseparable part of its existence. The major highlights of the city are: Amber Fort, Nahargarh Fort and Jaigarh Fort. Hawa Mahal or The Wind Palace is another major attraction that impresses spectators with its wonderful architecture and forces them to click pictures. Many other must-visit places in Jaipur are, Albert Hall Museum, Jal Mahal and Jantar Mantar. They are special spots as every bit of them reflects the presence of royalty in this city.

IN SHORT



NHPC Limited has been conferred the CBIP Award 2020 for Outstanding performing utility in hydro power sector. Ratish Kumar, CMD, NHPC along with MK Mittal, Director (Finance), NHPC and Janardan Choudhary, Director (Technical), NHPC received the award from Rattan Lal Kataria, Minister of State, Ministry of Jal Shakti at a function held on Wednesday. It has been conferred this award for their contribution by use of latest technologies and smart solutions for efficient operation of hydro power plants in the country, giving importance to environmental, social and economic aspects besides contribution for development of hydro power in the neighbouring countries.

The Ghaziabad Development Authority will once again give notice to the bank branches and ask them to move from residential areas to commercial areas. In this regard, the authority administration is preparing to give notice to banks on a large scale. This information was given by GDA officer Sanjay Kumar on Tuesday. He informed that notices are being issued to ten bank branches operating in residential areas near Rajnagar extension. After this, banks operating in other residential areas of the metropolis will also be brought under eviction. Kumar informed that banks have opened their branches in various apartments of Rajnagar extension which are against RBI norms. The privacy of the local residents is affected due to the crowd coming in the banks. The traffic is also being disrupted due to the congestion. This action is being taken on the complaints of the residents of colonies and apartments.



Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla and Union Minority Affairs Minister Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi visiting Hunar Haat, India Gate Lawns, Rajpath on Tuesday.

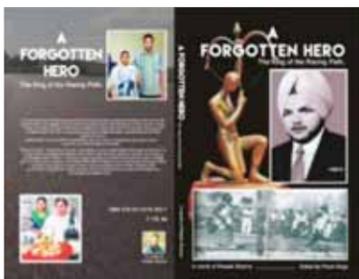
Makhan Singh's journey on silver screen

At a time when Bollywood has been flooded with biopics, the initiative of producer, K Ranjan along with Prateek Sharma is commendable. The athlete who holds the reputation of defeating the legendary Milkha Singh brought a lot of accolades for his country.

It is a sheer irony that the sportsman, Makhan Singh, who brought honours to his nation lived a life in poverty. The heart-rending fact that his wife was compelled to sell the prestigious Arjuna Award. When the avid writer and entrepreneur, Sharma, got a chance to meet Singh's family, his

heart got a thorough setback. He decided to bring the story of this star athlete in front of the world.

Ranjan has been working in the B-Town for more than three decades. Apart from producing films, he has also produced soap operas, more than 25 almost.



Any mission is incomplete without citizens' participation: Dinesh Chandra

Without public participation, no challenging mission can ever be completed. Inspired by the citizens of Ghaziabad in making the city beautiful and clean, the Municipal Corporation will carry many challenging tasks.

Talking about the completion of one year tenure in the Municipal Corporation, Dinesh Chandra, Municipal Commissioner said that the work of cleanliness and development will be taken forward continuously. The works will also be completed within the time limit. He informed that the citizens have sent their complaints about monkeys and dogs in urban areas, which they will resolve soon. Stray dogs and monkeys are being released from Ghaziabad border from Delhi side. A letter in this regard is also being sent to MCD of Delhi. Chandra added that a task force has been constituted to deal with the occupiers on government lands. Its charge has been handed over to retired Colonel Deepak Sirohi. On the question asked on the issue of cleanliness survey, he said that Ghaziabad will now be identified with a clean toilet.



First ever 100m pier bridge built

North Eastern Railway Construction Organisation has recently achieved a major advancement in constructing first ever 100 metre tall pier bridge coming up across river Makru in Tamenglong District of Manipur, in Indian Railways.

The bridge is a part of Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal new

BG line project (111 Km). There are total 47 tunnels in the project. The longest tunnel, Tunnel No 12 with a length of 10.280 Km. will be the longest railway tunnel in the Northeast.

The 555 metre long bridge is being constructed across the valley of river Makru in Tamenglong district of Manipur with a pier

height of 100 metre (equivalent to 33 storied building). The steel girders are pre-fabricated in a workshop at Kolkata, transported in segments and erected at site by Cantilever launching scheme which requires very meticulous planning and execution. Indian Railways Engineers have successfully demonstrated

their expertise. It is mentioned that during the entire works of open web Girder launching, no mishappening has occurred.

Despite facing difficult terrain, plagued by poor infrastructure facilities the last Open Web Girder of the Bridge launched successfully on Friday.

Obey Vedic principles

It is unfortunate that nowadays, humans are facing many diseases. The outbreak of coronavirus has been detected a few weeks ago. God being our real father gives us the knowledge of four Vedas to destroy illusion and solve all kinds of problems, including those of medical science. Many fatal infections can be destroyed if we simply perform daily *Agnihotra* in our homes.

When we obey the Vedic principles of God, diseases are either destroyed from its roots or do not even generate. Vedic mantras states that *agnihotra* purifies food grains, water, and bestows mental and physical strength so that people can enjoy prosperous life.

Everybody must offer *aahutis* in the fire of *havan-kund*. The nature of that fire is such that it purifies the entire atmosphere and prevents diseases. In *shloks* of Bhagwad Geeta, Yogeshwar Sri Krishna Maharaj states that Oh Arjun, when *Yajyen* is performed, the atmosphere is purified, which will in turn purify our food too.

Dr Kundanlal conducted an experiment taking twelve test tubes filled with food particles. He filled six of them with fresh air and rest with air generated from *agnihotra*. He found that food of the test tubes filled with air started decomposing much earlier than the food filled with the air of *agnihotra*. It proves that air gener-

ated by *agnihotra* is pure and further purifies the atmosphere.

According to *Atharvaved* mantra by performing *Yajyen*, the human beings protect themselves from all kinds of sufferings including diseases. *Yajyen* is basically performed by using wood of mango tree. A scientist named Trelle of France did experiments on *Yajyen*. He found that when the mango wood is burnt then a gas — formic aldehyde — is liberated, which destroys the harmful bacteria. Another scientist named Tautlik came to know that when *Yajyen* is performed with *samagri* containing raisins and black currants and if we stay inhale its smoke, the germs of typhoid and TB are destroyed.

Ingredients to prepare the samagri of *Yajyen*:

1. Honey, jaggery or raw sugar
2. Antibiotic herbs like gyol
3. Ghee and dry fruits
4. Fragrant materials like cardamom or dried petals of flowers

If people start performing *agnihotra* with Vedic mantras daily, he would surely protect himself, his family and the surroundings from all kinds of diseases and problems.

(The author is Swami Ram Swarup, Yogacharya, the Chief Editor of Ved Ishvareeya vani, a bi-annual Magazine.)

ITDC signs MoU with Gujarat to promote tourism



India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) Ltd, in an attempt to enhance the tourism growth in India signed an MoU on Thursday for providing consultancy services for innovative/decorative lighting and illumination of important monuments and sound and light show at important places in Gujarat.

It was signed by G Kamala Vardhana Rao, C&MD, ITDC, Jenu Devan, Commissioner of Tourism and Managing Director, Tourism Corporation of Gujarat in the presence of Union Minister of State for

Tourism, Prahlad Singh Patel, Gujarat Chief Minister, Vijay Rupani, senior officials from Gujarat Tourism department and Ministry of Tourism.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Prahlad Patel said, "There is a great scope for developing tourism in Gujarat for which the state government has developed many more new focussed sights to attract tourism. It may work with ITDC to promote and develop tourism through innovative and creative steps."

The event organised from Thursday to Saturday at

Dhordo, Kutch was to discuss the importance of Destination Management and Community Participation in the tourism sector. It involved speaker sessions by government officials, tourism industry and private sector entrepreneurs showcasing best practices/case studies from various states and Union Territories in the related field. The meeting aided in understanding the concepts and frameworks, approaches, challenges faced in implementation and impact generated by such initiatives on the society and the overall economy.

NTPC BAGS TWO AWARDS



NTPC has been awarded India's Best Workplace in Manufacturing 2020-Top 30 award in Mumbai. AN Verma, ED (HR) received the award along with CV Anand, RED (WR-I & SR). This year 142 organisations in the manufacturing sector undertook this

assessment. Based on the rigorous evaluation, GPTW has identified the Top 30 organisations among India's best Workplace in Manufacturing 2020.

The company has excelled in people's practices designed for their employees and the

feedback on creating a High Trust Culture from their employees.

It has also bagged the Central Board of Irrigation and Power (CBIP) 2020 award for outstanding performing utility in Thermal Power Sector. The award recognises the com-

pany's outstanding contribution by setting new benchmarks in generation and maintenance practices, excellence in engineering and use of latest State-of-the-art technologies and smart solutions.

Rattan Lal Kataria, Minister of State, Ministry of

Jal Shakti presented the award to Prakash Tiwari, director (operations). Prakash Mhaske, chairperson Central Electrical Authority (CEA), RK Jain, chairman, Central Water Commission and VK Kajaria, secretary, CBIP were present on the occasion.

AFP ■ MADRID

Better call Saul Ha la land

Níguez's early strike punish Liverpool on return to Wanda Metropolitano

Liverpool were the victims of an old-fashioned Atletico Madrid masterclass on Tuesday as Diego Simeone's side ground out a 1-0 win in Madrid to give themselves hope of reaching the Champions League quarter-finals.

Saul Niguez raised the roof at a bouncing Wanda Metropolitano by scoring in the fourth minute before Atletico's defence kicked in, suffocating the European champions and denying them a single shot on target.

"Tonight is one of those nights you don't forget," said Simeone. "We haven't gone through but we have beaten the best team in the world."

If Alvaro Morata had not slipped at the crucial moment, Atleti might even have taken a two-goal lead to Anfield, where they can expect an onslaught next month.

"We are not 5-0 down," said Jurgen Klopp. "We don't think it will be easy but as long as we can get 11 players in Liverpool shirts we will give everything we have. And for all the Liverpool fans that can get a ticket — welcome to Anfield."

If Liverpool remain favourites to go through, the roar from the Atleti fans at the final whistle, aimed at their fist-pumping players on the pitch, suggested Simeone's team now have belief.

Few had tipped them to keep this tie even alive for the second leg given their own stuttering form, in contrast to Liverpool, unbeaten in the Premier League, and gunning for a treble.

Jurgen Klopp said on Monday Atletico were a "results machine" but the temptation was to see his words as platitudes, not an accurate reflection of a side that sits 13 points behind La Liga leaders Real Madrid and had already lost six times this season.

Yet Atletico under Simeone have also become synonymous with upsetting the odds, just as they did when winning the Spanish title in 2014 and then twice reaching the Champions League final.

For all their failings this season, they summoned that spirit here to produce a throwback performance full of tenacity, resilience and guts that was always going to be needed to give them any chance of success.



He sprung a surprise by starting Thomas Lemar for the first time this year while Alvaro Morata and Diego Costa both returned from injury, the former from the start and the latter off the bench in the second half.

Liverpool, who began with their expected eleven, have blitzed numerous opponents with explosive starts but they were the ones rocking early on as Atletico snapped at their heels, pressed hard and relished being first to every loose ball.

They took the lead, aided by a hint

of fortune as Liverpool failed to clear the corner and the ball cannoned back off the foot of Fabinho for Saul to stab in from three yards.

On the sideline, Simeone beckoned his players to stay calm but they were celebrating in the corner while in the stands, the fans were delirious and given hope. Atletico were given a lead to defend and the rest of the game was largely a picture of Liverpool dominating the ball but failing to break down the 10 red and white shirts in front of them.

FIGURATIVELY

6 Since the start of 2018-19, no side has lost more UCL matches away from home than Liverpool (six — level with Crvena Zvezda)

5 Only Antoine Griezmann (6) has scored more goals in the CL knockout phase for Atlético Madrid than Saúl Níguez (5)

0 Atletico haven't conceded a shot on target vs Liverpool, the second team to get it after Napoli at San Paolo in October 2018 in Jurgen Klopp era for Liverpool in all competitions

0 Atletico have never lost at home under Diego Simeone in the Champions League knockout stages (W8 D4). In those 12 games, they've only conceded two goals

10 Erling Haaland is only the fifth player after 1958/59 — Just Fontaine (10); 1978/79 — Claudio Sulser (11); 2017/18 — Sadio Mané (10) & Roberto Firmino (10) to score 10 goals in their first season in the European Cup/CL

10 Erling Haaland is only the second teenager to score 10 CL goals, after Kylian Mbappé (13), and is the first teenager to score 10 in a single campaign in the competition

10 Erling Haaland has scored 10 CL goals in just seven appearances, reaching the tally four games quicker than any other player in the competition's history

10 Erling Haaland has scored 10 goals in his seven appearances for Borussia Dortmund; this is at least two more than any other player for a big-five European league club in all competitions since his debut for them in Jan

1 Erling Haaland is the first Borussia Dortmund player ever to score on his debut in the Bundesliga, DFB Pokal and Champions League

Erling's double gives Dortmund edge over PSG but Neymar strike keeps tie alive

AFP ■ DORTMUND

Teenage record-breaker Erling Braut Haaland scored twice as Borussia Dortmund sealed a 2-1 win over Paris Saint-Germain, for whom Neymar scored on his return to action, in Tuesday's Champions League last 16, first leg in Germany.

Forward Haaland took his tally to 11 goals in seven games since Dortmund paid Salzburg 20 million euros (\$22 million) for the 19-year-old with second-half goals either side of Neymar's equaliser.

Having also scored eight times for Salzburg in the group stage, Haaland now has 10 goals in just seven Champions League games this season.

"These are the moments you play football for. I really enjoyed it," beamed the Norwegian.

His performance left Kylian Mbappe and Neymar in the shade, with the latter struggling to truly make his mark having been kept on the sidelines for the last two weeks ahead of this game due to a rib injury.

However, the Brazilian superstar's away goal means PSG remain very much in contention to reach the quarter-finals after three consecutive exits in the last 16.

The presence of the world's most expensive player was a major boost for his team, after he missed last season's surprise last-16 loss to Manchester United with a foot injury.

He also sat out the second leg of their defeat by Real Madrid at the same stage in 2018.

However, Dortmund deserved the win as PSG's star-studded attack, with Angel Di Maria supporting Mbappe and Neymar, was repeatedly frustrated by the home side, for whom the midfield duo of Axel Witsel and Emre Can



regularly helped snuff out attacks.

There was little to separate the teams in the first half although Dortmund's English winger Jadon Sancho squandered one chance on the counter-attack and then forced a fine save from Keylor Navas just before the half-hour mark.

After the goalless first half, Dortmund poured forward and kept finding spaces to exploit down the flanks.

Dortmund's Swiss coach Lucien Favre then brought on Giovanni Reyna, who only turned 17 last November, for his Champions League debut midway through the second half.

Moments later Haaland got the breakthrough when he stabbed past Navas from close range after Thiago Silva had blocked a Raphael Guerreiro shot.

The game had now come to life, and with their German coach Thomas Tuchel frantically urging them on, PSG drew level six minutes later when Mbappe unpicked the Dortmund defence and presented Neymar with a straight-forward finish.

However, the scene was set for Haaland to continue his phenomenal scoring run with a stunning finish from the edge of the area following a Reyna pass.

"We didn't have enough possession, we made too many easy mistakes, we weren't smart enough and we lost the ball too early. It's difficult, but it's 2-1 and we still have a few games left to get back into the rhythm."
— THOMAS TUCHEL

"Of course it's a dangerous result, but we played well in both defence and attack. However, as things stand it's 2-1 to us."
— LUCIEN FAVRE

SINGLES

AL SADD BEAT SEPAHAN, DUHAIL SHOCKED
DOHA: Qatari sides had mixed luck in the Asian Champions League on Tuesday as Xavi's Al Sadd eased past Iran's Sepahan 3-0 in Doha while Al Duhail crashed to a 2-0 defeat against Saudi Arabia's Al Taawoun in Buraidah. Akram Alif opened the scoring while veteran Hassan al-Haydos scored a brace at the Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Stadium as the side coached by the former Barcelona captain grabbed their first win after having drawn against Saudi side Al Nassr last week.

CASILLAS TO END PLAYING CAREER
LISBON: Porto president Jorge Nuno Pinto da Costa said that Iker Casillas is set to retire, a day after the World Cup-winning captain announced he would run for the presidency of the Spanish Football Federation. Casillas had been expected to bring an end to a glittering playing career after making the announcement but has never confirmed that he was hanging up his boots. "Before announcing his candidacy, Iker Casillas came to see me to inform me of his decision to end his career," Pinto da Costa told Portuguese media on Tuesday.

PUJARA SIGNS UP WITH GLOUCESTERSHIRE
LONDON: India Test specialist Cheteshwar Pujara was on Wednesday signed up by Gloucestershire for the first six matches of the English County Championship. His stint will be from April 12 to May 22. "I am really excited to get the opportunity to represent Gloucestershire this season. The Club has a rich cricketing history, and this is a great opportunity to be a part of it and contribute to its success," Pujara said. The club took into consideration his ability to bat for long periods. He will bring his experience to a Gloucestershire side, which will be playing in Division One of the County Championship for the first time in over a decade.

10-YEAR-OLD HANSINI SET FOR ITTF DEBUT
CHENNAI: Following impressive performances on the national circuit, 10-year-old M Hansini is all set to feature in her maiden ITTF junior circuit event, Swedish Junior and Cadet Open, to be held in Orebro from February 19 to 23. It has been a memorable year for Class V student who bagged Bronze medal in cadet girls' singles at the 2019 National Table Tennis Championships and will start the upcoming season as India No1 in the U-12 category. Hansini has been placed in the Group 8 in junior girls' singles alongside Germany's Naomi Pranjkovic, Sweden's Hannah Holgersson and England's Amy Marriott.

INDIA WILL HOST 2022 AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP
KUALA LUMPUR: India will host the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup as the sport's continental body awarded the showpiece to the country with an aim to maximise the promotion of the game. It was felt that India, which will also have the experience of hosting the FIFA Women's U-17 World Cup later this year, was best placed among the three bidders - Chinese Taipei and Uzbekistan were the other competing candidates - to maximise the promotion of the women's game. The venues proposed by India - D Y Patil Stadium, Trans Stadia Arena and Fatorda Stadium - are also being used in the FIFA tournaments, the AFC said. The dates of the tournament are likely to be in late October and early November 2022 and the match schedule will be worked out keeping in mind the start of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.

B'DESH RETAIN MASHRAFE AS ODI CAPTAIN
DHAKA: Bangladesh pace bowler Mashrafe Murtaza will lead the country in the forthcoming three-match one-day international series against Zimbabwe despite uncertainty over his future. Mashrafe has not represented Bangladesh in any ODI since the ICC World Cup last year, and in January withdrew his name from a lucrative national team contract. But Bangladesh Cricket Board officials said he would skipper the side despite his apparent lack of commitment. "At this moment we don't have a substitute for a captain like Mashrafe," president Nazmul Hassan told reporters in Dhaka. "If he is not fit, that is another issue." Hassan said while Mashrafe's captaincy was vital to the team, it was also time for him to decide his future. "We have to decide about our next captain very soon," he said.

AGENCIES

Usual suspects need to be wary of lesser opponents

NEW DELHI: The Ranji Trophy quarterfinals begin across four venues today with usual suspects such as Saurashtra and Karnataka taking on the lesser teams capable of springing a surprise.

On paper, the most well contested quarterfinals should be between Saurashtra and Andhra in Ongole, Andhra Pradesh as both teams go into the knockouts from the elite cross pool.

Last year's runners-up Saurashtra are expected to go past Andhra, having shown solid form in the league stage to finish with three wins, four draws and a loss from eight games.

Seasoned pacer Jaydev Nadkani will be expected to fire once again, having taken 51 wickets this season at an average off 11.90, continuing his stellar form from last season. In the batting department, Sheldon Jackson has stepped up in the absence of Cheteshwar Pujara and is the leading scorer of the team with 605 runs at an average of 55.

Andhra go into the game after back-



to-back losses towards the end of the league stage. However, their rampaging run in the first half of the season, when they were leading the table, helped them

advance in the competition. They will rely a lot on in-form medium-pacer K V Sasiikanth and batsman Ricky Bhui in the must-win game.

In Jammu, the mighty Karnataka take on the spirited bunch of J&K players.

Karnataka finished third in the elite pool behind Gujarat and Bengal and scripted important wins over Tamil Nadu and Mumbai.

They play Group C top-pers J&K, who lost only to Haryana in the league stage. Captain Parvez Rasool has led from the front scoring 403 runs at 44.77 and 25 wickets at 14.56. Another player who has contributed massively to the success of the team is batsman Abdul Samad who has amassed 547 runs.

In Cuttack, a comfortable win is expected from Bengal against Odisha. Their confidence must be sky high following memorable victories over Rajasthan and Punjab in the last two

games. They chased down 320 against Rajasthan before beating Punjab in a low-scoring game on a difficult track in Patiala.

The seasoned Manoj Tiwary has been their go-to batsman and left-arm spinner Shahbah Ahmed their stand out bowler.

At the Sardar Patel Stadium in Valsad, hosts Gujarat would be overwhelming favourites against Goa who advanced from plate group having suffered relegation last year.

Gujarat made it to the last eight after topping the elite cross pool with five wins from eight matches and three draws.

Goa will have their hopes pinned on their leading run-scorer Amit Verma (791 runs) and SK Patel (751 runs) and would want them to play another crucial knocks in the marquee clash. But the quarterfinal will be a different ball game as they face a formidable Gujarat attack led by Roosh Kalaria, who has taken 30 wickets so far.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ashu, Aditya win Bronze

India's Ashu and Aditya Kundu won a bronze medal each in 67kg and 72kg Greco-Roman categories respectively on the second day of the Asian Wrestling Championships here on Wednesday.

Ashu beat Syria's Abdulkarim Mohammad Al-Hasan 8-1 while Kundu defeated Nao Kusaka of Japan 8-0 inside one and a half minutes in a lop-sided 72kg Bronze medal bout.

India has so far won four



medals in the championships, after Sunil Kumar's historic Gold in 87kg and Arjun Halakurki's Bronze

Saina advances to 2nd round but Prannoy loses

PTI ■ BARCELONA

India's Olympic Bronze medalist shuttler Saina Nehwal advanced to the women's singles second round of the \$170,000 Barcelona Spain Masters with a 21-16, 21-14 win over Germany's Yvonne Li here on Wednesday.

Sania took just 35 minutes to beat her opponent in the first round match.

Pranaav Jerry Chhopa and Sikki N Reddy also won their mixed doubles first round match against Denmark's Mathias Christiansen and Alexandra Boje 10-21, 21-16, 21-17.

However, H S Prannoy lost to Malaysian Daren Liew 18-21, 15-21 to bow out of the tournament.



Poker majority is game of skill

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The game of poker is majorly a game of skill which decides the winner says India Poker Championship 2020 winner Rubin Labroo, who won this year's championship which took place at Big Daddy Casino in Goa last month.

"Technically Poker is a mind game played with a lot of strategies. Obviously, luck is involved but a lot of it can be beaten by your skills and how good you understand how the game is. It's a very strategically motivated game," says Ruben who was introduced to the sport during his college days back in 2006.

Talking about the skills involved, he said: "It's a long term game and the result doesn't depend on what happens in one game."

"On a given day one might beat me but on the long term you will not be able to do so, that's the idea of a game. It's long term strategy you put in volume, numbers and over a period of time. If your math is strong and you are strategically better you will definitely beat the odds."

"In terms of skills edge, there is a lot of maths involved, selling and buying courses. There's a lot of studies involved, people study online, live and



books written on this and it's basically a statistical probability game. And also there is a lot of live tells that you can pick up on the table. Different kind of people drop hints via hand movements and this all understanding will come with experience.

The 2020 edition was his second appearance in the IPC and speaking about the experience of playing in it, he said: "I was playing in some other tournament before the IPC and was not in good touch, so I booked my ticket back home and decided to skip the event. But then on my friends' insistence, I decided to play and I am glad that I stayed back and won the tournament," he said.

Gunathilaka out of Windies ODIs

AFP ■ COLOMBO

All-rounder Danushka Gunathilaka will miss the three-match one-day international series against the West Indies due to injury, the cricket board said Wednesday.

The 28-year-old was excluded from the 15-member squad as a recurring back injury had worsened, a board official said.

He is replaced by Shehan Jayasuriya.

The first ODI is on Saturday in Colombo, while the second takes place in Hambantota on February 26.

The final will be held on March 1 in Kandy.

After the ODI series the sides will play two Twenty20 matches.

Squad: Dimuth Karunaratne (c), Avishka Fernando, Kusal Perera, Shehan Jayasuriya, Niroshan Dickwella, Kusal Mendis, Angelo Mathews, Dhananjaya de Silva, Thisara Perera, Dasun Shanaka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Lakshan Sandakan, Isuru Udana, Nuwan Pradeep and Lahiru Kumara.

We can put any team under pressure: Harman

PTI ■ SYDNEY

India captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Wednesday said her team has the ability to put pressure on any side in the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup if it stays in the right frame of mind.

Insisting that positivity is the biggest strength of this Indian team, Harmanpreet said they are eagerly waiting to face four-time champions and title holders Australia in the tournament opener tomorrow.

"The nerves do start to kick in because we are very excited about that opening game and we're looking positive in that," said Harmanpreet, who knows the city well after her stint with Sydney Thunder in the Women's Big Bash League.

"We are a side that can put pressure on any team, we just look to stay in the right mindset and play in the way we can because that is our biggest strength."

"In sport, sometimes you are in good form and others you are not. I know that everyone playing in this tournament will look to be positive, and that is good for our team," she added.

With less than two days remaining for their clash against Australia at the Sydney Showground, Harmanpreet said a slow track and a huge Indian diaspora augurs well for her side.

Kenin loses to Rybakina on WTA return

AFP ■ DUBAI

Sofia Kenin lost her first SWTA match since winning the Australian Open earlier this month as she went down 6-7 (2/7), 6-3, 6-3 to Elena Rybakina on Tuesday at the Dubai Championships.

American Kenin played a pair of non-Tour Fed Cup matches immediately after her Melbourne win over Garbine Muguruzza, who cut short Kim Clijsters' comeback on Monday.

The 21-year-old went down in just over two hours to her 19th-ranked opponent who stood 192nd in the world a year ago.

"There's a bit more pressure coming from my side



(after first Grand Slam win). But I've just got to try to manage it for the next tournaments," said Kenin. "I just didn't feel my game really well. I just made too many unforced errors, I didn't take my chances. I felt really off the whole match."

ISHANT, SHAW TO PLAY IN 1ST TEST

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

India captain Virat Kohli on Wednesday dropped enough hints to indicate that senior pacer Ishant Sharma and young opener Prithvi Shaw will be in the playing XI for the first Test against New Zealand at Basin Reserve.

If India's net session on Wednesday is taken into consideration, Wriddhiman Saha is starting as the wicketkeeper ahead of Rishabh Pant for the series opener beginning tomorrow.

Hanuma Vihari, team's designated No 6 batsman for away Tests, will be the fifth bowling option with Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and Ishant being three specialist pacers.

Ravichandran Ashwin is in the mix for the lone specialist spinner's spot though Ravindra Jadeja's all-round skills can't be ignored either.

Ishant, who was out for three weeks with ankle injury sustained during the Ranji Trophy game, bowled full tilt at the nets and even earned appreciation for troubling batsmen with his pace and bounce.

"He (Ishant) looked pretty normal and pretty similar to what he was bowling before the ankle injury. He is hitting good areas again and he has played (Test cricket) in New Zealand couple of times, so his



Prithvi Shaw and Mohammad Shami share a fun moment during India's practice session ahead of 1st Test BCCI/Twitter

experience will be useful to us. It was really good to see him bowling with pace and in good areas," Kohli said during media interaction.

The skipper also said in as many words that the team wouldn't like to change Shaw's natural stroke-play which was a good enough hint that Shubman Gill will have to warm the benches for now.

"Prithvi is a talented player and he has his own game and we want him to follow his instincts and play the way he does. Look, these guys have no baggage and are not desperate

to perform in any manner," the skipper said.

The skipper wants Shaw to take a leaf out of Mayank Agarwal's performance in Australia back in 2018-19 when he hit back to back half-centuries in Melbourne and Sydney.

"They don't have any nerves to do well overseas. Like a clear head with which Mayank played in Australia, Prithvi can do the same in New Zealand.

"A bunch of guys playing with fearlessness, something that can motivate the whole

team, gives us start that the team wants and not get intimidated by the opposition in any way."

The skipper downplayed India's below-par show in the three-match ODI series, especially that of Agarwal.

"Prithvi, I think you can call him relatively inexperienced and Mayank, I wouldn't call him that inexperienced because he has scored a lot of runs last year. So he understands what his game is like in Test cricket.

"I think sometimes in white ball cricket we try to do

too much but once you come into red ball cricket, you fall into that disciplined mode of batting, which obviously suits him much more at this stage."

While he didn't give an answer on the Saha-Pant debate, the burly Delhi keeper had precious little to do at the main nets and was seen spending more time doing his keeping drills and only got an opportunity to bat when the first team completed its routines.

New Zealand are likely to go with an all-pace attack but the Indian captain wants to stick to his team's strengths which is play with one spinner in the four-pronged bowling attack.

"If it had been a Johannesburg pitch, I could have said it's a possibility (to play four pacers) but our team has that skill that we can bowl out other teams with only three fast bowlers," he sounded confident.

"But you need one world class skillful spinner, who can take wickets on any pitch. We won't copy the home team. We would rather figure out what is the most lethal combination, which gives us balance," he added.

"As a bowling group it's better than the one that came to NZ last time and that is why we have got so many teams all out in last two and half years. We would like to repeat that here also," Kohli added.

Will play all formats for at least 3 more years: Kohli



Virat Kohli attempts to take catch during India's practice session ahead of 1st Test BCCI

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

India captain Virat Kohli is preparing himself for a "rigorous three years" of playing all three formats after which he might reassess his workload amid a "transition phase" setting in.

The world's premier batsman is looking at the "bigger picture" in Indian cricket with two T20 and one 50-over World Cup in the next three years after which he might decide on playing two of the three formats.

"My mindset is on the bigger picture as I prepare myself for a rigorous three years from now and after that we might have a different conversation," Kohli replied when asked if he is having second thoughts about quitting at least one format after the 2021 World T20 in India.

"It's not a conversation you can hide away from in any manner. It is around eight years now that I have been playing 300 days a year, which includes travelling and practice sessions. And intensity is right up there all the time. It does take a toll on you," the Indian captain was forthright in his reply.

The skipper understands his presence and peak performance is crucial till the 2023 World Cup after which he understands that the next phase of transition will set in.

"I can keep going on with the same intensity and also understand that the team wants a lot of my contribution in the next two to three years, so that I can ease into another transition that we faced five-six years ago," he said referring to the retirements of Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman.



Indian pacers Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma & Mohammad Shami during nets BCCI

Ishant adds new dynamic to Indian bowling attack: Taylor

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

A fit-again Ishant Sharma will add a fresh dimension to India's bowling attack, says seasoned New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor, who foresees trouble for his team if it focusses only on tackling Jasprit Bumrah during the upcoming Test series.

Taylor is only two days away from becoming the first cricketer to play 100 games across formats. Less than three weeks away from his 36th birthday, he has already competed in 231 ODIs and 100 T20I.

"I think if we just look at

Bumrah, we are in trouble. I think their whole bowling line-up is fantastic. Obviously, Sharma coming back will bring new dynamics to the team," Taylor told reporters.

Ishant is returning to the Indian squad after recovering from an ankle injury sustained during a Ranji Trophy clash last month.

"They have got a world-class batting line-up as well and we have to get through that. But they are the No 1 team in the world for a reason and we know we have to be on our game to be successful against them," he added.

HENRY CALLED AS WAGNER'S COVER

WELLINGTON: New Zealand on Wednesday called in pacer Matt Henry for the first Test against India as cover for Neil Wagner, who is awaiting the birth of his first child.

Wagner is among New Zealand's senior pacers alongside Trent Boult and Tim Southee. The left-arm fast bowler has an impressive record in Tests, having taken 204 wickets in 47 games at an average of 26.63.

"Neil Wagner will not be joining the squad in Wellington ahead of the first Test as he and his wife Lana await the birth of their first child. Wagner will remain in Tauranga until the birth. Matt Henry joins the squad tonight as cover," the Black Caps tweeted.

Though Kyle Jamieson is in line to make a Test debut, Henry, who has played 12 Tests and 52 ODIs, is also in the mix.

Test C'ship pinnacle of all ICC tourneys

WELLINGTON: India captain Virat Kohli on Wednesday rated the World Test Championship as the biggest among all the ICC events in the wake of revelations that the game's governing body is planning to have more flagship white ball tournaments during the next eight-year cycle from 2023-2031.

According to ICC's proposed 2023-2031 Future Tours Programme (FTP) cycle, a proposed T20 Champions

Cup is earmarked for 2024 and 2028 and an ODI Champions Cup in 2025 and 2029, alongside the T20 World Cups in 2026 and 2030, and the ODI World Cups in 2027 and 2031.

"I think World Test Championship as an ICC tournament should be right up there. All the other tournaments for me they start under that. This is probably the biggest of them all as every team wants to make it to the final at the

Lord's. We are no different.

"We are in that zone. We want to make sure that we qualify as soon as we can and be in that frame of mind to hopefully win that (championship)," said the Indian skipper ahead of first Test against New Zealand.

Kohli has no doubts that World Test Championship has added a context to the traditional format making the contests more exciting with points

on offer.

"It has made Test cricket more exciting and that's something we have experienced as a side although we haven't had too many games away from home. Couple of games in the West Indies and we haven't had a tour of Australia as a part of Test Championship. This is our first away tour since the start of home season," said Kohli.

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