

**OPINION 8**  
NO GROWTH  
IN THIS STORY

**WORLD 12**  
HERBAL REMEDIES FOR VIRUS  
SPARK DEBATE IN CHINA

**SPORT 15**  
DJOKOVIC WINS  
EIGHTH AUS OPEN

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TAYLOR NOT  
READY TO  
HAVE KIDS  
13 VIVACITY



## India ready to fight China virus

Suspends e-visa facility temporarily for Chinese; 2nd case reported in Kerala

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After reporting a second confirmed case of coronavirus from Kerala on Sunday, India escalated its security measures to deal with the deadly outbreak that has so far killed more than 305 people in China, infected over 14,000 others and spread to 25 countries. India temporarily suspended e-visa facility for Chinese travellers and foreigners residing in China after evacuating 647 Indians and seven Maldivian citizens by special flights from coronavirus-hit Wuhan city.

The Government on Sunday issued a fresh travel advisory, urging everyone to refrain from travel to virus-hit China and that travellers on return could be quarantined. "Also, anyone with travel history of China since January 15, 2020 and from now on could be quarantined," said the Government statement here.

According to the Central Government, the second patient has a travel history from virus-hit China and he has been isolated in a hospital.

Confirming the second case, Kerala Health Minister KK Shailaja said the condition of the student, currently admitted to the isolation ward at the Alapuzha Medical College Hospital, was "stable".

Earlier in the day, the minister said in Kollam that the State was awaiting the results of tests conducted on the patient from the National Institute of



Medics screen Indians after they were brought by an Air India aircraft from China's coronavirus-hit city of Wuhan, at the airport in New Delhi on Sunday

PTI

Virology (NIV) in Pune.

"Now, we have got the test report of the patient. There is a positive case in Alapuzha," she told reporters here on Sunday evening after chairing a high-level meeting with senior health department officials. The first patient, a woman medical student, is in an isolation ward at the Thrissur medical college hospital.

"We are trying to ensure that the virus does not spread. The two patients, who have tested positive for the virus, are stable. Their condition is not serious. But we are monitoring them closely," she said.

Till date, 1,793 people who travelled from coronavirus-hit countries have been identified and placed under surveillance in Kerala. Of this, 70 people

have been admitted in selected isolation facilities and 1,723 are under home isolation, a State medical bulletin said.

Meanwhile, the Indian Embassy in Beijing said, "Due to certain current developments, travel to India on e-visas stands temporarily suspended with immediate effect. This applies to holders of Chinese passports and applicants of

other nationalities residing in the People's Republic of China. Holders of already issued e-visas may note that these are no longer valid."

"All those who have a compelling reason to visit India may contact the Embassy of India in Beijing or the Indian consulates in Shanghai or Guangzhou, as well as the Indian Visa Application

### COMBATING CORONAVIRUS

- Air India's jumbo B747 made two flights to Wuhan city and evacuated 647 persons over the last two days
- India reports second case of coronavirus
- "Also, anyone with travel history of China since January 15, 2020 and from now on could be quarantined," said the Government statement
- 1,793 people who travelled from coronavirus-hit countries have been identified and placed under surveillance in Kerala
- Till Sunday, 58,658 passengers from 445 flights have been screened
- WHO says testing of only one swab sample is enough, as against the earlier two, in suspected coronavirus cases

Centres in these cities," it said.

An Air India's jumbo B747 made two flights to Wuhan city and evacuated 647 persons over the last two days. "Periodic checkups are being done as per medical protocol. All tests are negative till now. Food, bed and other basic requirements are provided. Sufficient amount of medicines are also kept at the centre.

Continued on Page 4

## Centre presses for early hanging of 4 Nirbhaya rapists

HC says will pass order after parties end arguments

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Seeking quashing of the death warrants suspension against the four convicts of the Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case, the Centre on Sunday told the Delhi High Court that the four death row convicts are "not entitled" to any more time asserting that the credibility of the judiciary and its own power to execute death sentence are at stake.

After a lengthy argument by the Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and the defence counsels, Justice Suresh Kait of the Delhi High Court who heard the Centre's petition challenging stay on the execution of the four death row convicts, reserved the order. Justice Kait said the court will pass an order after all the parties concluded their arguments.

Solicitor General Mehta, representing the Centre and the Delhi Government which have sought setting aside of a trial court order staying the execution of the convicts, said, "There is a deliberate, calculated and well thought of design to frustrate mandate of law by the convicts who were testing



the patience of the nation".

Senior advocate Rebecca John, representing convict Mukesh Kumar, contended that since the four were sentenced to death by a common order, they have to be executed together and cannot be "singled out". "Let me concede I have delayed the process, I am a worst person, I have committed a horrible crime which is unimaginable, still I am entitled to Article 21 (right to life) of the Constitution," John submitted.

During his arguments, Mehta contended that convict Pawan Gupta's move of not filing a curative or a mercy petition is a deliberate, calculated inaction. He said there was a deliberate delay on the part of the convicts and a prompt reaction to their pleas by the judicial and executive system.

The law officer said by the trial court's interpretation of Rules, if convict Pawan Gupta chooses not to file mercy plea, then nobody could be hanged.

Continued on Page 4

## AAP seeks FIR, ban on Yogi campaign

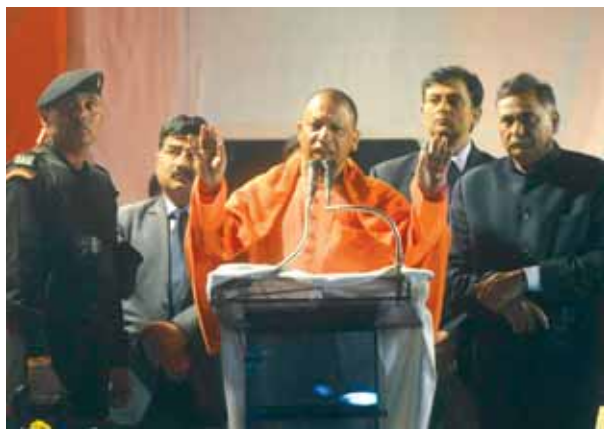
STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday asked the Election Commission to ban Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath from campaigning in the national Capital over his alleged provocative speeches and sought registration of FIR against him.

Responding to Yogi's speech, AAP Rajya Sabha MP and senior leader Sanjay Singh said it has been 48 hours since the AAP has sought time from the Election Commission to meet them but the same has not been granted.

"Issueless and leaderless BJP plans to spoil the elections in Delhi. The problems created during the election campaigns testify this. Two Union Ministers sowed the seeds of hatred and violence in Delhi. Influenced by these leaders, their followers brought guns to Delhi and fired at people", he said.

Attacking Delhi Police, he said unfortunately it watched such unwanted instances of violence silently and indifferently. "Yogi has made the entire Uttar Pradesh sick. Nearly 60 children died in his home town



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during an election campaign meeting for the upcoming Delhi Assembly polls, at Badarpur in New Delhi on Sunday

PTI

due to lack of oxygen in the ICU. Thousands of children died due to various diseases in UP. Television channels reported that in Sonbhadra in UP that one packet of milk mixed with one bucket of water and served to children as part of their mid-day meal," he said.

Singh further said Yogi came in Delhi and talked about some issues to divide people.

The AAP has demanded banning Yogi from campaigning after he echoed in the line

of BJP MP Anurag Thakur's "Goli Maro...Yogi had reportedly said, "Boli se nahi to goli se maan hie jaayega", during an election rally in outer Delhi on Friday. The CM warned those attacking the Kanwariyas. Targeting the BJP, he said it has no issue for Assembly polls and in absence of issues, BJP leaders resorted to divisive tactics and speeches in order to spoil the electoral debate and polarise the electorate.

Continued on Page 4

## Hindu outfit leader shot dead during morning walk in UP, 4 cops suspended

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Unidentified miscreants shot dead Vishwa Hindu Mahasabha International president Ranjeet Bachchan and also injured his cousin when duo were on the morning walk on Sunday barely a couple of kilometres from the high-security Uttar Pradesh legislature complex in the heart of the State Capital.

Saffron-clad Ranjeet Bachchan, 40, who had founded the Vishwa Hindu Mahasabha, was shot in the head and his cousin Aditya Srivastava injured in the attack by an unidentified assailant who also snatched their mobile phones, according to Joint Commissioner of Police Naveen Arora.

The attacker had covered himself in a shawl and was on foot, police said quoting eyewitnesses. Four police personnel, including a sub-inspector, were suspended for alleged laxity and a case has been registered at Hazratganj police station here in connection with the incident which occurred near the Collectorate building, days after Lucknow came under the police commission-



An undated photo of Uttar Pradesh unit chief of Antarrashtriya Hindu Mahasabha Ranjeet Bachchan

PTI

er system with an aim to improve law and order.

Later, police released CCTV footage showing a suspect and announced a cash reward of ₹50,000 for providing information, a senior official said. According to Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha president Swami Chakrapani, Bachchan was also the working president of the outfit's Uttar Pradesh unit.

Continued on Page 4

## Pak's locust army to intensify raid on India

Pak declares national emergency; till now locusts have ruined 4L ha crops in India

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

With Pakistan declaring a national emergency on Saturday, the locust outbreak in India is likely to intensify in the coming months.

The Locusts Warning Organisation (LWO) of the Ministry of Agriculture estimated that around 3.50-4 lakh hectare crops in various districts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh have been affected in 2019-20. The damage caused by locust attacks in 2019-20 is believed to be one of the worst in India. Crops of mustard, cumin and wheat have been devastated in Rajasthan and Gujarat, affecting lakhs of farmers. In Rajasthan, the worst hit districts are Jaisalmer, Barmer, Jodhpur, Jalore, Hanumangarh, Ganganagar, Bikaner and Sirohi.

South Sudan, Uganda, Oman, Saudi Arabia and



Southern Iran, among other countries are also likely to see robust locust attack in the coming months, threatening agriculture-based livelihoods.

According to a report by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the locusts are expected to grow over the coming months due to unusual and extreme weather and powerful cyclones.

According to locust warning system, the locusts entered Rajasthan through Pakistan and then spread across Banaskantha, Patan and Mehsana districts in north

Gujarat. Currently, locusts were found in Jaisalmer, Barmer, Bikaner, Jalore, Jodhpur, Pali, Sirohi, Sriganganagar of Rajasthan and Banaskantha and Bhuj-Kutch of Gujarat area. Over 3.68 lakh hectare areas have been sprayed so far in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh.

The locust warning system falling under the Agriculture Ministry has blamed Pakistan for this year's attack, saying it failed to conduct control operations successfully. "Ecological conditions are not favourable for locust breeding in summer.

Continued on Page 4

### CAPSULE

#### 2 FIRE IN AIR AT JAMIA, FLEE; NOBODY HURT

Delhi: An incident of firing was reported at Jamia Millia Islamia late night on Monday. Two people on a red scooty fired in the air and fled away, said Jamia Coordination Committee in a release, adding that nobody was injured.

#### POLICE SHOOT MAN IN LONDON TERROR INCIDENT

London: A man was shot dead by armed Scotland Yard officers in south London on Sunday in a terror-related stabbing incident which injured at least 2 people.

#### EC SHUNTS DCP AFTER SHAHEEN, JAMIA FIRING

New Delhi: The EC shunted out Delhi's southeast DCP Chinmoy Biswal, citing the "ongoing situation" in the area that saw incidents of firing at Shaheen Bagh and Jamia this week.

## Govt looks for liberal Mughal Dara's grave

### Archaeologists team set up

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Modi Government has set up a seven member-panel consisting of senior archaeologists to locate the grave of "liberal Muslim" Mughal Prince Dara Shikoh (1615-1659), who is said to be buried somewhere in Humayun's Tomb in the national Capital.

There are around 150 graves of the clan of the Mughal rulers in the historical monument and the grave of Shikoh is said to be one among them.

The graves of many members of the Mughal clans have already been identified at the "mortality of the Mughal dynasty". The move to identi-

fy the grave of the Mughal Prince comes close on the heels of a symposium named "Dara Shikoh: A hero of the Indian syncretist traditions", held recently in Delhi. Among others, it was addressed by Krishna Gopal, joint general secretary of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

The Mughal Prince is touted by the RSS as a liberal Muslim who was said to be rooted in the "Indian knowledge tradition — a truth-seeker who tried finding commonalities between the Hindu and Islamic spiritual traditions — and initiated a healthy debate and a dialogue between the two faiths".

The panel constituted by



the Union Culture Ministry last week has been given three months to locate the grave of Shikoh on the premises. The other members of the panel headed by ASI Director (Monument) TJ Alone include RS Bisht, Sayeed Jamal Hassan, KN Dikshit, BR Mani, Mohammed KK, Satish Chandra and BM Pandey, senior archaeologists and ASI officials.

Shikoh is known for his mastery in Sanskrit and had translated the Bhagavad Gita into Persian language.

"We have been asked to submit the report within next three months," said Sayeed Jamal Hassan, ex-director of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and one of the members of the panel.

He said "temporary records and a biography of

Shahjahanama compiled by Muhammad Saleh Kamboh, a court historian during the reign of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, has dedicated at least two pages detailing last days of Shikoh, on how he was brutally murdered and buried somewhere at the historical monument built by the wife of Humayun in her husband's memory."

An Islamic inscription has been written on Shikoh's grave, as per the epic, said Hassan.

French historian Jean Filliozat in his book has written that Shikoh's Samudra Sangama (The Confluence of Oceans), is the most important text for the comparison of sufism with Indian doctrines and spiritual practices.

Shikoh's greatest literary achievement was the translation of 52 Upanishads from

Sanskrit into Persian, titled Surr-i-Akbar (The Great Secret) and, in some manuscripts, Surr-ul-asrar (The Secret of Secrets). He was the eldest son and heir-apparent of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan.

According to the Shahjahanama, after Aurangzeb defeated his brother Dara Shikoh in 1657 in the war for the control of the Mughal empire, he brought the latter to Delhi in chains and paraded him all over the city. Shikoh's head was then cut off and sent to Agra Fort where his father had been imprisoned in a Fort overlooking the Taj Mahal he had built for his wife Mumtaz. Aurangzeb took over the reins of the Mughal Empire. Dara's remains were buried in an unidentified grave somewhere at Humayun's Tomb.

# Cong manifesto promises 300 units free power

CHANDAN PRAKASH ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to counter AAP freebies, Delhi Congress listed lucrative promises such as providing unemployment allowances up to ₹7,500, making Delhi India's first electric vehicles city, free coaching to 'Economic Weaker Sections' (EWS) students, 300 units free electricity and enacting Jan Lokpal Bill within six months in its manifesto released on Sunday.

The manifesto presented by Delhi Congress president Subhash Chopra, deputy leader in the Rajya Sabha Anand Sharma and manifesto committee chairman Ajay Maken. The party promised to provide unemployment allowance for ₹5,000 and post graduation ₹7,500 under 'Yuva Swabhiman Yojana' besides skill training to get them job.

It will also challenge the constitutional validity of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in the Supreme Court under article 131 of Indian Constitution. The party will



Senior Congress leaders Anand Sharma, Ajay Maken and Delhi Congress chief Subhash Chopra among others release Delhi Congress manifesto on Sunday  
Ranjana Dimri | Pioneer

pass a resolution after coming to power and demand the centre to withdraw it. "The act is against the basic spirit of our constitution. The Congress will not implement the National Register of Citizens (NRC)

and the National Population Register (NPR) in Delhi if voted to power in Delhi," it said.

The party announced many schemes to attract urban poor. It will provide one litre

edible oil at ₹20 and three kg of pulses at ₹25 per kg to each family comes under below poverty level.

In order to conserve water, the Congress will also launch a flagship water tariff scheme

wherein a cash-back of ₹30 paise per litre will be provided. "The residents will be provided cash-back if they use water less than 20,000 litre. They will be given 30 paise per saving each litre. The money will

be credited directly in to their bank account," it said.

The manifesto has given special attention to youth, unemployment, education, health, transport and environment. In order to attract slum voters, it also promised to regularize all unauthorised colonies and to spend ₹35,000 Cr in five years for carrying out various development works.

The Congress will launch 'Sheila Pension Yojana' under which senior citizens, persons with disabilities and transgender will be given ₹5,000 per month. To ensure education of girls, the party will provide free education to them in schools, colleges and universities from nursery to doctorate degree.

The manifesto also promised to set aside 25 per cent to combat pollution and improving public transport. It will also ensure the enforcement of the detailed action plan to fight pollution and protect environment happens strictly and in a time bound manner.

It will bring 30 per cent of Delhi's area under green cover and ensure that Delhi becomes

zero waste and garbage free. Also, it said that school students aged 12 to 16 would be encouraged to volunteer to be Delhi's 'Environment Ambassadors', they will help in keeping the city clean and green and outstanding 'Environment Ambassadors' shall be felicitated by the Chief Minister and Congress Government from time to time.

Congress will implement a proper dust management plan and work to reduce carcinogenic dust particles in Delhi's air-shed. To rejuvenate, accumulate and protect Delhi's water bodies, Congress will launch a comprehensive 'Jal Sanrakshan Mission'.

Congress president Chopra said that Congress will also give 33 per cent reservation in government jobs for women, besides offering free education to girls under the 'Ladli Scheme' up to PhD level, again to emulate the Punjab model.

Chairman of the Manifesto Committee Ajay Maken said that Congress' social welfare schemes have been included after working out their finan-

cial viability-like unemployment allowance and the pension scheme for senior citizens. "The unemployment allowances have been modeled on the patterns of Congress-ruled States Punjab and Chattisgarh, while some other points in the manifesto have also been drawn from other Congress-ruled States, like Madhya Pradesh," he added.

Besides, the Congress will construct ten super speciality hospitals in Delhi in next five years and add 5,000 beds in existing hospitals.

The manifesto also said that fares of the Delhi Metro will be subsidised for women, students and senior citizens. A subsidy of ₹300 per month will be provided to students through direct benefit transfer.

He said that Education and Sheila Pension Yojna are the other areas in which the party is determined to make a qualitative difference.

Chopra said that all unauthorised colonies will be regularised and "we will spend ₹35,000 Cr in five years for their upliftment.

# Poll body issues sankalp patra to encourage voters

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to encourage the people of Delhi to cast their votes, the Delhi poll body has started an initiative in association with the education departments and all the concerned civic authorities to maximise the number of voter turnout in the upcoming elections.

Under the initiative, a resolution letter will be distributed to all the students in schools through which they would persuade their parents to cast their votes on the day of polling.

Currently, around 36 lakh sankalp patras have been issued to the concerned departments of Education. The departments has distributed these to the schools under their authority and will submit the report to the elec-



tion office on Tuesday. "Sankalp patra is a resolution letter which is distributed to the students by their

schools. The students through this are being encouraged to persuade their parents that they will cast their votes with-

out fail. The parents in return too promise their children that they will cast their votes and will also cajole the eligi-

ble voters of their family, friends and neighbours to vote. Such initiative involves the emotional stuff of parents to their children and stimulates them to fulfill their promise and exercise their right to vote," said an official.

Officials also added that the education department has always played a vital role in spreading voters' awareness through their students by the means of organising rallies, competitions and so on. The motto behind this venture is "No voter to be left behind".

The much awaited assembly elections in the national capital will be held on 8th February and the results will be declared on 11th February. A total number of 1,67,85,613 voters will cast their vote on the polling day, out of which 81,05,236 are male voters, 66,80,277 female voters and 869 transgenders.

SHAHEEN BAGH

# Election officials, police meet to discuss situation

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the ongoing anti-CAA protests in the South East Delhi, the district poll officials and police authorities held a meeting to take stock of the situation in Shaheen Bagh ahead of the Assembly elections scheduled on February 8.

A meeting was held on Saturday evening at the Shaheen Bagh Police Station. However, due to a firing incident near the protest site, some of the officers could not join. So, we sat and discussed the situation afterwards," said a senior poll official deployed in Okhla constituency.

A 25 year old Kapil Gujjar had fired two rounds in the air at Shaheen Bagh before being

taken into custody on Saturday. Shaheen Bagh has been the epicentre of protests against the country's new citizenship law and the incident had created panic among people.

The polling officials said the elections will be held smoothly and there was nothing to worry about following the protest as the 'authorities are extra vigilant'. "The situation is being assessed across the city on a daily basis," he added.

Saturday's firing incident came two days after a juvenile fired a pistol at a group of anti-CAA protesters near the Jamia University in which a student was injured.

Last week, Delhi CEO Ranbir Singh also had visited the

area to assess the situation and preparation for upcoming assembly elections in the national capital. He said there was no obstruction in areas where polling will held on February 8 of the current year.

"Police forces and election machinery are on 'extra vigil' and assessing the situation all the time across the national capital. Shaheen Bagh falls in Okhla constituency," said the official.

The anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protests in the national Capital and the agitation at Shaheen Bagh, which has been going on for nearly 50 days, has become the focal point among the political parties and has been converted into a poll issue.

# RRTS gets ₹2,487 cr boost in Budget 20-21

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a major boost to Regional Connectivity in National Capital Region (NCR), the Union Government in its budget presented on Saturday has allocated ₹2,487 crores to country's first Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS). The Government has previously allocated ₹824 crore to the RRTS implementing agency National Capital Regional Transport Corporation (NCRTC) in the last budget.

According to a senior NCRTC official, at present the Civil Construction of the first RRTS Corridor, that is, Delhi - Ghaziabad - Meerut corridor is in full swing and piling and pier works are being done on the 17 km priority section between Sahibabad to Duhai including stations Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, Guldahar and Duhai.

"Out of the eight identified RRTS corridors to connect various NCR towns with high-speed rail, three have been prioritized for implementation in Phase-1 by the Planning Commission appointed Task Force, these are Delhi-



Ghaziabad-Meerut, Delhi-Gurgaon-SNB-Alwar and Delhi-Panipat," said the official.

"The Delhi - Ghaziabad - Meerut RRTS corridor will be immensely beneficial in curbing pollution in the region. The high-speed rail will promise to cover the distance between Meerut and New Delhi in less than 60 minutes," said the official.

NCRTC is a joint venture of the Government of India (50 percent) and State Governments of Haryana (12.5 percent), NCT Delhi (12.5 percent), Uttar Pradesh (12.5 percent) and Rajasthan (12.5 percent).

# AAP slams BJP over personal attacks on CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Senior AAP leader and candidate Sfrom Rajinder Nagar Raghav Chadha lashed out at BJP leaders and its Chief Ministers' inability to address the queries of the common people and resorting to personal attacks and abusive campaigns against the Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

"In Delhi elections, BJP does not fight with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) but with the common people of Delhi. Abuses and personal attacks insult and defame the people of Delhi, not CM Kejriwal," he said.

"For the last 5 years, BJP leaders did not even pay any attention to the plight of the people of Delhi but suddenly they focused all their attention on Delhi. In all their rallies, they are

targeting Kejriwal, making fun of his health and even personal remarks are made on his appearance, on his family members. BJP is resorting to dirty politics in these elections," he alleged.

Chadha said "BJP right now is so baffled because they are not directly contesting with AAP but with every common man and woman in Delhi. I want to welcome all these leaders who have come to Delhi to campaign but also want to ask them why they are afraid of answering people's questions."

"The reality is that people of Delhi are not at all impressed with these BJP leaders and you may go in any corner of Delhi, even at their public meetings, people can be heard repeating — Acche Beete panch saal, lagey raho Kejriwal," he said.

# 4 MEMBERS OF MEWAT-BASED GANG HELD IN PUSHP VIHAR AFTER BRIEF EXCHANGE OF FIRE

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Four members of a Mewat-based gang allegedly possessing illegal arms were arrested by the Special Cell of Delhi Police after a brief exchange of fire, officials said on Sunday.

Amin (33), Warish (20), Mustkeen (25), all residents of Haryana and Subba (25), a resident of Rajasthan, were held near Sector-7 of Pushp Vihar on the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday, they said. "We received information about the movement of Amin along with his associates in Delhi-NCR in their tempo to commit a robbery at Pushp

Vihar. A team was deployed to track their movements," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) P S Kushwah said. Sensing police presence, the driver of the tempo increased the speed of his vehicle but it hit the gate of a residential colony in Pushp Vihar following which Amin and his associates came out and fired at the police team, he said.

In retaliation, the policemen also opened fire in which Amin sustained bullet injuries on his legs, he said.

The accused were overpowered and disarmed by the police personnel, the DCP said, adding that Amin was immediately taken to Safdarjung Hospital.

# Locals stage protest against Kalindi Kunj road blockade

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Challenging the Anti-Citizenship Act (CAA) protesters who occupied Road number 13, a group of local residents staged a demonstration on Sunday demanding removal of barricades from the road connecting Noida with Kalindi Kunj. Displaying placards and posters, the protesters, including women, raised slogans such as "Jai Shree Ram", "Vande Matram" and "Khali Karao Shaheen Bagh wallo ko".

Senior Delhi Police officials who were present on the spot, managed to persuade them to call off their sit in and they vacated the place by noon. "We spoke to them at length and they agreed to leave the place and the area is peaceful now," said Chinmoy Biswal, the DCP of Southeast district.

The protesters demanded that the people, who have been sitting on dharna there for over a month to protest against the amended citizenship act, should clear the stretch as the commuters are facing difficulties.

Joint Commissioner of Police (Southern Range) Devesh Srivastava and Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Chinmoy Biswal and many other senior police officials were present at the protest site monitoring the situation to ensure no untoward incident takes place. The officers deployed on the area were seen trying to negotiate with the protestors and asking them to maintain peace.

"It is enough now, the residents of this area want their streets and roads to be cleared as it is causing inconvenience for the school children and office goers. The school children and office goers are facing difficulties to reach their destination since last one month due to this ongoing protest against the CAA," said a resident of Shaheen Bagh area.

While another resident of the Jasola area said, "These days we are reaching our office and work very late due to this protest. Also, due to the protest, the business is going in loss because the public is not coming to the area due to the closure of roads.

"Earlier, the residents were somehow crossing the roads by entering the



protest site but now after the firing incidents took place in the area, checking has been increased and even our relative does not want to visit our house. Moreover, the e-rickshaw and auto-rickshaw drivers also refuse to enter the area. One should have their opinion but what about the commuters and common people, if protesting your fundamental right then doesn't we have the right to move and live freely," says a resident of Sukhdev Vihar.

The protesters who were detained

and asked by the police to vacate the area by the police said, "These people are protesting for the last one month and the police did not remove them but we came here for one day and they are forcing us to leave the area. The board examinations are nearing and the office goes getting late daily. What only they the right to protest for their rights? Is commuting freely not our rights," rued another protester. About 52 people were initially detained from the protest site but were released shortly, police said.

# Court sends man held for firing at Shaheen Bagh to 2-day police custody

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A court has sent Kapil Gujjar, arrested for firing in the air at southeast Delhi's Shaheen Bagh area during a protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), to a two-day police custody on Sunday. Kapil was produced before Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Vijeta Singh Rawat. On Saturday, he had fired two rounds in the air at Shaheen Bagh, where anti-CAA protests are being held for over a month now.

After being overpowered by police personnel, Kapil had chanted "Jai Shri Ram" and said, "hamare desh me aur kisi ki nahi chalegi, sirf Hindoon ki chalegi (only Hindus shall have a say in our country, no one else)," as he was taken into custody by the Delhi Police.

**NOTICE**  
I Smt. Jaswant Kaur D/o Shri Mukhtyar Singh inform all concerned that I have been married no 4443553 Rank Sepoy Name Pritam Singh Son of Shri Sohan Singh R/o VPO Handiaya Tehsil Barnala Distt Sangrur State Punjab on 15.06.1968 at Punjab. My aadhar card number is 569209100869. This is certified by me that I am (Jaswant Kaur) is illiterate, my date of birth is 10.02.1950.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
It is known to all that I, Rakesh Chugh son of Late N. Parkash, R/o Flat No.01, Navmiti Apartments, I.P. Extension, Patparganj, Delhi-110092, am GPA Holder of my son Sh. Dheeraj Chugh regarding Residential Flat No.2006, 20th Floor, Tower-R, Amrapali Sapphire-II, Plot No.GH-003, Sector-45, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar-U.P. The original Allotment Letter by the Builder M/s Amrapali Sapphire Developers Pvt.Ltd., Flat Buyer Agreement between M/s Amrapali Sapphire Developers Pvt.Ltd. and Mr. Dheeraj Chugh, Demand Letters total 7 Numbers and Payment Receipts total 12 Numbers has been lost/misplaced anywhere and could not be traced till date. If the said documents are found, I shall never mislead the same.  
RAKESH CHUGH

**RAGHUNATH INTERNATIONAL LIMITED**  
CIN No.: L52312UP1994PLC022559  
Registered Office: Mandana Bithoor Road, Village Choudairpur, Bithoor, Kanpur-209201  
Corporate Office: 6926, Jaipuria Mills, Clock Tower, Subzi Mandi, Delhi-110007  
E-mail: rgs.secretarial@rediffmail.com, Website: www.raghunathintltd.com

**NOTICE**  
Pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, Notice is hereby given that a Meeting of Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on **Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2020, at 4:30 P.M.** at the Corporate office of the company inter-alia to consider and approve the Un-audited Financial Results of the Company for the quarter and nine months ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2019.  
This information is also available on the Company's website at [www.raghunathintltd.com](http://www.raghunathintltd.com) and on the Stock Exchange website at [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com).  
Further, in accordance with the SEBI (Prevention of Insider Trading) Regulations, 2015 and the Company's Code of Conduct for Prevention of Insider Trading, the Trading Window for dealing in the Company's securities was closed from Wednesday 01<sup>st</sup> January, 2020 and will open 48 hours after the said unaudited financial results are declared to the Stock Exchanges.

For Raghunath International Limited  
Sd/ (G.N. Choudhary)  
DIN: 00012883  
Director

Place: Delhi  
Dated: 01.02.2020

अवसर हम सब के लिए गर्व का है  
ये मौका लोकतंत्र के पर्व का है  
वोट करें, गर्व करें  
मतदान - 08 फरवरी 2020, शनिवार  
समय - प्रातः 08 बजे से शाम 06 बजे तक

मुख्य निर्वाचन अधिकारी, दिल्ली.  
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# 70 yrs' mess can't be cleaned in 5 yrs: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The mess created in 70 years cannot be cleaned in just five years but still the AAP Government has improved various sectors. Congress accused us of giving free electricity and water. If you want to avail free services, vote for AAP otherwise they (BJP, Congress) will not continue it after winning election, said AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal while campaigning for his party candidates in Kirari and Mundka Assembly constituencies.

Addressing the gathering, he said that AAP has worked towards the transformation of unauthorised colonies in Delhi. "The Opposition parties Congress and BJP are against providing free amenities to the people of Delhi. In the last five years, we have worked with conviction for the people of Delhi. We have worked in sectors like education, power, health, transport, free bus rides for women and there are many things to do in next five years," he said.

"No development has been done in Kirari Vidhan Sabha in the last 70 years. The roads and lanes were broken. All the unauthorised colonies in Delhi



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal during a roadshow in Kirari in New Delhi on Sunday Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

had the same situation. In the last five years, we have built roads and drains, installed water and sewer pipelines, installed CCTV cameras, but

some colonies are still left because the work pending for 70 years cannot be completed in just five years," he added. Kejriwal said that the instal-

lation of sewer pipelines in the lanes of Kirari constituency is in progress. "We have also constructed Mubarakpur Road. I promise you that all the lanes of

Kirari will be revamped before the monsoon season this year. A few days back, some residents of Kirari came up to me and showed me the miserable conditions of roads and lanes in their areas. I assured them to complete the work. It was only Kejriwal who has worked for you in the last five years, and it is only Kejriwal, your son, who will work for you in the next five years," he said.

"If you vote for AAP the provisions of free water, electricity, healthcare, bus rides, etc, will continue. BJP has already said in its manifesto, that they will neither provide free electricity, nor free bus rides for women. Opposition leaders have time and again maligned my image for providing free electricity and water to the people. They have a problem with me since they do not want to provide free amenities to the people. So, I would want to appeal to the people to think and vote," he said.

The roadshow was attended by hundreds of party supporters who shouted slogan "Acche bite panch saal, Lage raho Kejriwal" and danced on the tune of party official campaign song "Lage Raho Kejriwal".

# BJP intensifies campaign, holds booth-level meet

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With few days left for Delhi polls, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has intensified its campaign across the city and is reaching out to the people through booth-level workers and candidates of different Assembly constituencies. BJP has made a serious pitch to wrest power from the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and is leaving no stone unturned.

In a first, top leaders of the party are holding meetings with each candidate in all the 70 constituencies. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP President JP Nadda are reviewing every campaign in the constituencies and party is pushing to meet each and every voter and with new strategies.

This may be noted that the BJP has launched a blitzkrieg with union ministers, former/current chief ministers of states and over 200 members of parliament (MPs) are touring and seeking votes for the party candidates.

According to BJP office



Union Home Minister Amit Shah distributes pamphlets during a door-to-door election campaign ahead of the forthcoming Delhi Assembly elections at Mehram Nagar in New Delhi on Sunday PTI

bearers, "BJP has entrusted senior union ministers to manage booth workers and Shakti Kendras comprising of 30 booths while each union minister has been tasked to look after two - three Kendras in each constituency.

Meanwhile as a part of election campaigning, home

minister Amit Shah visited Timarpur and Adarsh Nagar constituencies and Nadda visited Jangpura, Sadar Bazar and Chandni Chowk. Delhi election state in-charge and Union Minister Prakash Javadekar visited Matiamhal, Balimaran and Karol Bagh assembly segments.

## Constituency profile

# Model town voters 'mange' more

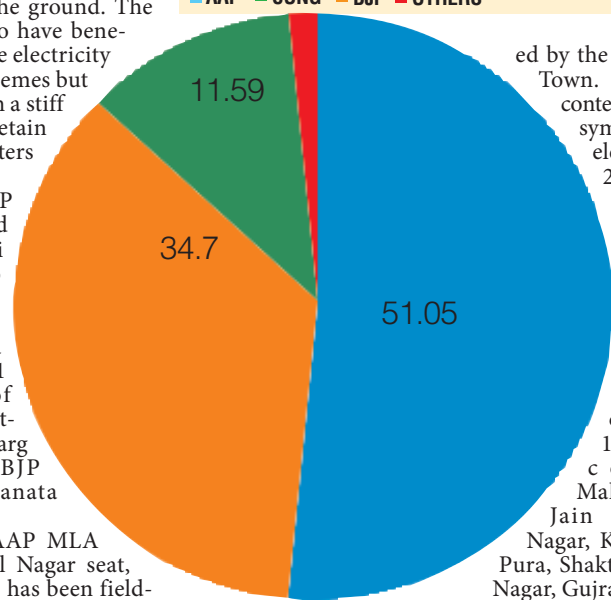
STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The residents of north Delhi's posh Model Town constituency applauded the development works done by the ruling AAP (Aam Aadmi Party) in slums but also stressed that more needed to be done on the ground. The AAP seems to have benefited from free electricity and water schemes but it is faced with a stiff challenge to retain the urban voters this time.

The AAP has fielded Akhilesh Pati Tripathi who won the seat in 2015 by securing a whopping 51 per cent of votes by defeating Vivek Garg of the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party).

Former AAP MLA from Karawal Nagar seat, Kapil Mishra, has been field-

Year	AAP	BJP	CONG	VOTE SHARE (IN PER CENT 2015)		
2015	51	34	11	ELECTION	MEMBER	PARTY
2013	35	32	29	1993	Chatri Lal Goel	Bharatiya Janata Party
2008		41	44	1998		
2003		43	54	2003	Kanwar Karan Singh	Indian National Congress
1998		37	52	2008	Akhilesh Pati Tripathi	Aam Aadmi Party
VOTE SHARE OF PARTIES, 2015 (%)				2013		
■ AAP ■ CONG ■ BJP ■ OTHERS				2015		



ed by the BJP from Model Town. Akansha Ola is contesting on Congress symbol. Tripathi was elected in 2013 and 2015 from the seat and he had polled 54628 votes in 2015, the highest ever by any contesting candidate on this seat so far.

The total voters in this constituency are 1,53,667 and it comprises Mahendru Enclave, Jain Colony, Roop Nagar, Kamla Nagar, Raj Pura, Shakti Nagar, Jawahar Nagar, Gujrawala Town, New

Gupta Colony, Kalyan Vihar, Guru Teg Bahadur Nagar, Rana Pratap Bagh, Sangam Park and Roshanara Garden. Kanwar Karan Singh of the Congress was elected from Model Town assembly seat in the Delhi assembly for three consecutive terms 1998, 2003 and in 2008.

The voting percentage for the BJP has been constant on this seat as it got on average 31.48 per cent in last five assembly elections. Interestingly, the BJP gained two per cent vote share in 2015 compared to 32 per cent of total votes polled in 2013. BJP got 37 per cent in 1998, 43 in 2003, 41 in 2008, 32 in 2013 and 34 in 2015.

AAP's vote share rose

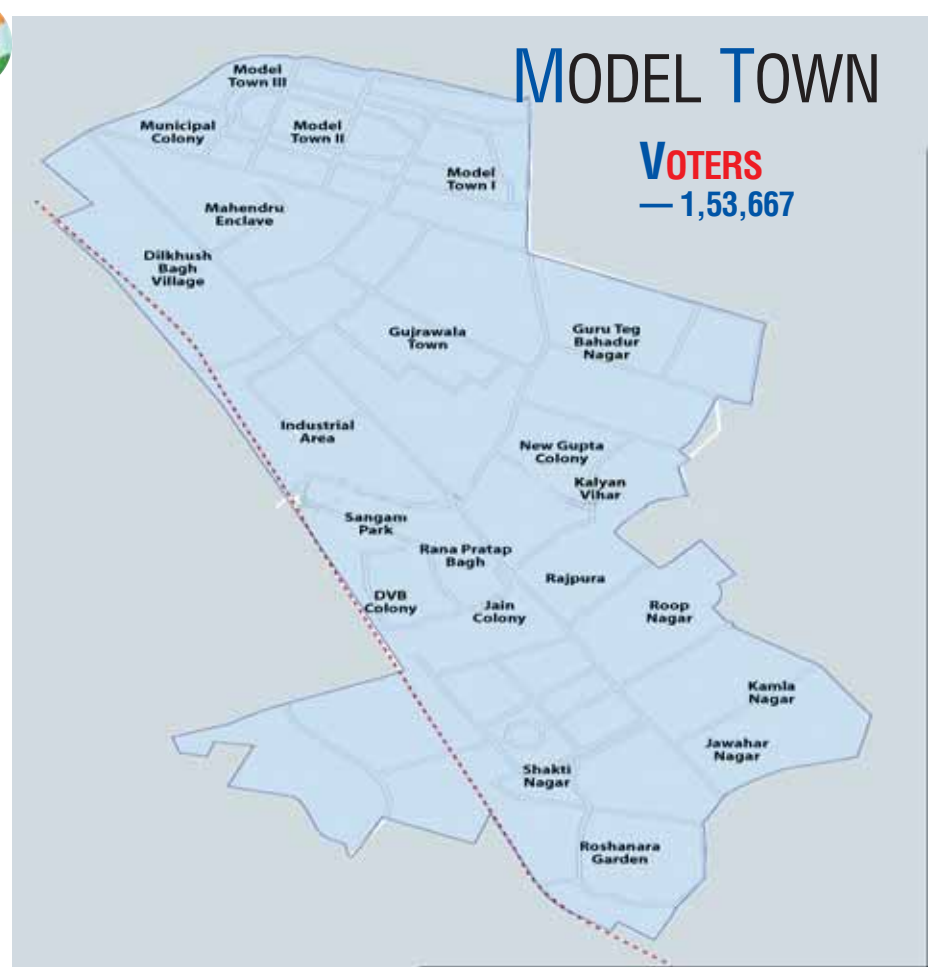
from 35 per cent in 2013 to 51 per cent in 2015. While Congress' vote share has seen declining in last five assembly elections. It got 52 per cent in 1998, 54 per cent in 2003, 44 in 2008, 29 in 2013 and was reduced to just 11 in 2015.

Shreya Kapur, a first time voter and resident of Model Town-2 said she will vote on the issue of development and women safety. "Roads here are not repaired for years and we have to face the problem of water logging every year during monsoon," she said.

"The AAP has taken some good steps like free electricity, water and transport but it has definitely benefitted a section of society but not us. We are also not interested in freebies. What we want the government to construct hospitals, develop infrastructure and creating employment opportunity for our youth," said Nitin Bansal, a resident of Mahendru Enclave.

There were many who opposed BJP candidate Kapil Mishra's statement on Shaheen Bagh protest, terming the attempt to polarize votes on the basis of religion.

Vishal Sahni, a businessman and resident of Model Town-1 said that all the par-



ties are on the same page and I will make up my mind at last time. On the issue of devel-

opment in the areas, he said "Yes, Tripathi is very sensible MLA and he listen to every-

one. But there are many things need to be done in areas other than slum."

# Nadda accuses Kejriwal of insulting purvanchalis

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president JP Nadda on Sunday accused Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of "insulting" the people from the purvanchal region and wondered if he can do any good to them when he cannot respect them.

In his tweets targeting the AAP leader, Nadda posted a brief video of Kejriwal, who is heard saying that poor people from Bihar come to Delhi by spending ₹500 and avail of medical treatment of over ₹5 lakh here free of cost.

The BJP has often cited these comments to accuse Kejriwal of insulting migrants but the AAP has asserted that the chief minister was making a point about the quality of medical facilities being offered in the national capital.

Nadda said people from poorvanchal have played a big role in the development of



BJP national president JP Nadda and Bihar CM Nitish Kumar during a public meeting at Sangam Vihar in New Delhi, Sunday PTI

Delhi but Kejriwal does not "realise" it.

"The way you have often insulted brothers and sisters from poorvanchal, is unbecoming of a Chief Minister," he said.

The BJP president also

attacked Kejriwal over the issue of drinking water, saying the AAP leaders has been making the promise of delivering piped water to every household since 2014 and then claimed in 2019 that it will take another five years.

# Alka Lamba lists AAP failures

CHANDAN PRAKASH ■ NEW DELHI

It is not freebies but always targeted developmental work with intention to create employment and bringing in overall changes by transforming the existing rooted system and by addressing concerns related to civic services. Combating pollution, providing drinking water, constructing roads and hospitals, laying sewer lines and good transportation are some of the issues, the Government has failed to tackle, Congress candidate and sitting MLA from the Chandni Chowk Alka Lamba said.

In an interview to The Pioneer, Lamba, who quit AAP in September last year after differences with AAP leadership to join Congress, said "During the Sheila Dixit term as a Chief Minister, people had to pay electricity bill once in every two months. Making everything free is a sign of weak leaders who intend to gain political advantages and by doing so he thinks that people can forget his failure."

Criticising Delhi CM, she said the condition of roads here is pathetic, no new hospital was constructed in last five years, people are forced to drink dirty water, Delhi has become a gas chamber but nothing was done to address the issues that has been haunting people for years.

Lamba won from the constituency in 2015, defeating Suman Kumar Gupta of the Bharatiya Janata Party by 18,287 votes. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has fielded Parlad Singh Sawhney, a four-



Congress candidate Alka Lamba during a campaign in Mori Gate area Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

YEAR	CANDIDATE	PARTY	VOTE SHARE IN PERCENTAGE (%)		
			AAP	BJP	CONGRESS
2015	Alka Lamba	AAP	49.35	24.79	24.07
2013	Parlad Singh Sawhney	Congress	21.96	25.95	37.77
2008	Parlad Singh Sawhney	Congress	—	32.64	45.61
2003	Parlad Singh Sawhney	Congress	—	35.57	59.91
1998	Parlad Singh Sawhney	Congress	—	31.84	47.90
1993	Vasudev Kaptan	BJP	—	50.56	41.87

term former Congress MLA from the seat.

On whether freebies can impact poll result she said, certainly not as the government has exposed themselves by announcing freebies before election and spending a huge money in subsidy instead of carrying out developmental works that can take the economy further and created new scope of opportunities.

"Our girls do not want to roam in the city taking free bus ticket in Rs 10 but they want a system where overall development is ensured. You can people here and no one will advocate the freebies but they keep saying develop the city and create jobs and they will take care of their electricity and water bills themselves," she said.

The Chandni Chowk con-

stituency comprises of Dariba Kalan, Fateh Puri, Jama Masjid, Kashmir Gate, Chandni Chowk, Khyber Pass, Lal Quila and Yamuna Bridge, Khari Baoli, Darya Ganj, Faiz Bazar, Kinari Bazar, Nai Sarak and Naya Bazar.

When asked about issues of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Shaheen Bagh protest, Lamba

attacked the BJP saying that they have nothing to show that is why they are asking votes by dividing people. "Inflation is on all time high. Rtes of vegetables are touching a new height. There are other issues like massive unemployment but the BJP is all busy in cashing by polarizing voters on the basis of religion. This is an example of cheap politics. The BJP leaders should be ashamed of them for asking votes on Hindutva. If you do not have anything to show to people you started using students to polarize voters," she added.

Asked whom she considers her strong opponent in the constituency, she said no one is even near me in terms of popularity. "AAP candidate Parlad Sawhney was elected four times from the seat but did nothing to improve the basic facilities in the areas except besmirching the good name of Congress party. BJP is a communal party and seeks votes dividing people on the basis of religion," she added.

Lamba said she is getting an overwhelming response from public and was confident to retain the seat. When asked why star campaigners and party bigwigs like Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi have yet to come in support of their campaign, Lamba said she was asking voters to vote on development work done by her in the area being an MLA in last five years.

AAP candidate Sawhney won the seat consecutively in 1998, 2003, 2008 and 2013 on Congress ticket. Lamba won in 2015 from the seat on AAP ticket and got 27.39 per cent more vote than that of she got in 2013.

## Kejriwal interested in publicity: Nitish

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Taking a dig at Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, his Bihar counterpart Nitish Kumar on Sunday said some people are interested in publicity and advertisements. We don't do that," Kumar said without naming Kejriwal. "Those who got the mandate to govern Delhi did nothing," he said.

The BJP is contesting the

party candidate SCL Gupta for the February 8 Delhi Assembly polls. Gupta is contesting the elections from the Sangam Vihar constituency in south Delhi. "Some people are more interested in publicity and advertisements. We don't do that," Kumar said without naming Kejriwal. "Those who got the mandate to govern Delhi did nothing," he said.

Bihar being a poor State has done a phenomenal job in areas of education, electricity and health, and strengthening road and transport infrastructure, Kumar said. BJP president JP Nadda and LJP leader Chirag Paswan were also present at the public meeting.

polls in Delhi in alliance with the JD(U) and the Lok Janshakti Party.

# CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

## Students celebrate return from Wuhan

**New Delhi:** Indian students, who have been evacuated from coronavirus-affected Chinese city of Wuhan, on Sunday celebrated their return by dancing and making selfie videos at Army's quarantine facility in Manesar, according to officials.

As many as 252 Indians have been kept under quarantine for a period of two weeks at the Army's 300-bed facility in Manesar, according to officials

In the last two days, 647 Indians have been evacuated through two special Air India flights. While 324 Indians were part of the first batch, 323 Indians and seven Malaysians were evacuated on Sunday.

As many as 252 Indians have been kept under quarantine for a period of two weeks at the Army's 300-bed facility in Manesar, according to officials.

Wuhan is the epicentre of the outbreak which has killed more than 300 people in China. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said in a tweet on Sunday, "7 Malaysians brought back with 323 Indians from Wuhan on the second @airindiain flight today. #NeighbourhoodFirst at work again."

Two Indians, both from Kerala, have been tested positive for the deadly coronavirus infection.

Due to the outbreak, IndiGo has suspended all three flights between India and China. Air India has suspended its Delhi-Shanghai flight and curtailed operations on the Delhi-Hong Kong route. **PTI**

## All preparations made to tackle coronavirus: Kangra officials

**Dharamshala:** The state Health Department has made all preparations to tackle the threat posed by novel coronavirus, officials said here on Sunday.

Kangra Chief Medical Officer Gurdarshan Gupta said though no case of coronavirus has been reported so far in the state, a counselling centre has been set up for foreigners at the McLeodganj Primary Health Centre. The CMO said the Kangra district administration also held a meeting with regard to the virus with the Tibetan government-in-exile.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Raghav Sharma said all tourists coming to Dharamshala will be asked to fill a self-declaration form with regard to their travel to China or other affected countries. **PTI**

## CAA: Spiritual guru offers to mediate between Govt, protesters

**Kottayam (Ker):** Renowned spiritual guru Sri M on Sunday expressed his willingness to mediate between the Centre and anti-CAA protesters.

Sri M, who was this year conferred with the Padma Bhushan for distinguished service of high order in spirituality, said he has conveyed to the central government his offer to mediate in the issue and was waiting for a response. "Dialogue is a way to resolve all sorts of issues. I am ready to mediate," he told reporters here in response to a query on the possible role played by the spiritual gurus to solve the issues over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA).

Born as Mumtaz Ali in Thiruvananthapuram, Sri M wrote his memoir 'Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master: A Yogi's Autobiography' and its sequel 'The Journey Continues.' **PTI**

## CPI(M): BJP wants to drive out all non-Hindus from country

**Agartala:** The Tripura CPI(M) on Sunday alleged that the BJP and the RSS are following an agenda of converting India into a 'Hindu Rashtra' by driving out all non-Hindu people from the country.

The Left party will launch a door-to-door campaign against the Citizenship Amendment Act, the proposed countrywide National Register of Citizen and the National Population Register across the state from Monday, CPI(M) state committee secretary Gautam Das alleged.

"The CAA, NRC and NPR are the part of an agenda the BJP and the RSS to convert India into a Hindu Rashtra by driving out all non-Hindu people from the country. We strongly oppose this and will launch a door-to-door campaign till March to build up a strong opinion against it," Das told a press conference.

He claimed that no party other than the BJP is supporting this programme as it would destroy the secular fabric of the country.

"If the BJP and RSS can implement

'We strongly oppose agenda of CAA-NRC-NPR and will launch a door-to-door campaign till March to build up a strong opinion against it'

—Gautam Das

these three (CAA, NRC, NPR), the secular fabric would be destroyed. Besides, poor people, mainly from the reserved categories, would bear the brunt of it," Das said.

He alleged that the NPR and the proposed nationwide NRC are entwined and the final agenda of the saffron party is to act against the people belonging to the poor and minority communities.

Attacking the BJP-IPFT government in Tripura, the CPI(M) leader claimed that it did not implement poll pledges like solving the unemployment problem.

The law and order had collapsed during the two years' rule of the BJP-led regime, he alleged. **PTI**

## Shun sedentary lifestyle, do exercise: V-P

**Hubballi:** Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday called upon people to wage a war against non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and urged the younger generation to shun sedentary lifestyle and do regular physical exercise to stay healthy.



practise yoga regularly.

This would help in maintaining a balanced attitude in all situations, he added.

Observing that the ever-mounting pressure, wayward lifestyle and changing food habits have resulted in youth suffering from physical and psychological disorders, Naidu said, "We need a transformation in the way we live, in the way we think and in the way we interact with our fellow human beings and Mother Nature."

"I believe that yoga will be a powerful tool to bring about the desired transformation in people who practise it regularly," he said. Naidu complimented Baba Ramdev and Patanjali Yogpeeth and many other yoga trainers and gurus, who have been making a great contribution towards making India healthy by popularising yoga and meditation.

Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Coal and Mines Pralhad Joshi and others were present at the yoga session conducted by Baba Ramdev of Patanjali Yogpeeth. **PTI**

## Youngsters needed to build better world: President

**Hyderabad:** President Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday said that in order to change the direction of humanity there is a need to take on board larger number of young people and engage them in building a better world.

Speaking after inaugurating the new global headquarters Kanha Shantivanam of Ram Chandra Mission in Rangareddy district of Telangana, the President said that in a world full of anxieties, uncertainties, insecurities and hostilities, the responsibilities of organisations like Ram Chandra Mission have increased manifold.

It is only such organisations which can provide the

reassuring touch of a healer, the president was quoted as saying in an official release. "Spirituality is India's most precious gift to the world. From the teachings of Vedanta, Teerthanker Mahaveer and Gautam Buddha to the messages of Nanak and Kabir there is a grand flow of eternal spiritual wisdom which was transmitted to the modern world by Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and many others of India's spiritual force, Kovind said. Today, Gandhi is revered all over the world for his message of truth, compassion and non-violence, and he was essentially a seeker of spiritual truth, he said.

"I am glad to see that Ram

Chandra Mission has been promoting individual change as well as social change. The mission has been promoting the great ancient tradition of Raja Yoga system of meditation in the modern world," he said.

The campus 'Kanha Shantivanam' presents a model of holistic living, Kovind said.

Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan, Himachal Pradesh Governor designate Bandaru Dattatreya and Daaji, the present guide of Heartfulness were among the dignitaries who were present. Heartfulness is a Raja Yoga system of meditation, which is also known as Sahaj Marg or the natural path. **PTI**

## Political parties not behind Shaheen Bagh protest: Yechury

**Mumbai:** Senior CPI (M) leader Sitaram Yechury on Sunday said that political parties were not behind the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protest in Shaheen Bagh.

Yechury said it was in fact a case of the protesters "leading us and we are walking behind them".

He said the Shaheen Bagh protest, which has captured the imagination of the country since it started over a month ago and has spawned several replicas, reminded him of his days during Emergency.

Yechury was speaking at the Mumbai Collective here. He was accompanied by NCP Lok Sabha member Supriya Sule.

"There is no political party behind such protests. In fact they are leading us and we are walking behind them," he said.

The senior Left leader said such (Shaheen Bagh) protests are taking place in at least 50 places and it is happening like in the case of civil disobedience. **PTI**

Speaking further, Yechury said every religion may have one holy book, and Hinduism may have several, but for the patriotic Indian, "the Constitution is the only holy book".

Supporting the protests, Yechury said such strident opposition to the National Population Register (NPR) will automatically affect the roll-out of the National Register of Citizens.

Sule said issues like CAA and NRC are being used to divert attention of the people from "core factors such as the crumbling economy of the country". India is scared while police is living on the edge. We call ourselves representatives of the people in the Lok Sabha but this (Modi) government and the Parliament is not responsive," Sule said. Taking a swipe at the Narendra Modi government, Yechury said, "At least 10 times, ministers in the Lok Sabha have said the NRC will be the basis of NPR." Sule said CAA and NRC would hurt the poor of the country, including Adivasis and banjaras (nomads) among others. **PTI**

## India ready to fight...

**From Page 1**  
Isolation beds are also kept ready in case of any situation arises," a statement issued by the authorities said about these quarantined persons.

As a preventive measure, Cabinet Secretary held a high level review meeting on the preparedness for coronavirus with secretaries of Health and Family Welfare, External Affairs, Home Affairs, Civil Aviation, Department of Health Research, and representatives of ITBP, AFMS and NDMA, here on Sunday.

Till Sunday, 58,658 passengers from 445 flights have been screened while a total of 142 symptomatic travellers

have been picked up to be referred to the isolation facilities set up by the Government.

Meanwhile, in a fresh set of instructions, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has said that testing of only one swab sample is enough, as against the earlier two, in suspected coronavirus cases. The new WHO instructions aims to ensure faster testing of samples which will quicken the fight against the coronavirus outbreak.

A video shared by Government officials on Sunday showed a group of six students dancing and taking selfies and videos inside the Manesar facility.

"The students are happy as they have been evacuated. You can see them dancing and making videos even though they have their face masks on," said an official.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said in a tweet on Sunday, "7 Malaysians brought back with 323 Indians from Wuhan on the second @airindiain flight today. #NeighbourhoodFirst at work again." Five doctors from the Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital, who were onboard the first flight, were also present in the second flight, an Air India spokesperson said.

Out of the 324 people that were evacuated through first Air India flight, 56, 53 and 42 were from Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, respectively.



Buddhist monks attend the 37th Kagyu Monlam prayers in Bodhgaya on Sunday

PTI

## Pak's locust army to...

**From Page 1**  
However, the incursion locusts across the border is still continuing. If Pakistan had taken proper control measures, the breeding of locusts could have been stopped, it said. Due to a longer monsoon in India, the locusts got a favourable environment to breed," officials said.

"Adult locust swarms can fly up to 150 km (93 miles) a day with the wind and adult insects can consume roughly their own weight in fresh food per day. A very small swarm eats as much in one day as about 35,000 people. If allowed to breed unchecked in favourable conditions, locusts can form huge swarms that can strip trees and crops over vast areas," officials added. According to the FAO report, the locust swarms have attacked vast areas of the region. "For example in Kenya, a single

swarm covered an area 40km by 60km, able to consume as much food in a single day as 85 million people, while in Ethiopia swarms have covered more than 429 km 2.

Unusual weather conditions last year contributed to the swarm, especially the widespread heavy rains across the Horn of Africa since October 2019. Across the region the October to mid-November rainfall was up to 300 per cent above average; in Kenya, the rainfall was up to 400 per cent higher than average," it said.

Locusts thrive in wet conditions, and outbreaks often follow floods and cyclones. Heavy rain leads to growth of vegetation in arid areas, providing locusts with the conditions needed to develop and reproduce, according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

## AAP seeks FIR, ban on Yogi...

**From Page 1**  
Continuing his relentless attack on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Yogi on Sunday while addressing a rally in Badarpur of Southeast Delhi said, "When the provisions of Article 370, that gave special status to Jammu & Kashmir, were abrogated; pain was felt by Pakistan and AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal."

Also, Yogi termed the Shaheen Bagh protest a "malicious attempt to disturb peace and normal life." "When Article 370 was abrogated, pain was felt by Pakistan and Arvind Kejriwal," Adityanath said, addressing a rally in south Delhi's Badarpur.

Yogi said in the Delhi elections, on one side there is the leadership of Narendra Modi for development and nationalism, on the other, there is the Congress and Kejriwal who "support divisive forces."

"The BJP is working with zero tolerance towards terrorism. But Kejriwal is busy with sponsoring and offering biryani in Shaheen Bagh," he said.

AAP leader Sanjay Singh said his party has been 48 hours since Singh has sought time from the Election Commission for a meeting but it has not been granted.

"He (Yogi) must be arrested for his communal speeches. We have lodged a complaint with the EC," he said.

## Hindu...

**From Page 1**  
Chakrapani condemned the murder and hit out at Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The incident comes nearly four months after the leader of a little known Hindu Samaj Party was killed in the city. On October 18, Kamlesh Tiwari (45), who was earlier associated with a faction of the Hindu Mahasabha, was found murdered at his home in the congested Naka Hindola area of the city.

"Such incidents throw a challenge to UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. He should weigh his options as to whether election campaigning in other states is more important or improving the law and order of the state," Chakrapani said.

Arora said as per initial information, Bachchan and his wife Kalindi Sharma Bachchan were not in a cordial relationship and a case in this regard was registered in Gorakhpur.

"This angle is also being looked into," he said. He said Bachchan was associated with the Samajwadi Party previously and took part in cycle rallies of the party between 2002-09.

Arora said they are examining CCTV footage from the area and checking the background of the people with whom Bachchan had any dispute. "As many as eight teams of the crime branch are working to solve the case," he said.

In the complaint registered with the police, Aditya Srivastava said: "I along with Ranjeet went out for a morning walk. At around 6 am, on the road outside Globe Park, an unknown person who had wrapped a shawl came from a

behind, and asked us to hand over our mobile phones.

"After this, the unknown person fired at Ranjeet, and also fired at me on my left arm. I ran from the spot in order to save my life."

Police said Bachchan died on the spot while Srivastava suffered bullet injuries on his left hand.

Asked about the incident, Police Commissioner of Lucknow Sujit Pandey told PTI, "The incident took place on the road outside the Globe Park, and it falls on the border of Hazratganj and Kaisarbagh police stations. In all four cops, including one sub-inspector, have been suspended for laxity."

On January 15, IPS officer Pandey took charge as the first police commissioner of Lucknow after the commissionerate system of policing was implemented in the state.

The system gives more powers, including magisterial powers, to police officers and is aimed at better and effective policing.

A senior police official told PTI requesting anonymity that they are looking into family reasons behind the incident.

"The deceased (Bachchan) had two wives. He was living with his first wife (Kalindi Sharma Bachchan) and had a three-year-old daughter from the second wife. His sister-in-law had filed a rape case against him in 2017," the official said.

Meanwhile, an aide of Bachchan said that he used to go on morning walk everyday and had no enmity with anyone. Chakrapani said Bachchan had spoken to him last month. "Almost 15 days ago, I got a call from him saying that he wants to meet me.

## Centre presses for early hanging of 4...

**From Page 1**  
"There is a deliberate move of co-convicts to delay the process which can frustrate the mandate of the trial court's judgment awarding them death sentence that was confirmed by the Delhi High Court and upheld by the Supreme Court," he said.

Referring to the December 6, 2019 Hyderabad gangrape and murder case of a veterinarian in which the four accused were killed by the police in an alleged encounter, the Solicitor General said what happened there was shocking but people celebrated it.

"It gave a very bad impression... The credibility of the institution (judiciary) and its own power to execute death sentence are at stake," he said. The Supreme Court had formed a three-member commission headed by a former apex court judge to inquire into the alleged encounter.

Police had claimed that all the four accused in the Hyderabad case were shot dead in "retaliatory" firing by the cops when two of the accused opened fire at them after snatching their weapons and tried to escape from the site where they had been taken for a reconstruction of events as part of the investigation.

"The four Nirbhaya case convicts are playing with judicial machinery and trying the patience of the nation," Mehta said, adding that any delay in the execution of death penalty will have a dehumanising effect on the convicts.

While Mukesh and Vinay Sharma's mercy pleas have been rejected by the President,

Pawan has not yet filed it. Akshay Singh's mercy plea was filed on Saturday and is pending.

Advocate AP Singh, who appeared for convicts Akshay Singh (31), Vinay Sharma (26) and Pawan Gupta (25), opposed the Centre's plea to set aside the stay on execution of death sentence.

John raised preliminary objection on the Centre's plea saying it was not maintainable. She contended that the Centre was never a party in the case proceedings before the trial court and while the Government was accusing the convict of delay, it has woken up just two days ago.

"It was the victim's parents who moved the trial court for issuance of death warrants against the convicts. At no point the Central Government or the State Government approached the trial court to immediately issue death warrants," John argued.

John told the High Court that the Centre has moved a plea in the Supreme Court seeking clarification whether co-convicts can be executed separately and this petition is pending before the apex court.

Mehta, however, said convicts are not to be hanged only till the stage of their SLP before the Supreme Court. Seven years have gone by but the convicts are still playing with the state machinery and the judicial system, he said, adding that the crime committed by these convicts was so ghastly that it has shaken the conscience of the nation.

Opposing the plea, John urged that she was only press-

ing for a common execution, if at all it happens, and as on today there was no definitive order to single order the executions of the convicts.

She added that a common judgment was passed by the trial court that they be hanged by neck till death and the death row convicts have every right to avail the remedies available to them till their last breath.

John said the day is not far when the execution will happen but nobody should circumvent the procedure as it is the question of life of a person.

She argued that the Supreme Court has never said that the convicts delayed the process and his curative petition as well as mercy petition by the President was rejected on merits and not due to delay.

A 23-year-old paramedic student, referred to as Nirbhaya, was raped and brutally assaulted on the intervening night of December 16-17, 2012 inside a moving bus in south Delhi by six persons, before being thrown out on the road. She died on December 29, 2012 in Singapore's Mount Elizabeth Hospital.

One of the six accused in the case, Ram Singh, allegedly committed suicide in the Tihar Jail. A juvenile, who was among the accused, was convicted by a juvenile justice board and was released from a reformatory home after serving a three-year term.

The top court, in its 2017 verdict, had upheld the capital punishment awarded to the convicts by the Delhi High Court and the trial court.

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DAVINDER SINGH CASE

HM commander Babu also BAT's hitman

NIA raids multiple places in J&K

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

**Naveed, who carried a reward of ₹20 lakh on his head, was also on the hit list of the Army**

Hizbul Mujahideen commander Naveed Babu, arrested along with Jammu & Kashmir Police Deputy Superintendent of Police Davinder Singh, had also worked for Pakistan's special force Border Action Team (BAT) since 2017 and specialised in hitting security forces' personnel and camps, according to probe into the case so far.

Babu and Rather along with Singh were arrested by the Jammu & Kashmir Police on January 11 at Mir Bazar in Kulgam district of the Valley following a tip off from the Intelligence Bureau just in time.

Singh, posted in the anti-hijacking unit of the Jammu & Kashmir police at the Srinagar airport, was spotted behind a team of 15 envoys, including US Ambassador to India Kenneth Juster, who visited the capital of the newly created Union Territory just ahead of Singh arrest.

Naveed Babu and Rather are suspected to have carried out hits against the security

forces as part of their involvement with the Pakistani BAT and the National Investigation Agency (NIA) is expected to probe this aspect in detail as the national capital is home to a host of VVIPs and diplomats, sources said.

Naveed and Rather's plans to visit the national capital before their arrest with Singh has come as a major concern for the security agencies especially since both the terrorists were specially trained by the Pakistani agencies before associating them with the BAT, sources further said.

BAT has been known carry out brutal actions against the security forces' personnel along the border and Singh's role in providing information on troop movement and deployment is also under the scanner of the agencies.

Following the arrest of Singh, various agencies including the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) have conducted

detailed security audit of their installations in the Valley as also screening of the entire work force.



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA on Sunday conducted searches at multiple locations in Jammu & Kashmir in connection with the case involving arrested Jammu & Kashmir Deputy Superintendent of Police Davinder Singh accused of providing shelter and safe passage to terrorists.

The searched premises include that of Deputy

Commander Hizbul Mujahideen Rahil Hamid Magray in Ganwopra, Shopian, Naveed Babu and Rafi Ahmed Rather.

Both Babu and Rather were arrested along with Jammu & Kashmir police DSP Davinder Singh last month by Jammu & Kashmir police from Kulgam district.

Multiple NIA teams fanned across various parts of south Kashmir and conducted searches at some private offices and residences, officials said.

The NIA had recently taken over the case in which Jammu & Kashmir's Deputy Superintendent of Police Davinder Singh, who has since been suspended, was caught in south Kashmir while ferrying two terrorists out of the valley on January 11.

The searches come days

after NIA officers interrogated all the accused arrested in the case till so far.

Besides Singh, the others arrested in the case include Syed Naveed Mushtaq Ahmed alias Naveed Babu, who is a self-styled commander of Hizbul Mujahideen, Rafi Ahmed Rather and Irfan Shafi Mir, who claims to be an advocate.

Later, Naveed's brother, Syed Irfan Ahmed, was also arrested on January 23 after he was brought from Punjab. He was in constant touch with his brother and had asked him to look for an accommodation in Chandigarh as an alternate hideout, officials said.

DSP Davinder Singh along with alleged terrorists Naveed Babu and Rather were arrested by the Jammu & Kashmir police following a tip off from the Intelligence Bureau.

DEFENCE EXPO

Open display of equipments raises security concerns

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Open display of protection parameters and resistance of personal protection equipment like bullet-resistant vests and headgears besides armoured troop carriers in billboards and literature for the upcoming Defence Expo at Lucknow has raised alarm bells ringing in the security establishment as such specifics can potentially compromise the safety of security personnel in counter-terror and anti-Naxal operations.



"Showcasing vital and sensitive information related to protection systems should be stopped forthwith and necessary directions be issued by Defence Ministry that only the finished products should be displayed without dishing out specific details of protection level," a serving official in a lead counter-terror force said.

Intelligence insiders conceded that information collected from such expositions by the sleeper cells of terror organisations and over ground workers of Naxal outfits have in the past been exploited by the insidious groups to target the troops.

The billboards and literature of the defence equipment manufacturers display the level of armour resistance from different kinds of bullet fires and area weapons like grenade and the impact of firing from different distance. Terror groups as also Naxal outfits can suitably strategise to nullify the resistance provided by the armour by tweaking the distance of their fire on the target or increasing quantity and quality of explosives for ambushing the protective gears and vehicles of the troops, another official engaged in counter-terror operation in Jammu and Kashmir.

During the last Defence

Expo in Chennai, Laboratory reports of reputed Terminal Ballistic Research Laboratory (TBRL) and Gujarat State Forensic University were displayed by the private players engaged in manufacturing and marketing defence systems, including personal protection gears and troop carriers.

Government regulations prohibit displaying specific details of sensitive items even while issuing tenders for procurement of such items. The regulations clearly postulate that such details should not be displayed on the websites or otherwise in keeping with national interest.

Strategic interests of the security forces should not be undermined by the private players in the Defence industry or the Defence Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) or Ordinance Factory Board (OFB) to further their commercial interests as they can defeat the whole purpose of acquisition of protective equipment and vehicles, another senior official of an Central armed force said, adding complete confidentiality should be maintained while dealing with such equipment or systems.

SC to frame issues about gender inequality at religious places

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A nine-judge constitution Bench of the Supreme Court will on Monday schedule to frame issues for hearing case of discrimination against women in various religions and at religious places, including Kerala's Sabarimala temple.

The Bench will consider the issues related to the entry of Muslim women into mosques, female genital mutilation in the Dawoodi Bohra Muslim community and barring of Parsi women, married to non-Parsi men, in the holy

fire place at an agiary. Besides Chief Justice S A Bobde, other judges on the bench are justices R Banumathi, Ashok Bhushan, L Nageswara Rao, MM

Shantanagoudar, SA Nazeer, R Subhash Reddy, B R Gavai and Surya Kant.

The apex court had, on January 13, asked four senior lawyers to convene a meeting



to decide on the issues to be deliberated by it in the matter.

On November 14 last year, while referring the matter to a larger bench, a five-judge bench had said the debate on the constitutional validity of religious practices such as a bar on the entry of women and girls into a place of worship was not limited to the Sabarimala case.

It had said such restrictions were there with regard to the entry of Muslim women into mosques and dargahs, and Parsi women, married to non-Parsi men, from entering the holy fire place of an agiary.

It set out seven questions of law to be examined by the larger bench. They include the interplay between freedom of religion under Articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution, need to delineate the expression "constitutional morality", the extent to which courts can enquire into particular religious practices, meaning of sections of Hindus under Article 25 and whether "essential religious practices" of a denomination or section thereof are protected under Article 26.

While the five-judge bench unanimously agreed to refer religious issues to a larger

bench, it gave a 3:2 split verdict on petitions seeking a review of the apex court's September 2018 decision, allowing women of all ages to enter the Sabarimala shrine in Kerala.

A majority verdict by then Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and justices A M Khanwilkar and Indu Malhotra decided to keep the pleas seeking a review of its decision regarding entry of women into the shrine

pending and said restrictions on women at religious places were not limited to Sabarimala alone and were prevalent in other religions as well.

Budget 20-21: ₹2,487 crore allocated for RRTS project

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a boost to connectivity in the National Capital Region (NCR), the Modi Government has allocated ₹2,487 crore to Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS), projects for the next fiscal year, nearly three-fold increase over the 2019-20 financial year. In 2019-20, the Centre had allocated ₹824 crore for the country's first RRTS. The project Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut is being extended to Muzaffarnagar.

According to the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC), the implementing agency of the RRTS project, the civil construction of the first RRTS Corridor — Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut corridor — is in full swing. "The first 82km stretch between Delhi, Ghaziabad and Meerut is under construction. The tender for Duhai to Shatabdipuram (Meerut) has been floated and will also be finalised soon. Tenders for rolling stock, rail supply and the RRTS's first underground section between New Ashok Nagar in East Delhi and Sahibabad in Ghaziabad have also been floated," officials of NCRTC said.

Business tycoons form body to fight climate change

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Apart from being business honchos and philanthropists, there is one more common factor among industry leaders such as Ratan N Tata, Anand Mahindra, Rohini Nilekani, Nadir Godrej, Aditi and Rishad Premji, Vidya Shah and Hemendra Kothari—they all are concerned about the threat posed by the global warming.

This connection has brought them together to set up India Climate Collaborative (ICC), a network to solve the country's climate crisis with the support of the local as well as international climate community.

"Our collective leadership through the ICC will indicate to the world that Indian philanthropy is ready to be a leader in climate action," Ratan N Tata, Chairman, Tata Trusts, said, commenting on the launch, in a statement here.

The ICC seeks to build a collaborative platform for diverse voices, innovative solutions, and collective investments, inspiring and connect governments, businesses, impact investors, research institutions, scientists, and civil society to work together.

"Scientific research tells us that the next decade will be critical in dealing with the global climate crisis," said Anand Mahindra, Chairman, Mahindra Group, as per the statement. "It is clear that the world cannot continue to pursue a business-as-usual approach and nobody can solve the problem on their own... Together we will find solutions that will make climate action effective and impactful." Nadir B Godrej, Managing Director of Godrej Industries added, "There is a lot that businesses can do, and are doing, to tackle the climate emergency at a cost that is not significantly high. Government can play a role in providing incentives and disincentives to ensure lower carbon emissions. We have to look at localised solutions that can solve global problems, and this will need businesses, governments, academia, and individuals to work together to identify and scale up solutions."

Extreme weather events driven by climate change claimed as many as 1,659 lives across India in 2019, which ended as the seventh warmest year on record.

Former AIADMK MP Sasikala Pushpa joins BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Expelled AIADMK leader Eand Rajya Sabha member Sasikala Pushpa Ramaswamy joined BJP on Sunday. Sasikala is among the Rajya Sabha members whose term comes to an end this April. She joined in the presence of the BJP's national secretary, P Muralidhar Rao, and former Union minister Pon Radhakrishnan. Between 2011 and 2014 she served as Thoothukudi's Mayor following which she served as an AIADMK MP in the Rajya Sabha.

At the press conference at the BJP office, Rao made the announcement of Pushpa's joining, saying it would be advantageous for the party in Tamil Nadu and described her as a "very aggressive, vocal leader in Tamil Nadu". "With the joining of Sasikala, the party's capacity to fight the coming Assembly election will definitely gain further advantage. Sasikala is a Rajya Sabha member and she has been a very aggressive, vocal leader in Tamil Nadu. Coming from south Tamil Nadu, she has also been a mayor of Thoothukudi, a port town, and has worked as the chief of the AIADMK's women's wing for



BJP general secretary P Muralidhar Rao (L) presents a bouquet to AIADMK MP Sasikala Pushpa Ramaswamy as she joins BJP in New Delhi on Sunday. Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

the State," he said.

BJP's decision to induct Sasikala into the party highlights its efforts to strengthen its base in Tamil Nadu, ahead of the Assembly polls in the southern state next year. Despite its rise across the country under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the party has been unable to make much of a mark in the Dravidian state so far.

Following an altercation with DMK MP Tiruchi Siva at the Delhi airport in 2016, it was believed that Sasikala Pushpa was expelled from AIADMK.

Subsequently, the then AIADMK supreme and former Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalalithaa had expelled her from the party.

"In Tamil Nadu, the BJP is gaining strength day by day. Our membership and penetration have increased in every district of the state. The appeal of Narendra Modi is enhancing the party's spread."

"A number of leaders, who have worked in different parties, have been joining the BJP and expressing their willingness to strengthen it under the leadership of Modiji," Rao said.

Visit Mughal Garden from Feb 5

New Delhi: Long rows of dark pink "Modern Art" roses juxtaposed with white, full-bodied "Ice Berg" patches of daisies, tulips and lilies mark the onset of the spring ahead of the annual "Udyanotsav" at the historical Mughal Gardens. The iconic garden at the heart of the President's Estate will be opened to public from February 5. Superintendent, President's Gardens, PN Joshi announced on Sunday.

Over 10,000 Tulip bulbs, 138 types of roses and 70 different kinds of about 5,000 seasonal flowers will welcome the visitors to the garden.

Known for its exotic and rare rose varieties, the garden this year boasts of "Grace de Monaco" rose, which was planted by Prince Albert II of Monaco last year.

Part of the fragrant exhibit are variety of roses named after eminent people, including former president Pranab Mukherjee, Mother Teresa, former US president John F Kennedy, Queen Elizabeth and first Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

Apart from the roses commemorating renowned personalities, there will be roses with unconventional names as "Christian Dior", "American Heritage", "First Prize", "Kiss of Fire" and "Double Delight".

The garden is also covered by a variety of bulbous flowers like "Narcissus", "Dahlia", "Sparaxis", "Ranunculus", "Hyacinth" and "Asiatic Lily".

The teacup-shaped Tulips are another attraction at the Mughal Gardens, especially "Jammu Pink" Tulip, which stands low yet distinguished with its rich pink petals edged with white, giving it a shiny texture.

The Mughal Gardens saw 5.18 lakh visitors last year and has received 3-6 lakh visitors every year since 2003. "The large number of visitors also pose some issues when they don't adhere to guidance and let their children pluck flowers or create disturbance for others," Joshi told PTI. "There will be security, barricades where necessary and our garden staff will keep an eye on anyone ruining the plants. It's a difficult task to maintain the garden if we don't take care, it takes a long time to bring it to its original shape," he added.

Inspired by the Mughal Gardens of Jammu and Kashmir, the garden around the Taj Mahal as well as Persian and Indian miniature paintings, the Mughal Gardens was designed by Edwin Lutyens and includes many elements of British garden art.

Covered by "doob" grass, which was originally brought from the Belvedere Estate, Kolkata, the lawn is abundantly covered by shade of neatly trimmed trees like Mouslari, Cypress and China Orange.



Children run near tulips in full bloom at the Mughal Gardens of Rashtrapati Bhawan. PTI

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## CAA-NRC-NPR

# Elderly woman dies after falling ill at Kolkata stir



**Kolkata:** An elderly woman, who was part of the ongoing demonstration by women against the CAA and the proposed nationwide NRC at the Park Circus Maidan here, died on Sunday after falling ill, police said.

The 57-year-old woman fell unconscious at the protest site around 2 am and was taken to a nearby hospital, they said.

Samida Khatun, a resident of Entally area, died at the hospital after sometime, police said.

Around 60 women have

been staging protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) at Park Circus Maidan, on the lines of the Shaheen Bagh agitation in Delhi.

The woman's last rites will be performed later in the day after her son arrives from Iran, a fellow protestor said. **PTI**

# Meghalaya Guv calls Didi Govt the vilest

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Meghalaya Governor Tathagata Roy has lashed out the Mamata Banerjee Government for its alleged contemptibility in dealing with Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar. This, while the Trinamool Congress leadership has faulted the Narendra Modi Government for its 'barbaric ways'.

Speaking to newsmen Roy on Sunday said that he had "never seen such a mean Government" in his life. Referring to the way the State administration conducted itself when Dhankhar was being humiliated by the students of Jadavpur and Calcutta Universities, Roy said "this is absolute vileness which does not go with the great Bengali culture."

The Governments had come and gone but none had misbehaved with a Governor like this Roy said. "I have never seen such a wicked and dirty behavior from any Government earlier... The way he was humiliated at the Calcutta University convocation programme is really reprehensible... One can-

not conceive of a Governor who is also the chancellor of the University being blockaded and humiliated by students in presence of the State police... so that he had to abandon the programme" and retire from the venue," he said.

Dhankhar had been in loggerheads with the State Government ever since he ignored the State Government's advisory and personally went to the Jadavpur University to secure the release of Union Minister Babul Supriyo who had been blockaded by the agitating students there.

Subsequently he had repeatedly complained against the State Government for refusing to cooperate with him whenever he tried to visit the districts to take stock of administrative situations there.

On the other hand Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and other senior ministers repeatedly attacked the Governor for crossing the line of political decorum and interfering in the State's administrative affairs.

The TMC leadership even went to the extent of calling the Governor a spokesperson of the BJP while

Banerjee charged the Central Government with "trying to run a parallel administration in the State through the Governor's office."

Meanwhile, senior Bengal Minister and TMC general secretary Partho Chatterjee on Sunday said BJP was running a barbaric regime in the centre. Referring to a "cruel remark" by a State BJP leader over the death of a woman who died amidst a sit-in demonstration against the Citizenship Amendment Act at Park Circus, Chatterjee said "this is a barbaric (Central) government. They (BJP) are inhuman. India has never seen such a barbaric and inhuman Government. They are insensitive to all kind of tragedy. I don't think sit-in demonstrations will move them."

He was referring to the death of a woman who fell ill amidst the Park Circus dharna against CAA and later succumbed to her ailments. Kolkata too had been protesting for the past more than a week against the CAA through a sit-in at Park Circus maidan a la Shaheen Bagh in Delhi.

# Day after confusion, 'Mumbai Bagh' protest continues on day 8

**Mumbai:** A day after attempts were made by some groups to call off the anti-CAA protest at Nagpada here, the stir, which has now come to be known as 'Mumbai Bagh', entered its eighth day on Sunday.

Confusion and high drama had prevailed on Saturday at the sit-in demonstration being held by women against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) on Morland Road in Nagpada after a section of the protesters decided to call off the protest as the police told the volunteers to vacate the area saying they did not have permission for it.

However, soon after the announcement was made that the protest was being called off, a huge crowd came to the site and started raising slogans. Following this, the plan was given up and the protest continued.

Talking to PTI on Sunday, Feroze Mithiborwala, organiser of the protest, said, "Despite the attempts to sabotage the 'Mumbai Bagh' protest by certain inside elements as well as by the police, the protest continues. We are now stronger and more resolute than before."

"The all-women protest, which began on the night of January 26, entered the

eighth day on Sunday. We request to the Mumbai Police to cooperate with the organisers of this peaceful protest," he said.

"Mumbai Bagh has become another Shaheen Bagh and it has successfully resisted all attempts to end the protest," he added.

Mithiborwala appealed to the citizens to join the stir in large numbers and show solidarity with the protesters.

Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) president Aishe Ghosh, who visited the protest site at 10.30 pm on Saturday to give a speech, was stopped by the police from using a megaphone saying the use of loudspeaker or public address system was prohibited after 10 pm. Ghosh addressed the gathering without the megaphone.

"When Ghosh arrived there, police told the organisers that they cannot use loudspeakers or public address system as the 10 pm deadline has ended. They were also asked to remove the sound boxes as well," a police official said.

Mithiborwala said, "Police refused to let Ghosh use the megaphone. So she addressed the gathering without it and inspired the people." **PTI**

# Stalin launches signature campaign against Act

**Chennai:** DMK president MK Stalin on Sunday launched a 'one crore signature campaign' against the Citizenship Amendment Act, the National Register of Citizens and the National Population Register here.

Launching the drive in which his party-led coalition partners, including the Congress, Left parties, IUML and MDMK are also taking part, Stalin slammed the Centre for "beginning work" for the NRC and NPR like it passed the CAA in Parliament.

"Sometimes we are confused about our own date of birth. When this is the case, a situation has now come about in which details about older

generations like our father and grandfather are sought," he claimed.

Though Opposition parties had all along opposed the CAA and other aspects like the citizenship register, the Central Government has, however, turned a deaf ear to it, he said.

Home Minister Amit Shah 'autocratically' declared that the Citizenship law will be implemented and Prime Minister Narendra Modi too echoed the view, the DMK leader said.

"CAA must be repealed and initiatives related to both the NPR and NRC must not be taken up and these are the campaign objectives and this drive will emerge victorious,"

he said. Stalin, also the leader of opposition in the Tamil Nadu assembly, strongly criticised the ruling AIADMK for supporting the CAA and said the signature drive has been launched following several forms of protests like demonstrations.

Wearing a "No to CAA NPR NRC," tag, the top DMK leader affixed his signature to kick start the campaign in his Kolathur Assembly constituency here.

The drive, with participation from his party and allies will be held across the State and volunteers will go door to door and get people's signatures after explaining the reasons, he said. **PTI**



Artists paint a human chain on a wall during a protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act, at Mumbra in Mumbai on Sunday

# Artists protest against Act

**Thane:** At least 60 artists from various parts of the country on Sunday vented their anger against the CAA-NRC-NPR regime on canvas at Mumbra in Maharashtra's Thane district.

The "Mumbra Shaheen Bagh" protest was organised by the Joint Action Committee for Social Justice, the Secular Art Movement of Maharashtra, the Artist Rises for India and local activists in solidarity with the Shaheen Bagh protesters in Delhi.

"The artists came from different parts of the country and raised their voice on canvas against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the National Population Register (NPR)," an organiser said. **PTI**

# Goa Budget session from today; Opp to raise CAA, NRC

**Panaji:** The Opposition is set to raise burning issues like the new citizenship law, proposed country-wide NRC and 'diversion' of the Mahadayi river water by Karnataka in the Budget session of the Goa Legislative Assembly beginning Monday.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant will table the state budget on February 6.

The Opposition parties comprising the Congress had announced that they would raise issues like the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), National Register of Citizens (NRC) and diversion of the Mahadayi river water by neighbouring Karnataka during the five-day-long session.

In the House of 40, the ruling BJP has 27 MLAs of its own. The party-led Government enjoys support of two Independent MLAs and an NCP legislator.

Among the rest 10 MLAs, five are from the Congress, three from the Goa Forward Party (GFP), one

from the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) and an Independent.

Meanwhile, the chief minister said that his first-ever Budget would be on the lines of the Union Budget tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday.

Various industrial bodies, including the Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI), have suggested various measures to boost the sagging revenue, which has taken hit due to suspended mining operations.

GCCI president Manoj Caculo identified agriculture and revival of sick industries as the key thrust areas for the government to bring the economy back on track.

A special one-day session of the state Legislative Assembly was held on January 7 to ratify the Constitutional amendment bill that extends reservations to Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies by another 10 years. **PTI**

# Kerala CM: Colonisers' strategy of dividing people being used today

**Mumbai:** Hitting out at the Centre over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Sunday said the "communal elements" today were using the British colonisers' strategy of disrupting people's unity by dividing them on communal lines.

He also said that the CAA must be rejected as it was "against the Constitution", 'divisive' and "seeks to impose the philosophy of Hindutva", due to which the country's secular fabric was facing a 'profound crisis'.

According to him, the amended citizenship law has pierced the secular mind of the people and rekindled the spirit of nationalist movement.

Vijayan, who heads the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) Government in the southern state, was speaking at the 'Mumbai Collective' here on 'National struggle against communalism'.

"In the past, our movement was against the colonisers, but presently our struggle against communalism is a movement against those who stood

with the colonisers," he said. "In the past, the colonisers tried to disrupt people's unity by dividing them on communal lines. Today, the communal elements are using the same strategy experimented by their masters," he added.

The fact that so many of us are out there on the streets, and gatherings such as this are happening across the country, are indicators of what our nation thinks at this point of time, Vijayan said.

"We do not have an iota of doubt that India's secular structure is facing a profound crisis, that our Constitution is under threat, and that our democracy itself is sought to be fundamentally undermined by the communal forces," he alleged.

"While a series of interventions with a communal agenda have been made by the ruling dispensation, it is the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 that has proved to be the last weapon which has strongly pierced the secular mind of our people. It has rekindled the spirit of out nationalist movement," he

said. He also defended the anti-CAA resolution passed by the Kerala Assembly.

"The Kerala Legislative Assembly has passed a resolution demanding the central government to repeal the Citizenship Amendment Act. Constitutionally, a state assembly can do so; it is well within its constitutional powers," he said.

Kerala was the first state to pass a resolution against the CAA, followed by Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal.

"The CAA-2019 has imperiled the nation's constitutional values, and it must be rejected for three reasons," Vijayan said.

"First of all, it is against the letter and spirit of our Constitution. Secondly, it is divisive, deeply discriminatory and violative of human rights. And third, it seeks to impose the politics and philosophy of Hindutva, with its vision of a 'Hindu Rashtra' on our entire people and on the basic structure of our polity," he said. **PTI**

# AMU constitutes panel to probe campus violence

**Aligarh:** The one-man judicial panel constituted by the Aligarh Muslim University to probe into violent incidents that rocked the campus in December 2019 has asked students and staffers at the AMU to submit their written statements by February 7, according to an official notification.

The probe is being conducted by retired chief justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court VK Gupta.

As per the notification issued on Saturday, students and staffers at the AMU should submit their written statements to the probe panel by February 7.

Similarly, a seven-member committee of senior faculty members instituted by AMU Vice Chancellor Tariq Mansoor to review all the FIRs registered by police against students in connection with anti-CAA protests is also expected to start

functioning shortly, AMU spokesman Omar Peerzada said.

The committee is headed by Professor Najam Khaliq of the Department of Community Medicine, Peerzada said.

He said the purpose of this committee is to help out the students who have been booked under 'false charges'.

"This committee would explore all legal and administrative steps for preventing undue harassment of all innocent students," he said.

Meanwhile, AMU officials said that there was a "marked improvement" in attendance in all faculties on Friday. The university was closed early for winter vacations from December 16 last year, a day after students clashed with police during a protest against the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Act on campus. **PTI**

# Murmu hopeful of visible change in next few months in J&K

**Jammu:** Jammu & Kashmir Lt Governor GC Murmu has said his administration is working tirelessly towards the welfare of the people and a discernible change would be visible on the ground in the Union Territory in the next few months.

He also said the Government alone cannot sustain the economy and it is the entrepreneurs who drive the economic engine of a country, emphasising that the dream of a five trillion USD economy will be a reality if the energy of youth is harnessed to its full potential.

"The Government is committed to strengthening the socio-economic fabric of Jammu & Kashmir and is always open to the ideas which can take this march forward... The Government is working tirelessly towards the welfare of the people and in the coming few months, a discernible change would be visible on the ground," Murmu



said at a function at Bari Brahmana in Samba district. In a boost to entrepreneurship and silk farming in the Jammu region, the Lt Governor inaugurated the newly-constructed, state-of-the-art administrative cum faculty block of the Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Institute (JKEDI), besides a government silk weaving factory and silk filatures facility at Bari

Brahmana. The Lt Governor emphasised the importance of entrepreneurship and exhorted the youth to learn from the success stories to make a difference.

"There is no dearth of talent and only a little hand-holding of the youth is required to give them a purposeful direction," he said and advised the EDI officials to ensure advanced skill development

and specialised training to the youth in consonance with the emerging requirements.

While launching a book on the success stories of entrepreneurs from Jammu & Kashmir, the Lt Governor appreciated the local entrepreneurs for scripting these success stories and felicitated them for achieving exceptional milestones in their respective ventures.

"You are the job creators and wealth creators. The Government alone cannot sustain the economy; it is the entrepreneurs like you who drive the economic engine of a country. The dream of a five trillion USD economy will be a reality if the energy of youth is harnessed to its full potential," he said.

The Government silk weaving factory and silk filatures have been established with project cost of ₹16.80 crore and ₹6.64 crore, respectively in a record time of about two years. **PTI**

# Kashmir: 2 CRPF jawans, 7 civilians hurt in grenade attack

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Two jawans of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) along with seven civilians sustained splinter injuries in a grenade attack in busy Lal Chowk area of Srinagar on Sunday. Hundreds of people were busy doing routine shopping in the Sunday market at the time of the grenade attack.

Police spokesman said, "terrorists lobbed a grenade in Lal Chowk area of Srinagar in which two civilians & two security force personnel sustained injuries".

Eyewitness reports claimed terrorists had targeted CRPF personnel posted on duty near Pratap park



area of the city. Soon after the grenade attack took place the entire area was cordoned off by the security personnel and the injured were shifted to a nearby hospital.

In Jammu region, Pakistan initiated ceasefire violation by firing small arms and shelling with mor-

tars along the line of control in Balakote sector. Reports of ceasefire violation also received from Mendhar tehsil in Poonch.

Defence PRO in Jammu said, Pakistan initiated ceasefire violation in Balakote sector around 7.00 p.m He said the Indian army retaliated befittingly.

# Woman injured in Bengal's Birbhum blast

PNS ■ KOLKATA

An old woman was injured following a loud explosion inside a house in Birbhum district. The intensity of the blast was so much that door of the house was torn apart and tossed away, sources said.

The police said investigations were on to understand the reasons of the blast.

This particularly because the site of the blast is not far from Khagragarh in neighbouring Burdwan district where a blast in 2014 killed two militants besides opening the lid of an elaborate terror network run by Jamat ul Mujahideen Bangladesh.

The blast site is also a few kms away from the Simulia madarsa from where the modules of JMB were functioning.

"We are investigation into the matter and nothing can be conclusively said at this point," said a senior police officer of the district.

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

WB: Surveillance system in place along B'desh Border

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The West Bengal health department, in the wake of the growing coronavirus threat, has put in place a surveillance mechanism in Hili, Petrapole and Gede areas along the India-Bangladesh border, a senior official said.

People entering the country from Bangladesh would be screened at these important checkpoints, as some among them might have visited China in the recent past, he said.

"We need to keep an eye on those entering India through these borders. Among them, there could be some who have recently travelled to China. We must conduct a medical test on them, before allowing them entry," the official said.

Ajay Chakraborty, the director of health services, had a few days ago visited the bordering

areas to oversee the medical facilities available there.

The State health department had last month initiated similar measures in Mirik, Pashupati market and Panitanki village along India-Nepal border. Nepal confirmed its first case of coronavirus a week ago.

On Friday, surveillance was also heightened in the Tangra area — the city's China Town.

"People in Tangra have relatives in China. If someone happened to have visited China recently, authorities at the city airport must have screened them. We are, however, conducting another survey to be absolutely sure," another senior official at the state health department said.

The State Government has also decided to set up isolation wards at seven medical establishments, besides the Beliaghata

ID hospital, where precautionary measures are already in place.

"These medical establishments have been directed to appoint one nodal officer to look after the preparations, and take a quick decision in case a coronavirus case is reported," he said, adding that all hospitals have been asked to keep adequate number of gloves and face masks in store.

The Bengal Government has also launched two helpline numbers — (033) 23412600 and 180031344222 — for people seeking help and information on the respiratory illness.

"The call centre numbers would be active 24x7. Doctors will be available to advice callers on the steps that should be taken and the tests that need to be conducted if someone complains of coronavirus symptoms," the official added.

Assam Govt assures people of no coronavirus infection in State

Guwahati: The Assam Government on Sunday allayed the fears of people, following media reports, of a person admitted to a hospital here with coronavirus infection.

Assam Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Pijush Hazarika said the person, who recently came from Kerala, was admitted to Gauhati Medical College and Hospital for suspected coronavirus infection.

"He was kept in isolation ward and given treatment. He is still in hospital and we are closely monitoring the situation," Hazarika said.

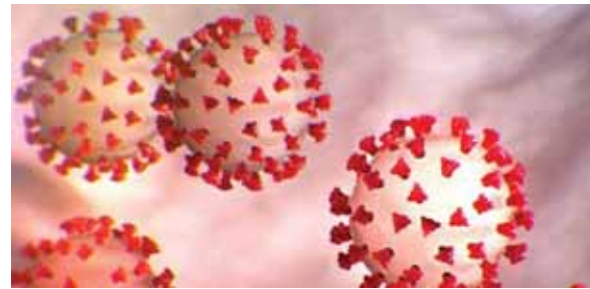
The youth, who hails from Morigaon district, was sent to the GMCH after he landed at the Lokopriya Bordoloi International Airport here with flu-like symptoms.

"In view of news reports of a Coronavirus case in

Assam, we would like to clarify that the symptoms of the person admitted in GMCH with fever and skin rash is that of Measles.

"The person is under observation," a statement from National Health Mission said.

In view of the coronavirus outbreak in China and India reporting the second



case of novel coronavirus, the Airports Authority of India has taken special measures at the airport to screen passengers.

2 persons put under house quarantine in Mizoram

Aizawl: Two persons, who returned to Mizoram from China in early January, have been put under house quarantine in wake of the outbreak of the deadly coronavirus, a senior official said on Sunday.

Though they did not show any symptoms of being infected with the virus and both of

health department, Lalngura Tlau, told PTI.

The Government has set up a screening counter at Lengpui airport and constituted a state-level task force as a precautionary measure to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus in the State, Tlau said.

A medical team has been deployed at the airport to screen passengers and collect samples (throat swab) from them. "The Centre has directed us to screen passengers who returned from China after January 14. We will check all passengers coming from outside," he said.

The State Government has not yet received any report of anyone being infected in the state till date, Tlau said.

He also said that the government is in close contact with Mizo students in China.

"We have created a Whatsapp group for students from Mizoram for speedy

information. We have been in close contact with them," he said.

Meanwhile, the state government has no plans to take back the student as the matter rests with the Union External Affairs Ministry, the official said.

The health department has received a report that a student, who is returning from China has already reached India, and will land at Lengpui airport on Monday.

He will be screened again, the official added. Tlau also said that the state task force team and chief medical officers in all the eleven districts are ready to handle any situation.

During a high-level meeting on Thursday, State Health Minister Dr R Lalthangliana instructed the State home department to set up screening points at inter-state and internal borders. PTI

Jaipur: Three test negative

Jaipur: Three persons who were admitted to a hospital here have tested negative for the novel coronavirus, officials said on Sunday.

They were admitted to the hospital on Saturday and were kept under observation.

"All three have tested negative for coronavirus," Dr DS Meena, Superintendent of SMS Hospital said on Sunday. Arrangements have been made at Alwar's ESIC Medical College for keeping nearly 300 Indian citizens airlifted from China's Wuhan city, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak. The batch of passengers has not yet arrived and is likely to arrive on Monday, said Ravi Sharma, a state health department official coordinating with the Centre. He said 300 beds have been prepared in two hostels and adequate staff has been deployed.

Deputy CMHO, Alwar, Dr Chhabil Kumar said the passengers will be quarantined and kept under observation for 28 days. PTI

Only one swab sample enough for testing: WHO

Mumbai: In a fresh set of instructions, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has said that testing of only one swab sample is enough, as against the earlier two, in suspected novel coronavirus cases, a senior Maharashtra health official said on Sunday.

The new WHO instructions will ensure faster testing of samples which will quicken the fight against the 2019-nCoV outbreak, the official said.

"We have received a new set of instructions from the WHO recommending that one swab sample is sufficient for testing of novel coronavirus infection. Earlier, we were sending two samples of each patient to NIV (National Institute of Virology in Pune) for testing,"



Maharashtra state disease surveillance officer Dr Pradeep Awate told PTI.

"This will ensure faster testing of samples, which will quicken the fight against coronavirus. We are tracking passengers arriving from China for

a period of 28 days from the date of their arrival," he added.

So far, no confirmed case of coronavirus infection has been found in the state. All 15 persons quarantined across the hospitals in Maharashtra for possible exposure have tested negative, officials have said.

The novel coronavirus started in Hubei province of China and has since spread to several countries, including two positive cases in India, both in the southern state of Kerala.

Chinese health authorities have said that the number of confirmed deaths from the coronavirus outbreak rose to 304 there, with hardest-hit Hubei province on Sunday reporting 45 new fatalities. PTI

Maha: 12 of 17 discharged after samples tested negative

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Samples of 12 of the total 17 persons who were admitted in hospitals in Maharashtra for suspected novel Coronavirus infection have tested negative, following which they have been discharged, a Health department official said on Sunday night.

He said the 17 persons were admitted in hospitals in Mumbai, Pune and Nanded in the recent past.

"The 12 patients have been released from Mumbai, Pune and Nanded-based hospitals after their samples tested negative for Coronavirus. The remaining five patients—three in Pune and two in Mumbai—will be discharged if their swab samples tested negative," he

said. The official further said they have been taking regular follow-up on the health of 72 persons who had returned from China.

"It is a part of the standard laid down procedure in such scenario," he said.

He said a total of 6,432 people have been screened at the Mumbai international airport so far after their arrival from China.

So far, no confirmed case of coronavirus infection has been found in the state.

The outbreak of the deadly novel coronavirus was first reported in Hubei province of China and has since spread to several countries, including two positive cases in India, both in the southern state of Kerala.

Farmers in Tamil Nadu not getting MSP announced by Centre

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

There is no end to the woes of the Tamil Nadu farmers. It ranges from non-availability of water for irrigating the paddy fields and scarcity of fertilizers and labour to work in the farms. The frequent interactions with farmers in most of the districts across the State yielded information which is not music to the ears of the authorities concerned.

Even as they expressed their gratitude to the Union Finance Minister who has set apart ₹15 lakh crore exclusively for farm loan, farmer leaders live RV Giri, president, Consortium of Indian Farmers Associations (CIFA) ask the authorities to ensure that the

farm loans reach the hands of the needy farmers. "There is no system as on today, at least in Tamil Nadu, to ensure that the loans reach the needy farmers," said Giri.

But the most shocking disclosure made by Giri as well as Kattamannarkoil Kannan, secretary, Cauvery Delta Farmers Association, is that farmers in Tamil Nadu do not get the Minimum Support Price announced by the Centre. Though the Centre had declared a MSP of ₹1,815/- per quintal for paddy for the year 2019-2020, Tamil Nadu farmers have not received any figure in the close vicinity of the Government rate. "The Direct Purchase Centres set by the State Government are far away from the villages and the paddy

fields. The farmers do not have the transport mechanism to carry the paddy to the DPCs. Even if they manage to do it, the bureaucrats and employees manning the DPCs ask money ranging from ₹10 to ₹100 per bag per person. What we get is far below the price announced by the Government," said Kannan and Arupathi Kalyanam, another farm leader from Nagapattinam.

The State Government officials, as usual, denied and dismissed the 'charges' and 'allegations' as 'baseless' made by the farmers and farm leaders. But the farmers were unanimous in their contention that the MSP was meant for reading in news papers and the reality was something different.

According to Kannan and

Giri, the DPC officials churn out a number of reasons not to accept the paddy brought to them. "They say that the moisture content in the paddy bags are more than prescribed by the government agencies and hence not acceptable. The poor and illiterate farmers are left helpless by these arguments," said Kannan.

Kalyanam said that unless the Centre has a fool-proof mechanism for disbursing the MSP, the farmers would continue to be at the mercy of government employees as well as traders.

"The hike in amount set apart for farming sector would yield the results only if the government has the technical knowhow to monitor whether the farmers are benefitted

individually.

We have been pleading with the Government for the implementation of the MS Swaminathan Commission Recommendations which had asked the Government to incorporate the cost of production and a fifty per cent profit in the final Minimum Support Price of the commodities. This would have helped the farmers to double their income. The Swaminathan Commission Report was submitted to the Centre in 2006," said Kalyanam who has launched a new movement by name Self Sufficient Green Villages Movement which focusses on 'swadeshi self reliance economic policies' to make India a Five trillion Dollar economy soon.

Pune: 50 vehicles damaged as vandals go on rampage

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In an apparent effort to terrorise people, some unidentified hoodlums went on a rampage in three different areas of Pune, vandalising at least 50 vehicles, including cars, autorickshaws, tempos and two-wheelers in three separate incidents that took place from Friday night to Sunday morning.

The incidents have taken the police by unawares and left the affected Pune-kars shell-shocked. The police have registered cases against some unidentified persons made a few arrests and are trying to ascertain if the three incidents are inter-linked.

In Pune's Sahakar Nagar locality which bore the maximum brunt, saw hoodlums—armed with some sickles, iron rods and sticks targetted and damaged at least 30 vehicles at around 2 am on Sunday.

The miscreants went on a rampaging spree, smashing the glass panes and damaging vehicles indiscriminately parked on the road. In a few cases, the miscreants have deflated the tyres of vehicles. They also set ablaze damaged vehicles, including a car, auto rickshaw and bicycles and set them on

Police have registered cases against some unidentified persons made a few arrests and are trying to ascertain if the three incidents are inter-linked

that took place on Friday night. The police are investigating the motive behind the incident.

The Sahakar Nagar police have detained some persons for questioning in connection with the incident that took place in the early hours of Sunday. Like in the earlier incident, the police have not established as yet as to what the motive behind the incident. Eyewitnesses have told the police that there were miscreants behind the incident.

No arrests have so far been made in connection with the incident that took place at Nigdi.

There have been similar incidents of vandalism in Pune in the recent past. On the night of June 12, 2019 some unidentified miscreants went on a rampage near Kamla Nehru Hospital area in Pune's Mangalwar Peth area, damaging at least six vehicles including two-wheelers and four-wheelers. In another incident that took place on the night of October 10, 2019, six vehicles—four autorickshaws, a tempo and a car—were damaged by some unidentified miscreants in front of the office of a local corporator at Pune's Ramtekdi locality coming under the Wanowrie police station.

Goa Citizens' group paints speed breakers, earns Gadkari's praise

Panaji: In a move aimed at reducing road accidents, a citizens' group in Goa has so far painted over 130 speed breakers in the State in white colour to increase their visibility, which has earned praise from Union minister Nitin Gadkari.

The group has been carrying out this activity under the #RostoGoa campaign.

Activist Cecille Rodrigues, who is leading the campaign, said, "The speed breakers had turned blind spots, causing road accidents. The RostoGoa initiative began from my own

Taleigao constituency and spread to other areas, including Calangute, Baga which are prominent tourist spots."

"Initially, a small group of like-minded people began painting the speed breakers, but later many others joined as the initiative through social media," she added.

Rodrigues said she had earlier met with an accident due to a speed breaker. Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari recently tweeted about the initiative and appreciated the group for its efforts. PTI

K'taka Cabinet expansion on Feb 6: CM

Bengaluru: The much awaited expansion of the Karnataka cabinet will take place on February 6 with Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa on Sunday saying that 13 MLAs would take oath of office.

"The Cabinet expansion will take place on February 6 with the oath-taking ceremony at the Raj Bhavan at 10.30 AM," he told reporters here. Thirteen MLAs, including 10 who had joined BJP from parties, including Congress and the JD(S), will take oath, he said. Yediyurappa had received the nod from the BJP central leadership on January 31 for the expansion of his six month old cabinet.

The exercise has been on the cards for nearly two months

ever since BJP won 12 of the 15 seats in the December 5 2019 bypolls, helping the Yediyurappa Government retain majority in the Assembly.

There are 18 Ministers, including the Chief Minister, in the Cabinet that has a sanctioned strength of 34. Sixteen berths are vacant.

The Chief Minister had said that barring one or two, most of the disqualified JDS-Congress MLAs who got re-elected in the bypolls on BJP tickets would be made Ministers, but that there would not be additional deputy chief ministers.

Though he had given an assurance to all 11 re-elected legislators that they would be

made ministers, he said on Sunday that 10 of them would be made ministers.

The Cabinet expansion exercise will be a delicate task for the Chief Minister as he has to ensure adequate representation to various castes and regions.

The cabinet already has eight Lingayats, including the Chief Minister, three Vokkaligas, three from Scheduled Castes, two OBCs, one from the Scheduled Tribe and a Brahmin.

Opposition parties have been critical of the BJP and Yediyurappa over the delay in the cabinet expansion, alleging that he was weak and that his administration had collapsed. PTI

Three mild quakes hit Gujarat's Kutch district within 14 hours

Ahmedabad: Three low-intensity earthquakes shook parts of Kutch district in Gujarat within 14 hours ending around 9 am on Sunday, an official said.

While two quakes were recorded within a gap of nearly half an hour on Sunday morning, another one was reported on Saturday evening, the official said, adding that no

damage to property or casualty was reported.

"An earthquake of 3.3 magnitude on Richter scale was felt in Kutch district with its epicentre being 11 kms north-northeast from Bhachau in Kutch district. It was recorded at 8.35 am," an official of Gandhinagar-based Institute of Seismological Research said.

Another quake of 2.1 magnitude was recorded at 9.7 am on Sunday with its epicentre around 46 kms north-northwest from Bela in the same district, he added.

The third earthquake of 3.0 magnitude was recorded at 7.24 pm on Saturday with its epicentre at 23 kms south-southeast from Rapar in Kutch district, the official said. PTI

**Office of Nagar Nigam Rudrapur**  
Distt. U.S. Nagar (Uttarakhand)  
Email: nagarnigamrudrapur@gmail.com Tel: 05944-242400 Visit: www.nagarnigamrudrapur.com  
Ref: 3051/2019-20/PB Date: 01.02.2020

**Request for Proposal (RFP)**  
Nagar Nigam Rudrapur invites E-tender/RFP for Selection of Concessionaire to process the Wet Waste handled over by the Nagar Nigam Rudrapur and convert it to Bio-CNG (50 MT Capacity Per day) at Rudrapur District-Udhm Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand in DFBOT Model under PPP mode. Interested bidders may obtain bidding document by registering themselves to the e-tendering portal (<https://www.uktenders.gov.in>) and download the bidding documents from 03.02.2020 at 11:00 am and shall submit upto 5:00 pm on 24.02.2020. The tender will be opened by the tendering opening committee at 11:30 am on 25.02.2020. For more details and Key dates visit above website and [www.nagarnigamrudrapur.com](http://www.nagarnigamrudrapur.com).

(Jai Bharat Singh) Municipal Commissioner (Rampal Singh) Mayor

PAPER WITH PASSION

## A road to nowhere

Some lower rate income taxpayers might be happy but what else exactly did this budget achieve? Nothing really



The Bombay Stock Exchange dropped nearly 1000 points a couple of hours after Finance Minister (FM) Nirmala Sitharaman finished delivering her Budget speech. As far as percentage drops go, there have been worse single-day collapses in the Indian capital markets but this time even corporate titans and financial experts were far from divided on the Budget. There was a universal feeling that it had missed the opportunity for big bang structural reforms that could have given a sense of direction and purpose to the economy. Of

particular irritation was the sense that the Government did not acknowledge that India is in the midst of an economic crisis and it was telling to hear even talking heads sympathetic to the government feeling a bit down after the speech. And what a speech it was; even with the standard deduction for couplets by classical poets, it was just short of three hours. Possibly that was the biggest disappointment with the Budget, a lot of talk but not all that much action. The headline that almost everyone will concentrate on is the rejig in personal income taxes, a slight reduction in income tax slabs which will help those Indians who earn less than ₹15 lakh a year. But there is a massive rider there, the old income tax regime remains because the new tax slabs allow for fewer exemptions. So effectively, older taxpayers who make tax-linked investments will most likely not shift away from the existing tax regime. In fact, while the FM spoke about "simplification" of the income tax system, it is likely that most taxpayers, other than those in the lower slabs, will have to sit down with professionals and work out how best to structure their taxes. The Government has long spoken about the need to rationalise income taxes and reduce exemptions and that is an achievable ideal. If that needed to be done, a more radical change in tax slabs would have been in order than having a confusing and parallel income tax system in place. Removing exemptions, including most under Section 80, medical insurance and house rent allowance among others, will almost ensure that few, if any, Indian tax payers will move to the new regime. That said, the abolishing of dividend distribution tax is a net positive for investors, albeit resident Indian promoters and high net-worth individuals might be desperately unhappy as their dividends will now be taxed at their regular tax rates. Then there is the fiscal deficit, with several economic experts openly questioning the Government's maths. It is very possible that it can mop up funds from divesting its share in several public sector units. The FM said that the Government would divest a portion of its holding in Life Insurance Company of India (LIC) but given that the overall disinvestment process has been haphazard under the Narendra Modi government, there are open questions about how this will be done.

While negativity will take us nowhere, this is the first budget in several years where Indian industry has been so highly critical of the Government. Of course, several industrialists and bankers realise that Sitharaman has to walk a tightrope between maintaining fiscal prudence and the profligacy of overspending. The latter has been relatively constrained. There are some interesting new spends such as investment in clean air, which are welcome. However, as we close the chapter on yet another budget, there is this overwhelming sense that this could have been so much more. This is not just a bad budget, it is a disappointing one.

## Social message

Without a result-oriented revamp, the social sector allocations end up being plain vacuous



Just as we are left confused as to whether the Budget is a vision document meant for a conclave or indeed about fund allocations for sectoral growth, many would find the announcements and the length devoted to the social sector encouraging. But just as we are finding the god of deliverance in the small things, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman offered some to both the health and education sectors, albeit in the nature of a summary role than pondering on the practicalities of implementation. She announced an outlay of

₹69,000 crore for healthcare, up from ₹62,398 crore last year and still short of the 2.5 per cent of the GDP promised by the Government. This is way off the ₹1,50,000 crore that health industry bigwigs had sought to drive the sector forward. And way lesser than what other emerging economies, BRICS and even Afghanistan and Nepal are spending. For a nation that has an increasing disease burden and a rapidly ageing population, a fact we disregard as we obsess over our young productive age group, there is no major policy overhaul that is indicated. That probably has got to do with the fact the Ayushman Bharat Yojna, which provides a cover of up to ₹5 lakh per poor family, has yet to overcome hurdles of execution. Private hospitals are yet to rationalise their packages with the subsidised costs and at the micro-level are turning away applicants who do not understand the fine print of medical conditions and what makes them eligible for entitlement and what not. There's a question hovering over the number of marginalised people it has managed to shield. So the Government has played safe by just apportioning a part of the total allocation, ₹6,400 crore, for the scheme. Instead, it would have been far more prudent for the Government to route some funds to smaller hospitals in Tier II and III cities and net them in as providers of Ayushman Bharat. Of course, the Government has been responsive in addressing the gaps in the public health delivery system by provisioning for local medical colleges to be attached to district hospitals in the private-public partnership (PPP) mode, with some exemptions on land to be acquired for this purpose. The FM also announced a special bridge course for medicare professionals. India's doctor to patient ratio is 1:1,445, against the WHO benchmark of 1:1,000. Duties on imports and special incentives for using medical devices "Made In India" may sound good but what really needs to be addressed are their quality and standardisation. Neither is there any mention of insurance, which experts have been suggesting should be tiered, for employees, the self-employed and elders, and backing them up with increased tax deductions.

The FM has allocated ₹ 99,300 crore to the education sector, ₹3,000 crore for skill development and even proposed FDIs. Clearly responding to criticism that our teaching modules fall way behind employability indices, she has announced apprenticeships at 150 higher education institutions and urban local bodies. The degree-level online education programmes to be offered by 100 top institutions would work only in terms of outreach at best. But what our education sector really needs is standardisation, quality and dynamic evolution of teaching systems. Some reports say that 63 per cent of school students will be unemployable when the fourth industrial revolution takes place and our universities, except IITs, do not even make it to the global top 100 list. Without a result-oriented revamp, the social sector allocations end up being plain vacuous.

# No growth in this story

The Indian economy is demand-constrained and investment-starved. The FM has not acknowledged these two challenges



GOURAV VALLABH

This budget was meant to increase consumption, encourage spends among the middle class, stimulate growth and primarily put the economy back on the road to recovery. Yet the reality is that far from being memorable, it is a damp squib without any sense of urgency to mean business. The story can be summed up easily. The GDP growth is the lowest in 11 years. The government estimates nominal GDP for 2020-21 at 10 per cent. It is lower than the 12 per cent that was projected in 2019-20, which turned out to be only 7.5 per cent. Private consumption is at its lowest in seven years. Investment growth is at its slowest in 17 years. Manufacturing is the lowest in 15 years. Tax growth is the lowest in 20 years. Food inflation is the highest in six years.

The government has done very little to revitalise the economy, stimulate growth rate, promote private investment, increase efficiency, create jobs or boost the rapidly shrinking exports. In a nutshell, this budget has nothing to address the problems the country faces. I am totally confused with the multiple themes, segments and programmes. Ongoing programmes have failed but still this government is throwing more (and in some cases less) money into them. Will that change anything? There is no clear vision or articulated plan for market economy, competition or higher trade intensity. This government is in complete denial that the economy faces a grave macro-economic challenge and the growth rate has declined in six successive quarters. Show me one thing in this Budget that will revive growth in 2020-21. The claim of 6 to 6.5 per cent growth next year is shocking.

It seems to me that the government's main source of revenue will be through the disinvestment of PSUs. The remaining government stake in IDBI Bank will be sold off. Also, a part of the government's stake in LIC will be sold through an IPO. This explains the doubling of the disinvestment target from the current fiscal to the next one — from ₹1 lakh crore in FY20 to ₹ 2.1 lakh crore in FY21. Even the disinvestment target for the current fiscal has not been met — with only ₹65,000 crore raised.

The Finance Minister (FM) stated that the government debt came down to 48.9 per cent from 52.2 per cent. This may be in part due to the unprecedented transfer of surplus from the RBI to the Central Government, to the tune of ₹1,76,051 crore (0.8 per cent of GDP), in August 2019. This "quasi fiscal deficit" practice is against the basic principles of prudent fiscal management.

The FM claimed that "Inflation is well contained." Yet inflation was 7.4 per cent in December 2019, a record high since July 2014. It is higher than the upper limit of the target inflation rate set by the RBI. (Target of four per cent, with upper tolerance level of six per cent, for the period between June 2016-March 2021).

The Minister claimed that the



Government's policy of Make in India has yielded "great dividends." The scheme has not yielded its target dividends. Its first target was to increase the manufacturing sector's growth rate to 12-14 per cent per annum, but the sector has only grown, on an average, at half of the targeted growth rate. In FY20, the manufacturing sector growth plummeted to a paltry two per cent. The second goal of increasing the share of manufacturing in GDP to 25 per cent by 2020 has also not been met since this figure has remained only around 15 per cent. The government is also clearly unable to meet its third target of creating 100 million additional jobs by 2022 in the manufacturing sector, given its refusal to provide numbers on how many jobs were actually created as a result of the scheme and the devastating figures provided by the NSSO, estimating the unemployment rate in 2017-18 at a 45-year high of 6.1 per cent.

The Budget emphasises the importance of building a statistical system that has strong credibility and supplies data in real time. Yet, this Government has triggered the dismantling of statistical institutions in India — from mass resignations by statisticians, to leaked reports

which the government refuses to acknowledge.

Five newer smart cities will be created. This is a meagre increment from the 100 designated already. Further, the Smart Cities Mission has been proceeding at a slow rate. At present, only 25 per cent projects proposed have been completed (1296 out of 5151) and a corresponding 11 per cent of funds have been spent on these completed projects out of the total proposed investment in the Mission.

And for all the bluster about development in Kashmir, the Minister made just a token reference to it, reciting lines from a poem by Pandit Dinanath Kaul. This is a mockery of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who cannot even hear the FM because of the communications blockade still present in many parts of the region. Of course, she conveniently omitted his full name, which is Pandit Dinanath Kaul 'Nadim'. Clearly, the honorific was politically inconvenient.

With the Budget's focus on wealth creation and a "caring society" and "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas," the question remains for whom? According to last month's Oxfam report, the top one per cent richest people in

India owns 42 per cent of the wealth of the nation, which is more than four times the wealth of the bottom 70 per cent. The rhetoric of compassion and caring has no real world implications as the BJP has launched a campaign of vitriol against peaceful anti-CAA protesters, often provoking violence against them.

The Indian economy is demand-constrained and investment-starved. The FM has not acknowledged these two challenges. Consequently, she has proposed no measures or solutions to those two challenges. If the twin obstacles remain, the economy will not turn around and there will be no relief to the millions of poor and the middle class. This government has done nothing to get us out of the financial crisis we are in. Our past track record with this government shows it failed miserably on attaining any key targets — nominal GDP growth, fiscal deficit, net tax revenue collection, disinvestment revenue or total expenditure. What is the assurance that it will meet the targets set for 2020-21? It looks like the FM has outright rejected every reform idea contained in the Economic Survey.

(The author is national spokesman, Congress)

“THE BUDGET HAS CONFUSED EVERYBODY WITH MULTIPLE THEMES, SEGMENTS AND PROGRAMMES. ONGOING PROGRAMMES HAVE FAILED BUT STILL THIS GOVERNMENT IS THROWING MORE (AND IN SOME CASES LESS) MONEY INTO THEM. WILL THAT CHANGE ANYTHING?”

## SOUNDBITE

The Government is ready to talk to protesters of Shaheen Bagh but it should be in a structured form. To clear their doubts on CAA.

Union Minister —Ravi Shankar Prasad



When I decide to wear an outfit, I'm not really nervous because when I walk out of the door, I'm secure. I don't like wardrobe malfunction!

Actor —Priyanka Chopra Jonas



If you ask if I would have been able to make Haider today, then I would be lying. All that is happening in the country is sad and pains Indians.

Film director —Vishal Bhardwaj



I have served in various capacities for India and most importantly I am still involved with the game. We will look to do an honest job.

Former cricketer —Madan Lal



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Create opportunities

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Indians at the fore" (February 1). There is no dearth of corporate professionals who bring laurels to India by getting the most coveted positions in their respective organisations. Microsoft, Google and IBM are the top-notch IT organisations of the world and heading them is a dream and honour for any professional. Arvind Krishna deserves all the credit for reaching this position. But, as rightly mentioned in your editorial, there is a flip side to this issue as well. Because we have been talking about brain drain for long. As a country, we have not been able to create a necessary ecosystem for Indian companies to transform to another level so that they compete with global counterparts and create an environment for young professionals to flourish and progress in India rather than thinking about going to the USA or the UK.

Nothing but the pathetic education system of the country is to be blamed for this. Apart from a few IITs, which still manage to appear in the ranks of top glob-

### BJP must dissuade its followers from violence

The chilling words "kisko chahiye aazadi, mai doonga aazadi (who wants freedom, I shall give freedom)" shouted by the assailant, moments before shooting at the peaceful anti-CAA march in Delhi, and "Shaheen Bagh khel khatam (The game is over for Shaheen Bagh)" posted on his Facebook page, revealed the teenager's identity, indoctrination and intention. The appalling incident appeared to be a corollary of the chant of "desh ke gaddaron ko, goli maaro sa\*\*\*n ko (shoot the traitors)" at a BJP rally and an inspired attack to intimidate the anti-CAA protesters to call off the stir. We quite understand the adversarial nature of two opposing forces representing Hindutva and secularism in the political arena. But we are perturbed at the call to violence and its actualisation as witnessed with frightening vividness in Delhi. The Hindu Mahasabha has hailed the attacker as a "national hero" and expressed its wish to "honor" him. Perhaps the Chief of Defence Staff Bipin Rawat would like to put the attacker in a de-radicalisation camp.

The subtext is that the current national crisis stems from Hindu revivalism, with religious profiling as a tool to target a section of the population, becoming the order of the day. The crux of the matter is that the BJP categorises people as "us-and-them" on the basis of religion. It is their second nature to do so. Zealots are consumed with hatred, a failure of imagination and do not accept compatriots as such,



irrespective of religion. Religious hatred is calamitous and must be an anathema to our great nation. The ruling elite arrogate to themselves the right to define "treason" and "patriotism" and decide "who is a traitor" and "who is a patriot." The Jamia shooting should be a wake-up call for the BJP to dissuade its supporters from violence. No nation divided against itself can realise its full potential. We are all obliged to be truly secular and altruistic so that we, who make up the mass of humanity in this beautiful country, can live in peace and prosper. Our prayer and hope is that the youth will save the country from going the Syrian or Rwanda way.

David Milton Maruthancode

between global organisations and all top 100 colleges in the country so that the quality of education can be improved manifold.

Bal Govind Noida

### Motormouth Thakur

Sir — This refers to the Election Commission (EC) barring BJP Minister Anurag Thakur from addressing any election rally for three days after he delivered a hate speech recently.

First, is this enough? We have a procedure laid down by the law under which he should be put on trial. But we are still waiting for that to happen. Expecting some bold steps from the current EC would be a waste of time. None in that department deserve to be a successor of the late TN Seshan. The present dispensation has got a lot of motormouths who spew venom whenever they get a chance. Worryingly, Thakur is also a part of the Sikh Regiment of the Territorial Army and serves in the capacity of a Lieutenant. Hate speeches are a recipe for mutiny and they aren't good for the integrity of the forces. Stripping Thakur of his rank would be the apt punishment and shall send the right signals across all quarters.

DS Thukral Ambala

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



**FIRST COLUMN**

## Marketing new perspectives

The overarching dominance of the Planning Commission and then the NITI Aayog have blurred the focus on regional development



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

The change in nature of markets has created several universes within its fold, so as to almost require an interpreter to talk from one segment to another. Yet in a country like India, all marketing instrumentalities, from hawking to internet communication, seem relevant. Their pertinence in the social segment in which they operate determines the robustness of that economy. Each segment has its own significance and it determines to a large extent the prosperity of the region where it operates. This economic growth is central to the community's welfare because livelihoods depend on that. However, there remains a catch-22 situation as each marketing method in a socio-economic segment can and does evolve. Leaving it frozen at a given level is unwise for the overall well-being of that division. Nature, being what it is, will induce change and its own evolution does not need a policy decision. But this progression may be slow and may be excluding migrant segments of that given economic division from returning to it for their livelihood and with a level of comfort. Thus it is that remaining migrant groups are reluctant to go back to where they originated from and settle down where they have moved to. Thereby they almost delink themselves from the base community from which they emerged. Marketing methods are a major determinant of this process.

Just as it is difficult to visualise a so-called avant-garde marketing method in a remote village cluster which does not even have proper amenities for food and shelter, so also the marketing methods have to be at peace with lifestyles and communities. The catch-22 referred to above, can be worked out by resolving this dilemma. Instruments of change have to carry out the upgradation of the affected communities without disrupting their livelihoods. This requires thought and proactive designs of intervention. Unfortunately this is a perspective which many social interventionists seem to miss altogether. The crescendo of modernisation does not help the case of graduated and gradual change. People often mistake the toolkit for substance. In the course of participation in many planning processes, it becomes evident that the interventionist paradigm of the leader, especially if he is a powerful one, gets smoother endorsement with the powers that actually control that segment. The result is many square pegs in round holes. In view of the competitiveness, India is often seen to adopt a method which appears prima-facie acceptable but undoable with immediate effect in many contexts in which it is attempted.

India is not the only country where periodically such interventions have been attempted in different pockets. Turkey, under Kemal Ataturk, attempted mediations which were not confined to economics and livelihood but also covered social engineering, where the national leader attempted to catapult the country into European social norms from the more conventional Middle Eastern ones. In many cases these intrusions did not take root and created a self-defeating environment where social practices lapsed into the original mould from where the political intervention had sought to leverage the community. In-built levels and echelons of hierarchy which were going to be affected by the changes, fought hard against them. It would be useful to remind ourselves that in a country as large as ours, it is possible and even desirable to have a certain degree of economic modeling, common at a pan-India level. At the same time, the economic diversities are so large that regional models of development will have to be crafted, evolved and practiced. Work in that direction is yet to begin in earnest. The overarching dominance of the Planning Commission and subsequently the NITI Aayog, coupled with the penchant of continuously highlighting emotive issues like caste, religion and language, have blurred the focus on regional development. It is difficult to conceive how a river valley culture of say West Bengal could be the receptacle of the same kind of economic philosophy which would work in the woodlands of Mizoram. The limited ability of economists to visualise a sociogram good enough for our agro-climatic realities and the wealth of soil and land, had high prices to pay. It is true that there are literally millions of people below the poverty line but the definition of poverty line alone reflects an overarching emphasis on the monetised version of economic development. There are substantial parts of India where forest produces are the primary resource of livelihood and where the money economy has still to make its entry in a significant enough manner to affect and create social interventions which result in positive change.

A window on the whole process can be created by extensive field-work in trying to understand what it is that moves livelihoods in a given agro-climatic zone. The first step towards the initial documentation of the ground realities is to smoothen and strengthen the conventional process in a manner in which wastage is reduced, longevity of the products is increased and the awareness of its availability is universalised in a relevant social segment where it can be bought. Socio-economic engineering based on the fulcrum of the local productivity process can move the world quicker. The lever has to be the intention and the will to give itself alternate economics, rooted in local conditions, a chance to prove itself. (The writer is a well-known management consultant)

THE UNION BUDGET GIVES THE OUTLINE OF A NEW AND CONFIDENT INDIA; IT WILL MAKE COUNTRY HEALTHY AND WEALTHY IN COMING YEARS.

—DEFENCE MINISTER  
**RAJNATH SINGH**

**POINT COUNTERPOINT**



IT (THE BUDGET) DESCRIBES THE GOVERNMENT WELL, LOT OF REPETITION, RAMBLING. ALL TALK BUT NOTHING HAPPENING FOR CITIZENS.

—CONGRESS LEADER  
**RAHUL GANDHI**

# Long on vision, short on means

The credibility of the fiscal consolidation glide path has been dented which is also reflected in the Sensex falling by over 1,000 points after the Budget announcements



UTTAM GUPTA

The Union Budget for 2020-21 presented to the Parliament by Finance Minister (FM) Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1 confirms apprehensions that the actual fiscal deficit (FD) for 2019-20 would exceed the Budget Estimate (BE) by a significant margin. Sitharaman puts it at 3.8 per cent of the GDP against the target of 3.3 per cent. However, she has justified this deviation in terms of the recommendation of the NK Singh Committee on review of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003 which permits breach of the target in case of "far-reaching structural reforms with unanticipated fiscal implications."

For 2020-21, the FM has provided for a FD of 3.5 per cent as against 3.0 per cent as stipulated under the FRBM Act. Here also, she has justified the deviation of five per cent in terms of the "unanticipated fiscal implications". One wonders whether this could be a credible justification considering that there is no major announcement in the Budget which could qualify in the category of structural reforms.

However, she has candidly acknowledged the existence of so-called off-budget liabilities and extra-budgetary resources (EBRs) — a euphemism for borrowings by agencies and PSUs made on behalf of the Government — and mentioned these in an annexure. She has also stated that it is the responsibility of the Government to service these liabilities. Having done so, logically these should have been brought on to the balance sheet and accordingly, revised the FD upward. In essence, the projected health of the Budget continues to be misleading.

The credibility of the fiscal consolidation glide path has been dented, which is also reflected in the Sensex declining by over 1,000 points or 2.5 per cent. Going through an unusually lengthy speech, one fails to come across any major reform measure that would either have the effect of bringing about drastic reduction in any of the major subsidies viz. food, fertilisers, fuel, electricity and so on or indicative of any major dilution in Government intervention or boost to market forces (as alluded to in the Economic Survey: 2019-20).

Even as the Budget is replete with welfare schemes being implemented under the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode to prevent pilferage, there is no mention of implementing DBT in the above-mentioned areas wherein subsidies guzzle over ₹300,000 crore every year. The recommendation of the Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) for attempting some reduction in food subsidy by limiting coverage (over 800 million people are covered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA)) and increase in the issue price — currently ₹1/2/3 per kg for coarse cereals, wheat and rice — remains unheeded.

In electricity, the proposal for smart meters, pre-paid meters and giving choice to consumers to choose their suppliers as a way forward to address the issues facing power distribution companies (PDCs) does nothing to deal with fundamental ailments afflicting the sector. These arise due to supply of electricity to a certain category of consumers viz. poor households and farmers either at a fraction of the cost of purchase and distribution or even free; large-scale theft (very often abetted by political brass) and inflated tariff allowed to generators under power purchase agreements (PPAs). One wonders whether these would be addressed under New Tariff Policy (NTP).

In this backdrop, the proposal to allow a lower

“THE FM HAS ATTEMPTED A DETAILED BLUEPRINT OF WHAT ALL NEEDS TO BE DONE TO PURSUE THE THREE THEMES VIZ. ‘ASPIRATIONAL INDIA’, ‘ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT’ AND, ‘CARING SOCIETY.’ BUT, IN THE ABSENCE OF CREDIBLE PLANS FOR ARRANGING RESOURCES (WITHOUT DESTABILISING THE FISCAL APPLECART) AND GARNERING NECESSARY POLITICAL WILL FOR EXECUTION, IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER THE RESULTS WILL MATCH THE INTENT



corporate tax rate of 15 per cent to existing power generation companies on par with that applicable to new enterprises (this was announced under the package of steep reduction in the corporate tax last year) will be of no consequence. A concession in tax rate helps only when the generator makes profit. But in a situation wherein it does not even get paid for its supplies (courtesy, mess in discoms), this won't be of any use.

Meanwhile, the FM has revealed the Government's decision to accept the interim recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission (FC) for 2020-21. This may not be good news for the States already facing stress on their balance sheets (due to shortfall in their own revenue and pending dues from the Centre under the GST) as the FC has recommended a significant cut in devolution of Central taxes even while proposing greater help through grant-in-aid. The Budget talks about giving a big boost to the agriculture and rural sector and reiterates the Government's overarching commitment to doubling farmers' income by 2022.

A number of innovative steps are suggested under a 16-point agenda — comprehensively covering almost every area that has an impact on farmers' ability to increase income. These cover *inter alia* adoption of flexible laws in sync with the model legislations passed by the Centre, creation of warehousing and cold storage facilities in the supply chain (including at the village level), setting up of solar power units on barren land, plan for use of proper manure (reducing dependence on chemical fertilisers) and minimising use of water, strengthening and expanding scope of Farmers Producers Organisations (FPOs) to include fisheries, increase in credit availability, increase in piped water supply to all households and so on. Agriculture being a Concurrent subject under the Constitution, all of the above is sought to be achieved by giving incentives to the States plus involvement

of agencies like the Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC), Food Corporation of India (FCI), viability gap funding plus financial support from organisations like NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) and so on.

When viewed in the backdrop of States continuing with archaic laws such as Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) under which millions of farmers and even FPOs are held hostage to politically-backed intermediaries/traders at the *mandis*, these would remain as pious declarations as always in the past. Even so, the allocation for agriculture and allied sectors and rural development at ₹283,000 crore for 2020-21 is just about ₹23,000 crore higher than the allocation for 2019-20 which is "modest" for the intended gigantic transformation. Curiously, the provision includes ₹60,000 crore for PM-KISAN which is essentially consumption oriented; it can't be deemed as augmenting the income-raising ability of farmers.

The lack of demand and investment are identified as two major constraints to growth. Continuing with a spate of stimulants provided during August/September 2019, this Budget has attempted to leave extra money in the pockets of salary earners by creating a highly differentiated slab structure. Under the new scheme of things, the highest tax rate of 30 per cent kicks in at an income of ₹15 lakh against the current threshold of ₹10 lakh. So, a person earning ₹15 lakh will save about ₹75,000 (as per the FM's calculation).

For the corporates, the dividend distribution tax (DDT) has been abolished, sparing them the double whammy of taxing profit first at the distribution stage and then in the recipient's hand. The Budget contains a spate of concessions for MSMEs, start-ups, exporters and the real estate sector, given their importance from the perspective of employment generation. A number of innovative steps are envisaged for MSMEs to help with the timely payment of their dues from large enter-

prises and increase in financing (especially through "invoice financing" by NBFCs).

The Budget reiterates the Government's commitment to continue with consolidation of public sector banks (PSBs), giving tax incentives under their mergers and amalgamations, effective use of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) for recovery of NPAs, recapitalisation for adequate provisioning and credit growth, improvement in the quality of lending and so on.

There will also be greater focus on continuous monitoring of loans and creation of a data bank to detect early signs of delinquency. The building of infrastructure commensurate with making India a \$5 trillion economy has received much attention. A comprehensive roadmap for projects to be taken up under the National Infrastructure Project (NIP) scheme is laid out. This is welcome but there remains a big question mark over funding it which entails a mammoth investment of ₹100 lakh crore over the next five years.

The Budget seeks to give a boost to "Make in India" with emphasis on consolidating its lead in the digital revolution and propping up industries involving labour-intensive technologies. However, from the way the FM has made changes in customs duties, it would appear that the Modi Government could be in for "over-protectionism." This won't be in the long-term interest of India wanting to derive a good slice of its growth potential from increasing participation in global trade.

The FM has attempted a detailed blueprint of what all needs to be done to pursue the three themes viz. "Aspirational India", "Economic Development", "Caring Society." But, in the absence of credible plans for arranging resources (without destabilising the fiscal applecart) and garnering necessary political will for execution, it is doubtful whether the results will match the intent.

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

# No statement of accounts from the FM

Allocations and numbers don't synchronise with the projections. This Government keeps on talking of long-term solutions for every problem but should we all starve and wait in the short-term?



ABHISHEK RAJA

The biggest problem with the longest Budget speech is there was no comparative on allocations to any scheme with that of the previous year. The Budget, which is called "Book of Accounts", has no meaning without numbers. Let's try to decode the Budget on some hits and mostly misses.

The Government proposed new tax slabs for individuals. Old slabs and tax rates were as follows — ₹2.50 lakh at NIL, ₹2.50-5 lakh at five per cent, ₹5-10 lakh at 20 per cent, ₹10 lakh at 30 per cent. But if you had income up to ₹ five lakh, then the tax was zero through a rebate. The new slabs and rates proposed are as follows ₹2.50 lakh at NIL, ₹2.50-5 lakh at five

per cent, ₹5-7.5 lakh at 10 per cent, ₹7.5-10 lakh at 15 per cent, ₹10-12.50 lakh at 20 per cent, ₹12.50-15 lakh at 25 per cent, above ₹15 lakh at 30 per cent. But in the new regime, there are no exemptions and deductions. The common man has an option of going with the old regime or switching over to the new one. Thus, every person has to calculate his income in both regimes and then choose one that works for him best. Thus, when the Government talks about simplification of income tax laws and return filing mechanisms, such a tax regime just ties us down to deeper complications.

In order to boost the manufacturing sector, new provisions were introduced in September 2019, offering a concessional corporate tax rate of 15 per cent to the newly-incorporated domestic companies in the manufacturing sector, which intend to roll out by March 31, 2023. This concessional tax rate benefit of 15 per cent has now been extended to new domestic companies engaged in the generation of electricity. But is the power infrastructure ready?

This Budget allocates ₹22,000

crore for power, renewable energy sector, discom reforms. Gas grid is proposed to be extended to 27,000 km (which is 16,000 km now) and gas price discovery will also be reformed. The Budget also intends to promote smart metering with all the State and Union Territories to replace conventional electricity meters by pre-paid smart meters in next three years. Pre-paid meters are against the vision of the Government. Taking electricity to every household has been a major promise but now they are moving towards pre-paid meters and privatisation of electricity. In a country where many people are still below the poverty line pre-paid electricity meters will make electricity a luxury item whereas it is a basic necessity.

The FM has proposed to sell the balance Government holding in IDBI bank to private, retail and institutional investors through the stock exchange. Certain specified categories of Government securities would be opened fully for non-resident investors, apart from being available to domestic investors as well. The Government now proposes to sell a

part of its holding in LIC by way of Initial Public Offer (IPO), ostensibly to keep it transparent. Sale of stake in LIC is a one-off event and it is important to note that on an ex-LIC basis, the fiscal deficit may be well above four per cent next year. As LIC has stakes in almost every company in India whether private or PSU, selling its stake can also be termed against "national interest." Already there is huge stress on the economy and by selling stakes in LIC, one thing is clear. That the company that till now bailed out many PSUs will bail out the Government itself.

Any tax system requires trust between taxpayers and the administration. To improve trust between the taxation department and the assessee, the Government will amend the provisions of the Income Tax Act to mandate the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) to adopt a Taxpayers' Charter. This is a welcome step towards enhancing investor confidence and trust.

The zero-Budget natural farming, which was mentioned in the July 2019 Budget, was explained further in this

Budget. Integrated farming systems in rain-fed areas will be expanded. Multi-tier cropping, bee-keeping, solar pumps, solar energy production in non-cropping season will be added. The portal on "jaivikkheti" — online national organic products market — will also be upgraded. The PM-KUSUM scheme to provide loans to farmers for setting up stand-alone solar pumps, will be expanded. Further it is also proposed to help another 15 lakh farmers solarise their grid-connected pump sets. In addition, a scheme to enable farmers to set up solar power generation capacity on their fallow/barren lands and to sell it to the grid would be operationalised.

For the sector comprising agriculture and allied activities, irrigation and rural development, an allocation of about ₹2.83 lakh crore has been made for the year 2020-21. The problem with such an approach is that most of it is just repackaging and rewording of existing schemes.

To connect farm with markets it is proposed that railways will introduce a Kisan Express and Ministry of Civil Aviation will launch Krishi

Udaan to help farmers transport perishable goods quickly. The Kisan Rail will be set up through PPP arrangement to transport perishable goods across the country at a faster pace. Further the Railways will also build cold supply chain for milk, meat and fish by setting up train services for the purpose. However, an amount for the same has not been allocated and the Government has simply expressed its intent to move in this direction but done nothing concrete.

To achieve the twin objectives of giving impetus to the domestic industry and also to generate resource for health services, the Budget imposes a nominal health cess, by way of a duty of customs, on imports of medical equipment, keeping in view that these goods are now being made significantly in India. Further it is proposed that the proceeds from this cess shall be used for creating infrastructure for health services in the aspirational districts. Given the fact that the generic drugs are yet to take off and patient trust is hard-earned, there is no mention of how India-made equipment can be pushed in terms of quality and

volumes.

To achieve higher export credit disbursement, a new scheme, NIRVIK, is being launched, which provides for higher insurance coverage, reduction in premium for small exporters and simplified procedure for claim settlements.

The best thing about this scheme is that it proposes to digitally refund to exporters, duties and taxes levied at the Central, State and local levels, such as electricity duties and VAT on fuel used for transportation, which are not getting exempted or refunded under any other existing mechanism. Electricity Duty and VAT on Petroleum goods constitutes substantial part of costs.

This Budget is full of promises with dreams for the future. But how these dreams will be achieved has not been explained. Also, allocations and numbers don't synchronise with the projections. This Government keeps on talking of long-term solutions for every problem but should we all starve and wait in the short-term?

(The writer is an author and GST and economics specialist)

# NRI tax not to apply on bonafide workers in West Asia

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Sunday clarified that the proposed tax on NRIs will not apply on bonafide Indians working in tax-free foreign countries and is intended to tax only those seeking to escape tax by exploiting their non-resident status.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget for 2020-21 had proposed to tax Non-resident Indians (NRIs) who do not pay taxes in any foreign country.

This provision raised anxiety in minds of those working in the Gulf region where countries don't tax income earned by individuals.

First Sitharaman clarified that only Indian income of NRIs is proposed to be taxed under the new provision, and later the tax department issued a statement to say that "the new provision is not intended to include in tax net those Indian citizens who are bonafide workers in other countries."

The Union Budget for 2020-21 presented on Saturday

had tightened the screws on those seeking to escape tax by exploiting their non-resident status. While earlier it was possible to be classified as a non-resident by staying out of the country for 183 days or about six months in a year, this has now been, in effect, enhanced to 245 days.

In an interview to PTI, Revenue Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey said the new rule was "an anti-abuse provision planned to plug loopholes in the system and not intended to tax income earned by those working overseas."

He said the wording in the Budget document may have created confusion and so a clarification has been issued now.

"What we are doing now is that the income of an NRI generated in India will be taxed here. If he's earning something in a jurisdiction where there is no tax, why will I include that into mine that has been generated there," Sitharaman told reporters here on Sunday.

She said Indian earnings of NRIs such as rental income from property in the country is



What was intended to be taxed by way of the new provision. "Whereas if you have a property here and you have rent out of it, but because you

## The Union Budget for 2020-21 presented on Saturday had tightened the screws on those seeking to escape tax by exploiting their non-resident status

right to tax," she said in a post Budget interaction with media.

"I am not taxing what you're earning in Dubai but that property which is giving you rent here, you may be an NRI, you may be living there but that is revenue being generated here for you. So, that's the issue."

Pandey said Indians working in the Middle East, as well as those in Merchant Navy, will not be taxed using the new provision.

"Somebody who is a citizen of India and sitting in a tax haven and not paying taxes then he has to pay tax," he said. "By issuing clarification, we

have kept them (workers in the Middle East) out. Same for merchant navy because their income is also not arising out of India."

Asked if raising the duration of overseas stay to qualify for NRI status would not deter Indians from making visits home, he said:

"These are anti-abuse provisions. If someone faces any difficulty because of this, we will see what can be done. The policy that you make, you have to see that a larger section of people is benefitted because of this. If he is a non-resident, he has to live substantially out of India. Now, substantially out of India means what? Earlier it was 50:50. Now we have made 2/3rd:1/3rd."

He said the new provision was brought in because people were taking advantage of the existing one. "These are the anti-abuse provisions, and not to inconvenience any genuine persons."

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) in a statement said the new provision is not intended to include those

Indian citizens in the taxation net, who are bonafide workers in other countries.

An "Indian citizen shall be deemed to be resident in India if he is not liable to be taxed in any country or jurisdiction. This is an anti-abuse provision since it is noticed that some Indian citizens shift their stay in low or no tax jurisdictions to avoid payment

of tax in India," it said. "The new provision is not intended to include in tax net those Indian citizens who are bonafide workers in other countries," it said.

It stated that it was not correct to say that those Indians who are bonafide workers in other countries, including in the Middle East, and who are not liable to tax in these coun-

tries will be taxed in India on the income that they have earned there.

"In order to avoid any mis-interpretation, it is clarified that in case of an Indian citizen who becomes deemed resident of India under this proposed provision, income earned outside India by him shall not be taxed in India unless it is derived from an Indian business or profession. Necessary clarification, if required, shall be incorporated in the relevant provision of the law," it added.

At present, if an Indian or a person of Indian origin managed his stay in India such that he remained a non-resident in perpetuity, he was not liable to pay tax on his global income in India.

# LIC public offer likely in 2nd half of FY21: Finance Secy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Listing of insurance behemoth Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) may be done in the second half of the next financial year, Finance Secretary Rajiv Kumar said on Sunday.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting the Budget 2020-21 on Saturday proposed to sell a part of government stake in LIC through an initial public offer next fiscal.

There are a number of processes which have to be followed and some legislative changes would also be required for the listing of LIC, Kumar said.

"We will follow the extant procedure for listing and for other things including the legislative changes it requires in

consultation with the Ministry of Law and that process we already started... Listing in the second half of FY21 seems logical," he said.

Listing of LIC will help bring in greater transparency, public participation and also deepen the equity market, he told PTI in an interaction. Asked about the quantum of dilution, Kumar said, it could be 10 per cent but no decision has been taken so far.

Later speaking to media, the finance minister assuaged concerns of policyholders of any breach of sovereign guarantee as ownership stays with the Government.

"We have only said an IPO (initial public offer). We have not given complete ownership to somebody," she said.

The Government aims to garner ₹90,000 crore from the

listing of LIC and stake dilution in IDBI Bank in the next fiscal out of total disinvestment target of ₹2.10 lakh crore.

The government currently owns 100 per cent in LIC, while it holds around 46.5 per cent stake in IDBI Bank.

"Listing of companies on stock exchanges disciplines a company and provides access to financial markets and unlocks its value. It also gives opportunity for retail investors to participate in the wealth so created. The Government now proposes to sell a part of its holding in LIC by way of Initial Public Offer (IPO)," the Finance Minister had said in her Budget speech.

Market participants are quite bullish about LIC and said it could be "IPO of the decade" akin to the Saudi Aramco listing.

# Govt provides 30% higher Budget allocation for agriculture sector

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Barring fertiliser and chemicals sector, the Government has provided higher Budget allocation for agriculture, and its allied activities as well as to the food and food processing sector for 2020-21.

For the Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Ministry, the Government has provided 30 per cent increase in the fund allocation at ₹1,42,761.58 crore for the next fiscal as against the revised estimate of ₹1,09,750.17 crore for the ongoing financial year, according to the Budget document.

Of the total allocation, maximum of ₹75,000 crore has been allocated for the government's flagship scheme PM-Kisan for the 2020-21 fiscal, followed by ₹15,695 crore for the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and ₹2,000

crore for Price Stabilisation Scheme (PSS).

That apart, the government has allocated ₹600 crore for promoting farm mechanisation, ₹500 crore each for PM-Asha scheme and setting up of 10,000 Farmers Producers Companies (FPOs), while ₹220 crore for PM Kisan Samman Nidhi (farmers pension scheme) for the next fiscal.

The allocation for the ambitious PM-Kisan scheme, under which ₹6,000 is given in three equal instalments to each beneficiary farmer annually, has been kept at ₹75,000 crore for the 2020-21 fiscal, higher than ₹54,370.15 crore provided in the revised estimate for this year.

The allocation has been trimmed for the current year from the initial estimate of ₹75,000 crore in view of imple-

mentation hurdles and lack of interest shown by some states like West Bengal.

In case of PMFBY, the government has allocated higher funds at ₹15,695 crore for the next fiscal compared to the revised estimate of ₹13,640.85 crore for the current fiscal.

For agriculture and research development, the government has provided ₹8,362.58 crore budget for the 2020-21 fiscal, up from ₹7,846.17 crore in the revised estimate.

Realising the potential of the allied farm activities like dairy can help provide supplementary income to farmers, the Government has increased the allocation for Animal Husbandry, Livestock, Dairy and Fishery Ministry to ₹4,114.13 crore for the next fiscal from the revised estimate of ₹3,490 crore.

# Seven of top 10 firms suffer combined loss of ₹1.89L cr in m-cap

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Seven of the 10 most valued companies suffered a combined loss of ₹1.89 lakh crore in market valuation last week, led by Reliance Industries which alone took a hit of ₹87,732.8 crore.

The 30-share BSE Sensex plummeted by 1,877.66 points to close below the key 40,000-mark at 39,735.53 last week. RIL's valuation tumbled ₹87,732.8 crore to reach ₹8,76,906.57 crore.

The market capitalisation (m-cap) of HDFC Banked ₹31,148.4 crore to ₹32,962.14 crore and that of HDFC Bank by ₹24,736 crore to ₹6,56,888.50 crore.

The m-cap of ICICI Bank dropped ₹19,044.7 crore to ₹3,26,410.37 crore and that of SBI cracked ₹18,652.4 crore to ₹2,70,549.60 crore.

The valuation of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) declined ₹7,317.15 crore to

**In the ranking of top-10 firms, RIL remained at the number one place followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, HUL, HDFC, Infosys, ICICIBANK, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bharti Airtel and SBI**

₹8,12,428.81 crore and that of Infosys dipped ₹1,149.83 crore to ₹3,32,280.10 crore.

In contrast, Bharti Airtel which made its entry into the top-10 list, added ₹2,392.15 crore to ₹2,71,332.15 crore in its valuation.

Kotak Mahindra Bank's valuation rose by ₹1,182.02 crore to ₹3,15,346.61 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) gained ₹119.07 crore to ₹4,48,895.43 crore.

In the ranking of top-10 firms, RIL remained at the number one place followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, HUL, HDFC, Infosys, ICICIBANK, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bharti Airtel and SBI.

# Stock market's reaction on Budget surprising: Niti Aayog vice chairman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar expressed surprise over the stock market reacting negatively on the Budget proposals, saying investors probably expected some big bang reforms and ignored the initiatives towards investment and growth.

Kumar in an interview to PTI said the Budget has done nothing wrong, and it has "ticked all the boxes".

Giving a thumbs down to the Budget, the market benchmark Sensex logged its biggest single-day plunge in more than a decade, wiping out Rs 3.46 lakh crore investor wealth.

"I am actually quite surprised by the market's reactions yesterday, going down 1,000 points. I was trying to understand why did that happen," he wondered.

Kumar added that "... The Budget does nothing wrong, it has got nothing anti-private investment or anti-private sector or anti-growth, the Budget is ticking all the boxes".

Probably, the market was expecting some big bang reforms that are associated with huge push for consumption as was witnessed in the aftermath of Lehman Brothers crisis in 2008.

"So my own thought was that market expected so called big bang reforms and by big bang reforms, normally everybody understands in India, a huge impetus for consumption. And I think the best example of that was in 2008 Budget which preceded the Lehman Brothers crisis," he said.

Pointing out that the UPA-1 gave lot of sops in 2008 Budget because elections were due, Kumar said it had resulted in ballooning of the fiscal deficit to 6 per cent in 2009 from 2.5 per cent.

"If the market had expected that kind of consumption boost without any regard to fiscal discipline, it was not possible," he said adding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was very clear that Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) target

should not be breached.

"Therefore, if you notice, we used 0.5 per cent escape clause (under FRBM) and remained within that," Kumar stressed. The Niti Aayog vice chairman said the Budget has given a big boost to the investment.

"Many steps are announced to improve the investment sentiments.. Both foreign and domestic," he said.

Asked if it is still possible to achieve \$5 trillion target by 2024-25, the eminent economist said it is not an unreal goal and will be achieved.

"In the next 5 years, there is no reason to believe that you can't achieve that unless rupee depreciates out of the blue etc. If you do 6-6.5 per cent (growth) now(2020-21), and jump up to 7-8 per cent (growth) in remaining four years, you will achieve that, that's not an unreal target," he said. Moreover, Kumar said, the Prime Minister has mentioned it as an inspirational target, more to drive the people together.

# Amazon, Flipkart may approach Govt for clarifications on Budget

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Amazon India and Flipkart are studying the Budget proposal on levy of 1 per cent TDS, and may reach out to the Government for clarifications.

"We are studying the details, and will reach out to the government for clarifications. We hope the tax regime is simple and uniform so that millions of small and medium businesses can go online, digitise their operations and continue to contribute to growing the economy," an Amazon India spokesperson said in response to an e-mailed query.

Flipkart also said it was going through the proposal. "We are studying the details, particularly how it impacts the MSMEs and Sellers on our marketplace platform. We will discuss further with our seller partners, and engage with government and other stakeholders in due course," Flipkart said in its response.

The government on Saturday proposed a new levy of 1 per cent TDS (tax deducted at source) on e-commerce transactions, a move that could increase burden on sellers on such platforms. "In order to widen and deepen the tax net by bringing participants of e-commerce (sellers) within tax net, it is proposed to insert a new section 194-O in the Act so as to provide for a new levy of TDS at the rate of one per cent," according to Budget 2020-21 documents. The amendments will take effect from April 1, 2020. The documents said the e-commerce operator — an entity owning, operating or managing the digital platform — will have to deduct 1 per cent TDS on the gross amount of sales or service or both. This provision will not apply in cases where the seller's gross amount of sales during the previous year through e-commerce operator is less than Rs 5 lakh and the seller has furnished his PAN or Aadhaar number.

# Indian Budget will attract more FDI: US industry leaders

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The 2020-21 Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will improve the ease of doing business in India and attract more foreign direct investment, US industry leaders have said.

Presenting her second budget in Parliament on Saturday, Sitharaman offered tax breaks to foreign investors and specifically those like sovereign wealth funds who are willing to place a long-term bet on the economy.

She said the Budget was aimed at boosting incomes and enhancing purchasing power, stressing that the economy's fundamentals were strong and inflation was well contained.

"Despite a slowdown in growth, the global outlook for investment in India remains strong and therefore the budget was a great opportunity to convert the global sentiment into action," said Mukesh Aghi, president of US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF).

# Huawei 5G troubles to test Nordic competitors' bandwidth

AFP ■ HELSINKI

Tougher UK and EU rules restricting 5G network supplier Huawei should be a golden opportunity for competitors Nokia and Ericsson, but the companies may struggle to meet the increased demand, analysts warned.

On Tuesday, Britain imposed a 35 percent cap on the role of "high-risk vendors" in building the country's next-generation communications network, over security concerns. The change will hit Chinese giant Huawei, whom critics accuse of being ultimately under the control of Beijing, an allegation it strongly denies.

The EU followed by releasing guidelines urging member states to avoid dependency on

"high risk" suppliers, though the bloc stopped short of naming Huawei or calling for an outright ban. On the face of it, the biggest beneficiaries from this week's announcements appear to be the Chinese firm's two largest competitors, Nokia and Ericsson.

"BT in the UK thinks it's going to cost it ?500 million (\$660 million) to switch out Huawei, so a good chunk of that will now be going to Nokia and Ericsson," analyst Matthew Howett of Assembly Research told AFP.

On Friday, Nokia welcomed the EU's guidelines and commitment to cybersecurity, saying in a statement that "5G starts and ends with trust and security." Ericsson greeted the "comprehensive approach" agreed

by the EU countries. "Ericsson stands ready to support this process to ensure a high level of protection for European citizens and business".

But industry watchers claim that fulfilling the increased demand left by market leader Huawei may not be straightforward.

Huawei is widely seen as providing the most advanced 5G for the super-fast data transfers, necessary for self-driving cars and remote-controlled robots in factories or operating theatres.

"A discussion needs to take place about Huawei's perceived leadership position, and how ready Nokia and Ericsson are to step up to that over the next three year period," Howett said.

# Lanka to probe Airbus bribe allegations

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Sunday ordered a comprehensive probe into a multi-billion dollar aircraft purchase involving the national carrier SriLankan Airlines and Europe-based Airbus.

A statement from the Sri Lankan President's office said the President reacted to the media reports alleging financial irregularities.

"Upon seeing these reports President Rajapaksa immediately ordered officials to initiate a full scale inquiry into these allegations, covering all aspects of the deal and report back to him," the statement said. The president has ordered

a comprehensive investigation into reports of allegations over financial irregularities said to have been committed during the deal between SriLankan Airlines and Airbus SE for the purchase of aircraft.

According to a statement issued on January 31 in a court case in London, as part of the Deferred Prosecution Agreement reached between Airbus and the prosecuting authorities, Airbus had agreed to pay a sum of USD 16.84 million to a company registered in Brunei under the wife of an executive at SriLankan Airlines.

The statement said that the Airbus had paid out a sum of \$2 million of the agreed amount to the company.

# Chinese central bank to pump \$173 bln to economy in virus boost

Beijing: China's central bank said Sunday it would pump 1.2 trillion yuan (\$173 bln) into the economy as it ramps up support for a nationwide fight against a deadly virus that is expected to hit growth.

The People's Bank of China (PBOC) said in a statement it would launch a 1.2 trillion yuan reverse repurchase operation on Monday to maintain "reasonable and abundant liquidity" in the banking system, as well as a stable currency market, during the epidemic.

It added that the overall liquidity of the banking system would be 900 billion yuan (\$129 bln) more than in the same period last year. The move will kick in the day that China's financial markets reopen, following an extended Spring Festival break. AFP

# 3.8% fiscal deficit target looks ambitious, says SBI research

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The revised 3.8 per cent fiscal deficit for FY20 looks ambitious as it is based on projected 18 per cent rise in tax collections against a paltry 5.1 per cent higher realisation so far, and around ₹65,000 crore mop-up through disinvestment in the last two months of the current fiscal, SBI Research said in a report on Sunday.

The revised deficit target is propped on the belief that the divestment will fetch ₹65,000 crore through the next two months. As against the ₹1.05 lakh crore budgeted target, the divestment proceeds has been one of the lowest in recent years at a paltry ₹17,800 crore.

The Union Budget for 2020-21 used the permissible 50 bps deviation under Section

**The revised deficit target is propped on the belief that the divestment will fetch ₹65,000 crore through the next two months**

4(3) of the FRBM Act to widen the fiscal deficit at 3.8 per cent of the GDP, revealing a revenue shortfall of around ₹2.60 lakh crore, of which states are losing ₹1.09 lakh crore.

"After adjusting for the expenditure rationalisation of around ₹88,000 crore, the revised fiscal deficit for FY20 comes to around ₹63,086 crore over the budgeted numbers. The saving grace is the jump in non-tax revenue of around ₹32,335 crore or 20 bps of fiscal deficit, possibly reflecting the AGR payments/interim dividend from RBI in lieu of telecom.



**CORONAVIRUS**

# China intensifies efforts as toll reaches 305

**Beijing/Wuhan:** China on Sunday resorted to more drastic measures like isolating coronavirus patients to designated areas and restricting the movement of residents in regions hit by the rapid spreading virus that has killed 305 people and infected over 14,000 others.

The Philippines on Sunday reported the first death outside China from the deadly virus that has spread to 25 countries, including India, taking the total toll to 305.

The victim, a 44-year-old Chinese man, was the companion of a 38-year-old Chinese woman who arrived in the Philippines on January 21 from Wuhan, the epicentre of the virus outbreak.

So far over 140 coronavirus cases have been reported from abroad, including India where a second case of virus was reported from Kerala on Sunday.

By the end of Saturday, a total of 304 people had died of the disease in the country, China's National Health Commission said.

The state-run CGTN reported that there were 14,411 confirmed cases of virus. However, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post said that the virus has infected 14,562 people.

The commission said 19,544 people were suspected of being infected with the virus of which the condition of the

2,110 patients remained severe. Chinese health experts have been saying that the casualties will increase sharply for the next two weeks before they start declining.

This is so because millions of travellers especially those from Wuhan and Hubei province who travelled to China and abroad during the New Year holidays are returning home.

A top Chinese official said that about five million residents of Wuhan have travelled out of the virus-hit city before it was locked down on January 23.

China is bringing back by charter flights hundreds of its

citizens who had travelled abroad during holidays. They are directly being flown to Wuhan.

The commission also highlighted that number of virus affected patients are recovering, saying that 328 people have been discharged.

Since the virus is transmitted human-to-human, over 1.63 lakh close contacts had been traced of which 1.37 lakh are still under medical observation, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

China has intensified measures to contain the virus by isolating the patients. Wuhan health authorities announced that peo-

ple suspected of infection will be isolated in designated areas effective immediately.

Wenzhou city in Zhejiang Province regulated that only one family member is allowed to step out of the house every other day for grocery shopping from Saturday to February 8, amid efforts to contain the epidemic, state-run Global Times reported.

The National Health Commission also directed that bodies of coronavirus victims should be cremated close by and immediately. Burials or transfer of the bodies are not allowed, the Commission said.

China also reported an outbreak of the deadly H5N1 bird flu in Hunan province, which lies on the southern border of Hubei province.

**FEARS OF NEW VIRUS TRIGGER ANTI-CHINA SENTIMENT WORLDWIDE**

**Seoul:** A scary new virus from China has spread around the world. So has rising anti-Chinese sentiment, calls for a full travel ban on Chinese visitors and indignities for Chinese and other Asians.

Restaurants in South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and Vietnam have refused to accept Chinese customers. Indonesians marched near a hotel and called on Chinese guests there to leave. French and Australian newspapers face criticism for racist headlines. Chinese and other Asians in Europe, the United

States, Asia and the Pacific complain of racism.

Two dozen countries outside of China have reported cases of the new coronavirus, which has killed more than 300 people and sickened thousands of others in China. Many countries have sent planes to the Chinese city of Wuhan to evacuate their nationals.

The anti-China sentiments come as a powerful Beijing bolsters its global influence, and China's rise has caused trade, political and diplomatic disputes with many countries.

**AP**

**Dubai:** The United Arab Emirates has confirmed a new case of the novel coronavirus, taking the total number of people affected by the deadly disease to five in the country, according to media reports on Sunday.

The Ministry of Health and Prevention on Saturday announced that the new case involves a Chinese travelling from Wuhan, the epicentre of the virus, the Gulf News reported.

The person is currently receiving necessary treatment and his health condition is stable, the ministry said.

**UAE confirms 5th case**

The coronavirus outbreak has killed 305 people and infected 14,562 others as the Philippines on Sunday reported the first death outside China from the epidemic that has spread to 25 countries, including India, the US, the UK and Russia.

In China, all the deaths were reported in Hubei Province for which Wuhan is the capital.

Four cases earlier detected in the UAE involve a Chinese family from Wuhan.

The family is still under medical care and their condition is stable, the report said. **PTI**

## B'DESH HALTS VISA-ON-ARRIVAL FOR CHINESE NATIONALS

**Dhaka:** Bangladesh has temporarily suspended its visa-on-arrival services for Chinese nationals and issued directions not to recruit them for ongoing projects in the country after the coronavirus outbreak that has killed more than 300 people and infected 14,562 others spread to 25 countries.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister A K Abdul Momen during a media briefing on Sunday said the government has requested Chinese nationals in Bangladesh not to go on leave

especially over the next month while the global health emergency is in place, the BD News reported.

"At the same time, we have requested the authorities not to recruit any Chinese national for ongoing projects in Bangladesh," he was quoted as saying. He, however, said that the move does not bar Chinese nationals from applying for a Bangladesh visa.

"This is a temporary measure. Chinese nationals can still apply for a visa but they must

## Herbal remedies for virus spark debate in China

**Beijing:** A claim by Chinese scientists that a liquid made with honeysuckle and flowering plants could help fight the deadly coronavirus has sparked frenzied buying of the traditional medicine, but doubts quickly emerged.

As the death toll from the SARS-like pathogen sweeping the country continues to rise, shoppers have swamped pharmacies in search of "Shuanghuanglian". The rush came after influential state media outlet Xinhua reported Friday that the esteemed Chinese Academy of Sciences had found the concoction "can inhibit" the virus.

Researchers at the state-run academy, a top government think tank, are also studying the potential use of a plant commonly known as Japanese knotweed to alleviate symptoms.

The National Health Commission on Tuesday said TCM practitioners were among nearly 6,000 reinforcement medical personnel being sent to Wuhan in Hubei province, ground zero of the outbreak.

The strategy has reignited fierce and long-running debate about the efficacy of TCM, which has a history going back 2,400 years and remains popular in modern-day China. **AFP**

## Mortar shelling from Afghan side kills seven in Pak

**Peshawar:** At least seven members of a family, including four children and two women, were killed in a mortar shell fired from Afghanistan in Pakistan's northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Sunday, officials said.

The mortar shell hit the family's home at border village Baatwar Bangro in Salarzai tehsil, 137 kilometres from here.

The local people, district administration officials, security forces, ambulances and rescue teams rushed to the site and retrieved the bodies, officials said. The house was destroyed in the mortar attack. The shell

was fired from the adjacent Kunar province of Afghanistan, an official said. **PTI**

## Pompeo condemns China's Xinjiang crackdown during Central Asia tour

**Nur-Sultan (Kazakhstan):** US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called on countries to offer asylum to ethnic minorities fleeing China's troubled Xinjiang region during a visit Sunday to oil-rich Kazakhstan — a country that borders the region.

"We ask simply for them to provide safe refuge and asylum for those seeking to flee China," Pompeo said at a press appearance with Kazakh foreign minister Mukhtar Tleuberdi.

"Protect human dignity, just do what is right," Pompeo said.

Pompeo was meeting top officials in ex-Soviet Kazakhstan as he rounds off a five-nation tour in two countries where Russia and China enjoy privileged interests.

His visit to the Kazakh capital Nur-Sultan also saw him

meet with Kazakhs who say their family members are detained in Xinjiang, where over a million ethnic Uighurs, Kazakhs and other minorities are believed to have been incarcerated as part of an unprecedented security crackdown in the region.

Kazakhstan has allowed several ethnic Kazakhs of Chinese citizenship who fled the region to stay in the country, but has not given any of them asylum — a reluctance local activists attribute to Chinese pressure.

Pompeo also commended Kazakhstan's "quick action" over the novel coronavirus that has killed more than 300 people and infected more than 14,000 in mainland China and beyond, forcing governments around the world to take drastic mea-

## Twenty killed in Tanzanian church stampede: Official

**Dar Es Salaam:** At least 20 people in Tanzania were trampled to death at an open-air evangelical Christian church service in the north of the country, officials said on Sunday.

Government official Kippei Warioba, District Commissioner in the northern town of Moshi, said he feared the number of dead could still rise from the accident, which took place on Saturday afternoon.

"So far, 20 people have died, but the death toll could increase as there were also wounded," Warioba told AFP.

At least 16 others were injured in the crush, he said.

The tragedy happened when a crowd of worshippers was attending a prayer cere-

mony on Saturday led by the popular preacher, Boniface Mwamposa, who heads the Arise and Shine Ministry Tanzania.

The stampede occurred when Mwamposa, who calls himself the "Apostle", poured what he said was holy oil on the

ground and the crowd surged toward to touch it in the hope of being cured of sickness, witnesses said.

"The Apostle Boniface Mwamposa poured sacred anointing oil on the ground," one witness, Jennifer Temu, told AFP. **AFP**



## Japanese warship heads to West Asia to protect tankers

**Tokyo:** A Japanese warship departed Sunday for the Middle East to ensure the safety of the country's oil tankers in waters where tensions between the U.S. and Iran are high.

The destroyer Takanami with some 200 sailors left Japan's main naval base in Yokosuka, near Tokyo. Its main task is primarily to gather intelligence in the Gulf of Oman and nearby waters.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called the waters "a lifeline that supports the lives of the Japanese people." Thousands of Japanese ships ply the route every year, transporting 90% of the country's oil supply, he said.

"Your mission of information gathering is an

extremely significant one that directly affects people's lives," Abe told the troops in a televised sendoff ceremony at Yokosuka.

Sending warships to areas of military tension is a highly sensitive issue in Japan because its pacifist post-World War II constitution limits the use of force by the military strictly to self-defense. Abe has gradually expanded Japan's military role since he took office in late 2012.

Under the plan, the destroyer and some 200 Maritime Self-Defense Force troops will join a pair of P-3C reconnaissance aircraft that were operating in the same area from a base in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa.

The Abe government is

expected to authorize troops to protect Japanese commercial ships in case of danger, a plan that has faced opposition from pacifist groups.

Despite being a U.S. Ally, Japanese troops are not part of a U.S.-led coalition protecting Middle East waterways, because Tokyo wants to maintain neutrality in a show of consideration to Iran.

Japan, which has friendly ties with Iran, seeks to serve as a mediator between the Washington and Tehran and play a greater role in restoring regional stability.

In June, a Japanese-operated tanker was attacked in the Gulf of Oman. Washington said Iran was responsible and urged Japan to join the U.S.-led military initiative. **AP**

## REJECTING NEW PRIME MINISTER



- ❑ Furious anti-government youth dug in their heels in Iraq's capital and south on Sunday, rejecting the previous evening's nomination of Mohammad Allawi as premier after months of demonstrations and political paralysis.
- ❑ Allawi was named Prime Minister-designate after a hard-won consensus among Iraq's rival parties
- ❑ In Baghdad, hundreds of students flooded the streets around the main protest camp of Tahrir Square, carrying Allawi's photograph with an "X" over his face.
- ❑ Mass rallies have rocked Baghdad and the mainly-Shiite south since October, with protesters demanding snap elections and an independent Prime Minister as well as accountability for corruption and recent bloodshed

## Somalia declares locusts a 'national emergency'

**Mogadishu:** Somalia on Sunday declared a locust infestation sweeping the Horn of Africa to be a national emergency, as insects devastate food supplies in one of the poorest and most vulnerable regions in the world.

"The Ministry of Agriculture... Has declared a national emergency in view of the current desert locust upsurge, that poses a major threat to Somalia's fragile food security situation," the ministry statement read.



Experts say the locust swarms are the result of extreme weather swings, and Somalia's declaration -- the first country in the region to do so -- is aimed at boosting national efforts in tackling the hungry insects.

The locusts -- part of the

grasshopper family -- have led to what the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has termed the "worst situation in 25 years" in the Horn of Africa.

"Food sources for people and their livestock are at risk," the agriculture ministry added.

"The desert locust swarms are uncommonly large and consume huge amounts of crops and forage." The emergency declaration was made to focus efforts and raise funds, because it was critical to containing the locust swarms before harvests are due in April, the ministry said.

Desert locusts -- whose

destructive infestations cause major crop damage and hunger -- are a species of grasshopper that live largely solitary lives until a combination of conditions promote breeding and lead them to form massive swarms.

"Given the severity of this desert locust outbreak, we must commit our best efforts to protect the food security and livelihoods of Somali people," said Minister of Agriculture Said Hussein lid.

"If we don't act now, we risk a severe food crisis that we cannot afford." According to the regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group, East Africa is already experiencing a high degree of food insecurity, with over 19 million people facing acute hunger. **AFP**

## Dozens in Lebanon protest Trump's West Asia plan

**Awakar (Lebanon):** Dozens protested near the US embassy in Lebanon Sunday against US President Donald Trump's Middle East plan.

The demonstrators, both Palestinian refugees and Lebanese, chanted slogans and flew flags as security forces blocked off a road to the diplomatic compound.

Some protesters tried to dismantle a razor-wire barrier but no major clashes took place, an AFP reporter said.

"The 'deal of the century' shall not pass," read a huge banner in the colours of the Palestinian flag, referring to the plan unveiled by Trump last Tuesday.

A call to protest circulating on social media dubbed the plan

"the deal of shame."

"I came here to defend my rights and those of my children as Palestinians," said Etab, a Palestinian refugee living in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.

"We will not accept handing over our land," she told AFP.

Palestinians began taking refuge in Lebanon with the creation of Israel in 1948, setting up camps that have since transformed into bustling urban districts. Abdullah Mahmud, an 18-year-old Palestinian, criticised the "failed" plan.

"It won't pass as long as the Palestinian people are still standing," he said. Around 174,000 Palestinian refugees live in 12 camps across Lebanon, a one-off government census said in 2017. **AFP**

## Guido calls for 'great mobilisation' ahead of Venezuela return

**Miami:** Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido promised "a great mobilization in Caracas" when he returns to the country after a two-week international tour, drumming up support to dislodge President Nicolas Maduro.

Recognized as interim president by more than 50 nations, Guaido said in Miami on Saturday he would end the "tragedy" in his country, which has been battered by political and economic crises.

"In the next few days, despite the risk, we will be entering Venezuela," Guaido said at a convention center near the airport.

Guaido defied a travel ban imposed by local authorities to leave the country and meet with officials abroad.

"There is only one option -- to achieve free elections," he added, calling on Venezuelans to be "prepared for the announcement of a great mobilization in Caracas."

Trump and Guaido missed each other at the world economic forum in Davos, with Guaido saying he would try to meet with the US president.

While in the US, Guaido met with Senator Marco Rubio, who has shaped many of Washington's policies towards Venezuela. **AFP**

Trend Slazer

Priyanka wishes Kerry Washington

Actor PRIYANKA CHOPRA JONAS has a birthday wish full of love for *Scandal* star and her friend Kerry Washington.

"Happy birthday @kerrywashington much love always!" Priyanka tweeted to wish her.

Priyanka recently starred in and co-produced *The Sky Is Pink*. She will next be seen in Netflix's *We Can Be Heroes*, and *The White Tiger*. The actor is said to be in final talks to join Keanu Reeves in *Matrix 4* and is also gearing up for *Citadel*, an Amazon original series, with Richard Madden. The series comes from *The Avengers* makers, the Russo brothers.



An ode to the master

A watch company launched the latest collection of high-tech ceramic watches, which pays tribute to the legend of design, Le Corbusier, at the IAF

Swiss watch brand Rado joined forces with India Art Fair 2020 for the second year as the official timekeeper. The brand announced the launch of the latest collection of full high-tech ceramic watches, which pay tribute to a true legend of design — Le Corbusier. *The True Thinline Les Couleurs Le Corbusier* celebrates the work of the father of modernism. Le Corbusier's

Architectural Polychromy theory of colour is just one of the achievements he is known for. Also known as an artist, architect, master of materials, he is a legendary name in design.

Created in 1931 and 1959, Architectural Polychromy was ahead of its time, using 63 colours with architectural significance that help to create space and depth as well as having a pro-

found physiological and psychological impact on the viewer. The colours are classified in nine groups of different shades and tones. The palettes are still used widely today by architects and designers. Each has a special case back design, which includes all 63 colours. Each piece is durable, scratch-resistant, light and comfortable to wear, thanks to the full high-tech ceramic



and monobloc case construction.

Matthias Breschan, President of Rado since 2011, had earlier said in an interview with a watch magazine, "Design is absolutely

essential at Rado. There has been no change in our strategy. Since 1957, we have been focused on materials, innovation and design." This collection is based on delivering the best watches that fit those three criteria. "Our work with external designers is vital to our research and development. We challenge them to bring their unique design to a product on a micro scale and they challenge us to deliver on their vision," said he.

*The True Thinline* is perfect to showcase the brand's ability to create bold and dynamic colour and to pay tribute to Le Corbusier.

The 12th edition of the India Art Fair concluded yesterday.

What would you say about the status of cruise tourism in India?

Ratna: I with my husband pioneered the concept of tourism in 1993. There were only 200 people then, who had sailed on any cruise ship with an Indian address. Things were very different then, not only in India but in the international scenario as well. We might think that we have come a long way now but it's not in terms of the number of passengers that have cruised until now. Only 2,20,000 passengers have cruised out for vacations. It is quite evident that the industry is very nascent and underdeveloped. We haven't even scratched the tip of the iceberg. But having said that, we understand that there's a huge potential. Indians have a high standard of living, we have the ability to pay higher rates and want to experience the best, especially during travelling.

The cruise industry hasn't yet flourished in India. Why do you think so?

Ratna: This is because international brands are not represented well in our country. When you see a Mercedes on an Indian road, you would want to buy that. When you have a four season hotel, a Sheraton or the Hyatts all over the world, you will want to stay in the same hotels because there is membership, royalty programmes and you are familiar with the brands. It is very important for people to get familiar with the cruise lines. The industry want to come to India but is not able to because it has its own issues. This is the biggest challenge.

We have a vast coastline, if we clear the waters for international cruise lines to come why wouldn't they come? They can't keep plying in the same area. How much can North America or Europe allow? Those destinations are already covered. They have to move the equipment because these are mobile assets. And the cruise lines can move them to different parts of the world on the basis on seasonality. But we are too occupied with our own challenges to let them in.

What steps need to be taken to help the industry grow?

Ratna: The only way to up the quotient or bring India on the tourism map is to welcome the international cruise lines into the country because we don't have the capacity to build our own ships at the moment. These are already ready-made ships. All we have to do is to include India as a part of their itinerary. The business environment also has to be such that it's viable for them to come.

What are your expectations from the Government of India?

Ratna: The government is positive. They have understood the potential of the industry. They need to use the 7,600 km of our coastline. If the ocean cruising transportation develops then the internal waters and river cruising will also develop. Our own heritage sites will gain an impetus.

How is India's economic decline

affecting the industry?

Ratna: As various businesses and exports are down, it is impacting the industry largely. For tourism industry or hotels, it is very important for the environment to facilitate their business. After all, tourism works on disposable income. And ours is such a small market. If the share market is down and people don't have a disposable income, we won't be able to do well. It is quite obvious that when onions are ₹100 a kg then how will people think about planning a holiday. Even the upper segment is holding back. It is high time we get India up and going. The sooner we do it, the better it is for us as more cruise lines will invest.



...AND THE SHIP SAILED

While RATNA CHADHA, chairperson and co-founder, Tirun, talks about the status of the cruise industry, APPLE WOO, director of Asia, Celebrity Cruises, shares about India's contribution in the overall market. By SAKSHI SHARMA

How is India's economic decline

affecting the industry? Ratna: As various businesses and exports are down, it is impacting the industry largely. For tourism industry or hotels, it is very important for the environment to facilitate their business. After all, tourism works on disposable income. And ours is such a small market. If the share market is down and people don't have a disposable income, we won't be able to do well. It is quite obvious that when onions are ₹100 a kg then how will people think about planning a holiday. Even the upper segment is holding back. It is high time we get India up and going. The sooner we do it, the better it is for us as more cruise lines will invest.

How can the cruise industry generate employment opportunities?

Ratna: It is a matter of concern that there are lot of young people graduating every year. Where are they going to go? The cruise industry will have a multiplier effect on the economy as the employment will increase and hotels will make money. Heritage sites and domestic tourism will also get a huge impetus as we offer multi destinations.



tions. I was also on the task force instituted by the Ministry of Tourism and shipping to bring India on the tourism map.

We also need to focus on the fact that it is a mobile industry, our equipment can be moved. This acts as an advantage for us. You can't move a hotel or a brick and mortar thing but a cruise can be. This feature helps us to switch to a different destination if there are any unfavourable conditions in any destination, which in turn will always facilitate

employment opportunities in different locations.

What is the overall growth of celebrity cruises?

Apple: We have seen a significant growth over the past three years. Even now we see huge potential because of our new ship. We expect a 35 per cent growth in the sector, especially where the ship is sailing in, the Euro as well as in the Western and Eastern Mediterranean.

What are the emerging industry trends for 2020?

Ratna: There will be newer destinations and ships, very high on design. There will also be more of variety, something to suit everybody's budget. Entertainment, spa, wine is open for everybody. The Broadway shows are not ordinary ones and they are even cost effective. Now there are even no language barrier or food issues on a new ship, Indian foods are there on the ship. The only challenge is that India has many states and each state has its own requirement. We are hopefully going to personalise that too as more Indians start travelling. At the moment, we have common Indian selection as Indian cuisine is getting popular, especially the vegetarian food. I see other nationalities pouncing on our palate. Infact, 60 per cent of our staff are Indian because we have trained professionals.

Now the cruise lines are also investing huge amount of money to build newer ships. We have got a ship making a debut this year in April — Celebrity Apex. We have also planned to introduce new ships, atleast for the next two years.

What was the overall scenario of the industry in 2019? What is India's contribution in the overall market?

Ratna: It was not a very good year because there were a lot of challenges in the country. Elections took place, couple of airlines crippled, economy slowed down, automobile industry was hit adversely. However, the previous year was a rocking one. And that's what we would base ourselves on.

Apple: Overall contribution for Asia Pacific stands at 10 per cent. India would stand a good five per cent for it.

It's trivialising to say that Thappad is an answer to Kabir Singh because its way beyond

that. I feel very sad when people say this. I feel the thappad (slap) is only a trigger but there are so many other things that will unfold about relationships in this film. I agree that there was one instance in Kabir Singh that doesn't match with the ideology of our film but didn't it happen in many earlier films?

—Taapsee Pannu

Actor MALLIKA SHERAWAT reveals a healthy diet and Iyengar Yoga. The actor has been regularly sharing her Iyengar Yoga photos and videos on Instagram for a while now.



"It's been five to six years that I have been doing Iyengar Yoga. I love it because it is based on alignment of the body and is very good for your mental health, too. It is like meditation, it is a great stress reliever and promotes positive inflow, which I really enjoy. That's the main reason I do Iyengar yoga, said the 43-year-old actor.

Taylor not ready to have kids

Singer TAYLOR SWIFT says there is a part of her that is definitely "not ready to have kids."

She made the revelation in her new Netflix documentary *Miss Americana*. Swift, who is now 30 and has been with Joe Alwyn since 2017, pointed out that starting a family is tough "because my life is planned like two years ahead of time."

She said, "I don't have the luxury of figuring stuff out. They'll come to me with the dates for the next tour, and they'll be like: 'So, you'll be at Foxboro Stadium, this date, 2020 or whatever year, you know?'"



Melanie Musson in Belgrade, Montana, does a lot of driving with her four girls. Juggling a broad age range, one to nine, she's forever searching for ways to keep them all entertained without relying entirely on video.

While she still adores paper and tablet books for her kids, Musson said, "I think when they hear without seeing, they have to make up visuals in their heads. That's so good. They have to be engaged and get more out of it."

There are plenty of quality audiobooks, podcasts and music for the young, she noted but weeding through thousands of selections and jumping from platform to platform is a challenge since audio content has exploded over the last few years.

Dad blogger Balint Horvath in Zurich agreed after trying to make sense of kid options for his 14-month-old daughter. "I couldn't find any resource that would organise podcasts according to different criteria. Information without proper searchability is like looking for a needle in a haystack," said Horvath, who works as a productivity coach for research and development teams.

Audiobooks and music for kids have been around awhile but podcasts made for the three to 12 set are relatively new, driving more parents to choose one-stop platforms that include all formats. Demand is "primarily driven by parents who are podcast listeners or audiobook fans," said Frannie Ucciferri, associate managing editor for the nonprofit Common Sense Media. With a huge bump in podcasts

TECH TALK

Alexa, read me a story

With plenty of audiobooks, podcasts, music and online audio content for the young, jumping from different platforms is becoming a challenge for parents



overall, the value of audio content for kids hasn't been lost on companies large and small. Spotify recently launched a new ad-free app, Spotify Kids, as a free extension for premium family subscribers. Not yet available in the US, it's packed with singalongs, soundtracks and stories for children as young as three. A platform called Pinna is among the latest to launch ad-free with a variety of content and ages in mind, at \$7.99 a month or \$79.99 a year. Others stick to podcasts alone, while Amazon's FreeTime Unlimited allows parents to customise a child's experience to provide the most relevant books, videos, apps and more without ads, starting at \$2.99 a month.

Old-school broadcasters are also getting into the act. Boston's WGBH, for instance, widely shares free of cost two of its top podcasts for young people: *Molly of Denali*, based on the TV series about a girl in Alaska, and *The Creeping Hour*, for ages eight to 12. More are

planned as part of the public affiliate's "ongoing exploration of audio storytelling," said WGBH spokeswoman Jeanne Hopkins.

Bonnie Way of Vancouver, British Columbia, has five kids, ranging from two to 12, and like Musson, she pulls a lot of travel time with her brood. She reaches for audiobooks to keep them happy, even on short trips, and relies a lot on her local library for free selections.

"Yes, it can be challenging to find books that everyone is happy listening to. My four-year-old is probably exposed to things that her older sisters wouldn't have heard at that age. We started with short stories like Robert Munsch and *Curious George*, and moved to longer stories like the *Chronicles of Narnia*," she said.

Some of her kids are prone to motion sickness, and listening rather than reading helps, Way said. She sees other benefits as well. "Audiobooks create a shared experience. We're able to discuss the books after we've listened to them, which has been a lot of fun," she said.

Maggie McGuire is a former teacher who has been in children's media for more than 20 years. She's now CEO of Pinna, which is backed by the Graham Holdings Co, formed from what remained of The Washington Post Co. after the Post itself was sold to Jeff Bezos five years ago.

Pinna both curates and creates for kids ages three to 12. It offers more than 2,000 audiobooks, podcasts and songs while also producing original podcasts, all ad-free

and in compliance with federal standards aimed at protecting children's privacy and safety online, McGuire said. It's available as an app and usable off the Pinna.fm website.

Podcasts, McGuire said, are a "fresh new format that everyone's very excited about." The company worked with parents and teachers to understand what they were looking for in audio content. Among their priorities were a "one-stop solution" and a high level of curation to ensure quality and that all content was tucked into a safe platform exclusively for kids.

"There's a real desire now to figure out how the media diet in a kid's day, in a kid's week, can include things that aren't wholly screen-based," McGuire said.

Last year, Pinna produced 25 podcasts of its own, and plans to grow that number this year. Its slate of originals accounts for half the listening among its consumers, McGuire said. The company plans to launch curated playlists this month. Not unlike other streamers, Pinna will mix new content with classic stories and other familiar standards.

Included is Pinna's Peabody-winning podcast, *The Unexplainable Disappearance of Mars Patel*, a serial mystery performed by middle graders for middle graders. Another popular original is *Grimm, Grimm, Grimm*, a series of fairy tales retold. It was written and produced by Adam Gidwitz, bestselling author of *A Tale Dark and Grimm*.

For younger kids, Pinna partnered with Random House Children's Books to turn the pub-

lisher's popular Ron Roy book series, *A to Z Mysteries*, into a podcast. Mo Willems and Rick Riordan are among top names in the company's audiobook lineup on Pinna, along with music from Kidz Bop, They Might Be Giants and Ralph's World.

The Amazon-owned Audible.com, a dominant force in audiobooks, is also reaping benefits from the increased interest in kid content. The company offers more than 30,000 titles for kids among more than 4,75,000 overall.

"Parents and families are excited about listening together before bedtime. They're listening on road trips. They're listening while they're making dinner," said Diana Dapito, a senior vice president of content at Audible.

Audible worked with RL Stine on its original *Camp Red Moon*, with Pottermore Publishing on Wizarding World audiobooks and has produced more than 100 audiobooks of the *The Baby-Sitters Club* series, including some narrated by Elle Fanning. In September, Audible released an original of Jessica Khoury's middle-grade *The Mystwick School of Musicraft* with music performed by the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra Youth Orchestras. It's now in Audible's Top 20 most-listened-to kid titles of all time.

Parents' nostalgia has played a role in kids' listening, Dapito said, but so has the emergence of home speakers such as Alexa. "It's easier than ever for kids to have access," she said, "and for everybody to come together."

# INVEST IN KNOWLEDGE

Students in Khodasgaon village joined hands to make sure that families don't neglect their children's education during seasonal migration. By **DIPAK KULKARNI**



**A**rchana Vijay Padvi from Khodasgaon village, Nandurbar, is in 10th grade. She studied in the local Zila Parishad School up to the seventh grade and went on to study further at the Kamla Nehru Kanya Shala in Nandurbar. Her parents have studied only up to second grade and hence, Archana is the first generation in her family to push the boundaries and go for higher education. Going beyond her own aspirations, during the last three years, Archana has encouraged, if not pushed, more than 40 families in Nandurbar to ensure that their children's education doesn't suffer because of seasonal migration.

More than 70 per cent of the Nandurbar district comprises tribal communities. With about 2,000 hamlets and more than 900 villages, the district still experiences severe systemic failures in the education system. Sure, government has invested in education there. If one was to count, there are more than 2,000 schools in the district

— including Zila Parishad schools, boarding schools, Ashram schools, and middle level schools. However, there aren't enough means to earn a livelihood, with no big industry in the district. Therefore, agricultural labour is the main source of income. Locally, wages are extremely low but if people of Nandurbar migrate, they stand a chance to earn slightly better wages. Therefore, this district has been linked to large-scale seasonal migration. Thousands of families in the district migrate to the nearby state of Gujarat for a period of six months after Dussehra and sometimes even to Kolhapur or Solapur in Maharashtra. To understand complexity of the story, one needs to understand the complexity of this distress migration.

A family which doesn't have enough money will pick up an advanced loan from a money-lender, who also happens to be a labour contractor. This money is raised for marriage, death and sickness in the family. Owing to abject poverty, this money

**THE MIGRANT FAMILIES, WHO TRAVEL RIGHT AFTER DUSSEHRA, ALSO TAKE THEIR CHILDREN ALONG. THEY MISS SCHOOL FOR MORE THAN SIX MONTHS. THEREFORE, THEY ARE NOT ABLE TO ENJOY STUDIES AND AUTOMATICALLY DROP OUT OF SCHOOL**

generally cannot be paid back. The contractor then asks the family to act as agricultural labour for the next six months. There is a condition that their loan's repayment will be wage compensation. The contractor then provides labour for various companies and sugar factories. That's where these labourers get their jobs — sugar cutting being the largest source. Somehow, there is no written agreement or payment slips and the contractor always claims of even bigger dues. This cycle has been going on for years. Workers and their families migrate for this purpose. These migrant families, who travel right after Dussehra, also take their children along. Children miss school for more than six months. Therefore, children do not enjoy education and automatically drop out.

Archana worked to ensure that no child from such a migrant family dropped out of school. In the local context, she is one of the most educated girls from the village, where out of 300 families, only two people have gone for

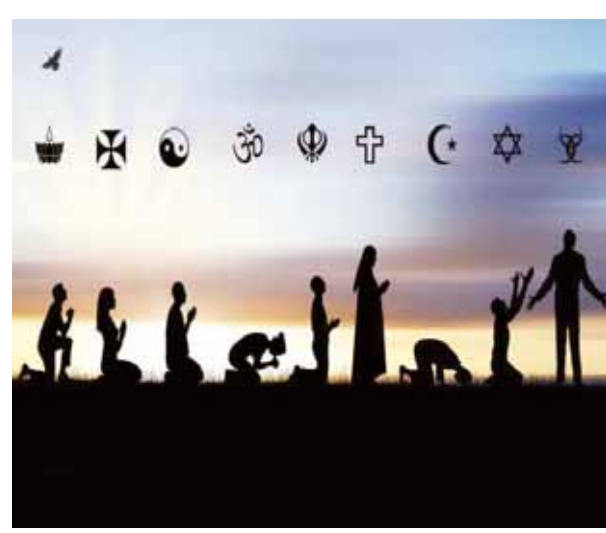
graduation. While one of them got an agricultural studies degree and a job in the respective department, only one girl has completed 12th grade. With Archana's intervention, more than 40 children are set to go to Nandurbar to complete their ninth and 10th standard, an unprecedented occurrence in this area.

So how exactly did this happen? A local NGO and UNICEF worked hand in hand to dissuade families from taking children with them for migration. District coordinator Sachin Dada spoke to the children. He took two girls and three boys to Nandurbar for a one-day training. Along with Gram Panchayat's cooperation, the children, who acted as local advocacy leaders, led efforts to ensure that the education of the children will continue. Archana took the lead in this. She went from house to house to address families before Dussehra. Being a small area, everyone knows each other. She said, "You go to Gujarat for work but don't take your children along." Villagers questioned as to who would take the responsibility of the child in their absence. Archana encouraged children's grandparents to take up the responsibility and ensure that children have maximum attendance in school. She told families, "Let them learn. You have no money in your pocket, so you can go. But how long will this work? How will the family go ahead if the children don't receive their education properly? You work because you haven't learned. If they learn, they will be *sahabs* one day."

Gradually, her work had a positive impact on the village. Now without exception, all the children from class 1 to 10 go to school. Around 40 students are on their way to Nandurbar for post-seventh grade education. Archana and her friends have also campaigned for a bus service from Nandurbar to Khodasgaon. The bus picks for five days a week. However, children still miss school on Saturdays because there is no means of commuting.

Archana Padvi has also worked to promote the use of toilets and de-addiction from tobacco and alcohol in her village. Slowly, she's finding success in those endeavours too.

—Charkha Features



## In search of universal truth

We need to create a religion of spiritual love and brotherhood that can inspire men, women and children to build a new world full of peace, amity and spirit, says **RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI**

**T**he ongoing communal or religious disharmony in various parts of the world reminds us that there has been a vast discrepancy between what religions have preached and what most of their followers have actually practised.

Going by the frequent confrontation happening between two east Asian countries as well as unresolved conflicts between two gulf nations, brings one to the conclusion that religious preachers and believers have done more harm to the meaning of religion than its opponents. Blind faith, meaningless and tiresome rituals, needless physical austerities, dryness and dogmatism, unbridgeable gulf between religious preachers on such vital topics as true identity of god, their rigidity of views, narrowness of outlook and intolerance are some factors responsible for repulsion in people's minds. As a result, religion has become uninspiring. Though there is no dearth of temples, mosques, synagogues, *vihars* and churches in the East as well as in the West, the number of devotees visiting these places has considerably dwindled, which clearly indicates that religion has increasingly been losing its appeal.



**Various problems in our society like over-population, eve-teasing, criminal assault and adultery are a result of man's desperation and lust. It's clear that spirituality can tackle these with ease**

Off lately, it has come into observation of the common man that most religious preachers do not have any reliable experience about god nor is there any unanimity among them even on fundamental subjects such as the soul. They can neither explain the religious truth logically nor inspire others from their own practical examples. All this has naturally led people to distance themselves from religion as well as spirituality. This, however, does not mean that religion has lost its utility or is unnecessary. If religion loses its influence on the minds of scientists, politicians and men in general as it has been losing, the world will soon face an unprecedented catastrophe.

It was not very long ago when Swami Vivekananda reflected on the concept of universal religion and its necessity in society. He realised the nature of man, which is making the world look for more in the quest of reaching god. Therefore, the world is today expecting a religion, which is acceptable to all, is universal in its scope and teachings and which works as a unifying force. The need of the hour is

to have a religion of spiritual love and brotherhood that can inspire men, women and children to build a new world full of peace, amity and spirit.

Looking at various problems in society, it is clear that spirituality can tackle them with ease. For instance, problems like over-population, eve-teasing, criminal assault and adultery, are a result of man's desperation and lust. Economic exploitation, bribery, adulteration, etc., are a result of man's greed. All wars and acts of violence are due to man's anger. Many countries are backward in the comity of nations because of sloth or laziness. All these basic evils are recognised by religion but there are a number of ways to eradicate these only if man cares. In fact, it has been found and thoroughly researched that easy yoga is the only solution which can eradicate man's mental pollution. And if man does not follow spirituality and wisdom, purity and yoga even during such a critical time, gradually, a number of wars and nuclear weapons will clear the dominating evil in this corrupt society and destroy the world. Now it's up to us which way we choose.

**O**utdoor plants in cold climate need to bank a certain number of hours being chilly during the winter for their buds to awaken in the coming months. And that's not the same thing as being cold. To a plant, "chilly" generally means a temperature between about 32 and 45 degrees Fahrenheit.

Lack of enough chilling time is why it might be a waste to try to force forsythia blossoms indoors now. The bushes have been exposed to frigid temperatures but not enough chilling temperatures. Spring-flowering bulbs also need some chilling before they will flower, which is why we keep them in a cool spot for a few weeks before bringing them indoors and for forcing. And lack of chilling is why you can't grow most apple varieties in Florida. Without chilling, the trees either don't leaf out or they just cough forth a few, low-quality fruits.

Once any plant has accumulated enough hours in its chilling "bank," it will grow as soon as temperatures warm.

# Time to take a chill pill

Plants in winters need to bank a certain number of hours in chilling temperatures

originating in colder climates are usually at the higher end of this range. Forsythia hails from eastern Asia, and the yellow blossoms of a plant originating in the southern part of that range would welcome spring here earlier in the season than would a plant originating in the northern part of that range.

The need for less chilling is not always an asset: With fruit trees, earlier blossoms are not welcome because they are more likely to get frosted, and frosted blossoms don't go on to become fruits.

Chilling requirements are not directly related to latitude in all cases. High-altitude northern plants have low chilling requirements because temperatures there stay reliably cold through winter, and then growth needs to begin quickly for the ensuing short season. Conversely, high chilling requirements where winter temperatures fluctuate frequently keeps plants adapted to those regions from starting growth too soon.



Chilling can influence how a plant performs in your garden. Imagine a gardener in Portland, Oregon, who is growing the same variety of kousa dogwood as another gardener in Vermont. Buds at the tip of any plant's branches need less chilling than do buds lower down, so where climates have mild winters, as in Portland, tip buds start growing first, as soon as their chilling requirement is met. Getting an earlier start, those terminal shoots can suppress, to some degree, growth of buds lower down along the stems.

In Vermont, however, frigid weather holds back tip buds even after their chilling requirements are satisfied. Once weather warms in spring, all the buds grow pretty much together. So, a kousa dogwood in Vermont will become bushier than the same plant grown in Portland.

For the same reason, frigid winters coax particularly spectacular spring flower shows from trees and shrubs. In Vermont, flower buds on many different plants that have been

chilled by midwinter sit tight waiting for warm weather. When warmth finally arrives, all those buds burst open almost at once.

Portland, on the other hand, gets weeks and weeks of bloom, the mild winter weather letting each tree's or shrub's flowers awaken as its chilling requirement is met.

We can't really do much about chilling of outdoor plants. We can't even be too exact in figuring out just when to bring branches or bulbs in for forcing or how far south we can grow a McIntosh apple tree. That 32-to-45-degree definition of chilling varies somewhat from plant to plant, and warm temperatures in winter can take hours out of the chilling bank.

One part of plants is unaffected by chilling: the roots. They will grow whenever temperatures are above about 40 degrees Fahrenheit, which is why mulching in fall, which keeps the ground warmer longer, is good for plants. More root growth makes happier plants.

—AP

**HOW MUCH CHILL DO THEY WANT?**

Plants vary in just how many hours of chilling they need before they'll awaken, with most needing between 500 and 2,000 hours. Plants

**EFFECTS MAY VARY**

**Pain is temporary. Quitting lasts forever.**  
—Lance Armstrong

**SPIRITUALITY IMPROVES HIV PATIENTS' LIFE**

Adults living with HIV are more likely to feel higher levels of emotional and physical well-being if they attend religious services regularly, pray everyday and self-identify as religious or spiritual, as per a new study.

By contrast, patients living with HIV who have the lowest levels of quality of life and more mental health challenges are privately religious, the research added.

"These findings are significant because they point to the untapped potential of encouraging patients living with HIV who are already religious to attend religious services regularly. People who identify as spiritual also benefit from improved overall health-related quality of life," said study researcher Maureen E Lyon from Children's National Hospital in the US.

It also suggests that religions that present god as all-powerful, personal, loving and forgiving make a difference in quality of life. "In general, patients living with HIV have reported that they wished their health care providers acknowledged their religious beliefs," Lyon added.

**ROSE SCENT IMPROVES LEARNING AND SLEEPING**

Researchers have found that smelling the scent of rose improves the quality of the learning and can also help in sleeping better.

The study, published in the journal *Scientific Reports*, was conducted within pupils of two classes that learned English vocabulary, one of which learned it with the scent sticks while the other one did it without it.

"We showed that the supportive effect of fragrance works very reliably in everyday life and can be used in a targeted way," said study leader Jurgen Kornmeier from the University of Freiburg, Germany.

For the study, first author and student teacher Franziska Neumann conducted several experiments with 54 students from two sixth grade classes of a school in southern Germany.

"The students showed a significant increase in learning success by about 30 per cent if the incense sticks were used during both the learning and sleeping phases," Neumann said.

**EXERCISE LEVELS INFLUENCE BRAIN FUNCTION**

Researchers have found that low-intensity exercise triggers brain networks involved in cognition control and attention processing, while high-intensity exercise primarily activates networks involved in emotion processing.

Using resting state functional magnetic resonance imaging (rs-fMRI), a noninvasive technique that allows for studies on brain connectivity, the study, published in the journal *Brain Plasticity*, shows for the first time that low and high exercise intensities differentially influence brain function.

"We believe that functional neuroimaging will have a major impact for unraveling body-brain interactions," said study lead author Angelika Schmitt from University Hospital Bonn, Germany.

"These novel methods allow us to 'look' directly into the brains of a group of athletes, and, maybe even more importantly, understand the dynamic changes in brain structure and function associated with the transition from a sedentary to a healthy lifestyle," Schmitt added.

**SMALL BIRTH WEIGHT UPS RISK OF BREATHLESSNESS**

Parents, take note.

Researchers have found that babies born with low birth weights are more likely to have poor cardio-respiratory fitness later in life than their usual-weight peers.

Having a good cardio-respiratory fitness is important for staying healthy and can reduce the risk of numerous diseases and premature death. Alarming, cardio-respiratory fitness is declining globally, both for the youth and adults.

The study, published in the journal *JAMA*, showed that the proportion of Swedish adults with low cardio-respiratory fitness almost doubled from 27 per cent in 1995 to 46 per cent in 2017.

The magnitude of the difference observed is alarming. "The observed 7.9 watts increase for each 450 grams of extra weight at birth, in a baby born at 40 weeks, translates into 1.34 increase in metabolic equivalent (MET), which has been associated with the risk of premature death and developing cardiovascular disease," said researcher Daniel Berglind from Karolinska Institute, Sweden.

**HORMONE THERAPY PREVENTS MISCARRIAGE**

Researchers have revealed that thousands of miscarriages in a year could be prevented with a daily hormonal capsule.

Giving progesterone to women with early pregnancy bleeding and a history of miscarriage could lead to 8,450 more babies being born each year in the UK, as per a new study.

Progesterone is a hormone that is naturally secreted by the ovaries and placenta in early pregnancy and is vital to the attainment and maintenance of healthy pregnancies.

"Our suggestion is to consider offering to women with early pregnancy bleeding and a history of one or more previous miscarriages a course of treatment of progesterone 400 mg twice daily, started at the time of presentation with vaginal bleeding and continued to 16 completed weeks of gestation," said study researcher Arri Coomarasamy, professor at the University of Birmingham, UK.

# GRANDNESS

Novak lessons Thiem in five-set to win Eight title at Melbourne park

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Novak Djokovic battled through a five-set thriller with Dominic Thiem to maintain his dominance at the Australian Open Sunday, claiming a record eighth title and returning to world number one in the process. The indomitable Serb stretched his unbeaten streak this season to 13 but he had to rally from two sets to one down to beat the courageous fifth-seeded Austrian 6-4, 4-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4 in a nearly four-hour marathon. It was his 17th Grand Slam title, moving him within two of Rafael Nadal and three of Roger Federer on the all-time list.

"Definitely my favourite court, my favourite stadium in the world and I'm blessed to hold this trophy once again," said Djokovic.

Victory put him alongside his fellow legends as only the third man in history to win eight or more titles at the same Slam after Nadal (12 at the French Open) and Federer (eight at Wimbledon).

It also ensured he will once again be world number one when the new rankings are released on Monday, usurping Nadal. Federer remains third with Thiem moving up a place to a career-high fourth.

But it wasn't easy with the Serb looking lethargic and out for the count in sets two and three before regaining his mojo after a medical timeout to grind down the talented



Novak Djokovic kisses his trophy after winning Australian Open

Novak Djokovic/Twitter

## Ram and Salisbury win doubles title



Rajeev Ram, right, of the U.S. and partner Britain's Joe Salisbury kiss their trophy

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Eleventh seeds Rajeev Ram and Joe Salisbury halted the incredible doubles run of Australian Open wildcards Max Purcell and Luke Saville Sunday, crushing them 6-4, 6-2 in the final.

The American and British pair showed their class and experience, eventually breaking in the seventh game of the opening set, and two more breaks in set two was enough to

earn them the title.

They only lost seven points on serve and never faced a break point.

"Rajeev, I don't think I thought when I asked you to play just over a year ago that we would be standing here now but it's been an honour to play with you," said Britain's Salisbury after their first Slam title as a team.

"Thank you so much for being the best partner I could get."

Thiem.

Djokovic had never before won a Slam final in seven previous attempts when finding himself two sets to one down.

"You and two other guys (Nadal and Federer) brought men's tennis to another level. I am happy I can compete in these times," said Thiem.

"I fell short today but I hope soon I can compete with you again."

### NERVELESS START

The Serb, 32, was the overwhelming favourite, but the supremely fit and fast Thiem, 26, always had the weapons to trouble him, which he deployed successfully for much of the

match, taming his serve and unleashing some explosive groundstrokes.

It was a nerveless start from Djokovic, who comfortably held then put big pressure on the Austrian's serve, with a forehand into the net giving him an immediate break and a psychological edge after some monster rallies.

Thiem, though, is as strong mentally as he is physically and he finally got on the scoreboard after another tough service game.

And against the run of play, with Djokovic seemingly in control, he broke back, unleashing pinpoint groundstrokes to make the most of some loose Djokovic shots.

But the world number two was unrelenting, breaking again as Thiem served to stay in the set, with the Austrian sending down his first double fault of the match at the crucial moment.

Remarkably, a rare Djokovic double fault handed Thiem a break to go 2-1 up in set two with the courageous Austrian refusing to go away.

The Serb was getting frustrated, looking at his coaching box and pointing at his head.

He refocused and once again began attacking the Thiem serve, breaking back for 4-4, pumping his fists when the fifth seed sent a backhand wide.

But two time warnings on his serve in the next game rattled Djokovic and he was broken again, with the Serb losing his cool by patting the umpire's foot at the changeover and telling the official: "Great job... You made yourself famous."

### 'TOUGH LUCK'

With Djokovic still looking distracted, Thiem served out the set — the first the Serb had dropped in an Australian Open final since 2015.

Djokovic appeared dejected and was immediately broken twice in set three as Thiem raced to a 4-0 lead, having won six games in a row with Djokovic imploding.

The Serb was heard telling a trainer he was tired and after losing the set, he went for a medical timeout.

He came back and the fourth set went with serve until a Thiem double fault handed the Serb two break points and he converted to regain control, serving out the set with an ace.

Djokovic drew on all his experience to force another break in the deciding fifth set to take a 2-1 lead and kept his foot on the gas to claim an eighth crown from the last 13 Australian Opens.

"It wasn't meant to be tonight," Djokovic told Thiem. "Tough luck. It was a tough match. But you were very close to winning it."



Leipzig's goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi makes a save during the German Bundesliga soccer

## LEIPZIG LOSE TOP SPOT

AFP ■ LEIPZIG

Previous pace-setters Leipzig failed to stay at the top despite coming from two goals down in their 2-2 home draw with 10-man Borussia Muenchengladbach.

Gladbach netted two first-half goals in quick succession as Alassane Plea and Jonas Hoffman exploited sloppy defending.

Leipzig striker Patrik Schick pulled a goal back on 50 minutes, poking the ball over the line after Gladbach goalkeeper Yann Sommer failed to hold a cross after stumbling over defender Denis Zakaria.

The game turned on the hour when Gladbach had Plea sent off for arguing with the ref after being booked.

Taking advantage, Leipzig attacked hard and Christopher Nkunku rescued a point when the French forward sprinted into the area and fired into the top corner on 89 minutes.

Winter signing from PSV scores on PL debut as Mourinho's side beat 10 men City

AFP ■ LONDON

Steven Bergwijn's debut goal helped Tottenham to a remarkable 2-0 win over 10-man Manchester City on Sunday to breathe new life into their challenge for a top-four finish in the Premier League.

Jose Mourinho's men had been completely outplayed for the first hour, but were kept in the game by City's profligacy and Hugo Lloris's first-half penalty save from Ilkay Gundogan.

However, Oleksandr Zinchenko's sending off changed the course of the game as Spurs scored with their first two shots on goal through Bergwijn and Son Heung-min.

Victory lifts Spurs up to fifth, just four points off fourth-placed Chelsea.

A sixth league defeat of the season for City sees Liverpool remain 22 points clear at the top and within touching distance of their first league title for 30 years.

This was arguably the least anticipated of Mourinho and Pep Guardiola's 23 meetings as opposing managers, but it resorted to type as the Portuguese set up Spurs to defend deep, while City monopolised possession.

The visitors could have been out of sight by half-time as in a recurring theme of their season,

## Berg wijn for Spurs



the champions were wasteful in front of goal.

However, Tottenham also felt City were lucky not to be down to 10 men earlier when Raheem Sterling caught England international teammate Dele Alli with his studs.

Lloris was making just his third appearance since returning from a long-term layoff due to a dislocated elbow, but the French number one was back to his best to keep his side level at half-time.

Lloris turned Sergio Aguero's low shot onto the post before the Argentine was chopped down in the area by Serge Aurier.

Referee Mike Dean initially waved play on, but with no break in play for a few minutes he eventually stopped the game after being told to give a penalty by VAR.

City's dreadful run from the spot continued as Gundogan joined Gabriel Jesus and Sterling in failing to convert in recent

weeks as his low effort was parried by Lloris.

Sterling then pounced on the rebound and went down over Lloris, but no second penalty was awarded and Sterling also escaped the possibility of a second booking for diving.

The chances continued to come for City as Aguero fired into the side-netting from point-blank range just before the break.

### DREAM DEBUT

Gundogan was the guilty party again minutes into the second period after a calamity of errors.

Lloris collided with Japhet Tanganga, Aguero's effort was cleared off the line by Toby Alderweireld and when Sterling squared to Gundogan rather than go for goal himself, the German spooned the ball over.

However, the game was decided in three minutes just after the hour mark.

Zinchenko was shown a second yellow card for a foul on Harry Winks as Tottenham launched a counter-attack.

At that point City had had 14 shots on goal to Tottenham's none, but they only needed one.

Bergwijn, signed earlier this week from PSV Eindhoven, capped a dream debut as he chested down Lucas Moura's pass and volleyed past Ederson.

Eight minutes later, Spurs were out of sight when Son, who scored three times in a famous Champions League quarter-final win over City last season, was the scourge of City again with a fine low finish from Tanguy Ndombele's pass.

City's failings at both ends of the field leaves Guardiola with plenty of problems to solve just weeks away from his side's Champions League last-16 clash with Real Madrid.

And there was more concern for Guardiola ahead of that tie as Sterling hobbled off with a muscle injury five minutes from time.

## RONALDO DOUBLE SENDS JUVE SIX-POINTS CLEAR

AFP ■ MILAN

Cristiano Ronaldo stretched his scoring streak to nine consecutive league games with a penalty double on Sunday as Juventus bounced back from last weekend's defeat to Napoli with a 3-0 win over Fiorentina.

The Portuguese striker slotted in both his goals from the spot in either half in Turin with Dutch defender Matthijs de Ligt heading in a third in injury time.

Maurizio Sarri's side open up a six-point lead on top of the Serie A table on second-placed Inter Milan, who travel to lowly Udinese later on Sunday.

Juventus had fallen to just their second defeat of the season last weekend at Sarri's former club Napoli, despite Ronaldo scoring. Fiorentina, in 14th position, have had a resurgence in form since Giuseppe Iachini took over on December 24, and had been unbeaten in the league this year.

They tested Juventus goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny early with the Pole getting his hand to deny Federico Chiesa's back-heel kick and a Pol Lirola effort.

Fellow Pole Bart?omiej Dragowski denied Rodrigo Bentancur at the end before a VAR viewing confirmed Fiorentina's German Pezzella had handled the ball in the area.

Five-time Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo made no mistake, slotting in five minutes before the break.

His second came ten minutes from time after Federico Ceccherini brought down Rodrigo Bentancur.

Ronaldo made it 14 goals in nine games to bring his tally to 19 this season, including seven penalties.

The former Real Madrid player has now scored 50 goals in 70 games since moving to Juventus in 2018.

The 34-year-old also becomes the first Juventus player to achieve a run of goals in nine consecutive league games since David Trezeguet in December 2005.

De Ligt nodded in a Paulo Dybala cross after 91 minutes to hand Iachini his first league defeat with the Tuscany side.

Third-placed Lazio will try to close the gap on Juventus against struggling SPAL later on Sunday.

Roma's fourth position however is now at risk after losing 4-2 to Sassuolo on Saturday.

Atalanta are just a point behind in fifth before they play relegation-candidates Genoa looking to move into the final Champions League berth.

## Sindhu beats Shriyanshi Pardeshi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

World Champion PV Sindhu put up a master-class to beat Shriyanshi Pardeshi in an all-Indian clash as Hyderabad Hunters notched up a thrilling 4-3 win over Mumbai Rockets in the fifth Premier Badminton League here on Sunday.

Languishing at the bottom of the table, Hyderabad finally had something to cheer about as Sindhu lead a recovery after the team was 0-3 behind at one stage against the sixth-placed Rockets.

Sindhu had come to this match on a two-match losing streak, having suffered a reversal of fortunes at the hands of Michelle Li and Tai Tzu Ying. However, this time the Hunters Trump made no mistake as she beat Shriyanshi 15-5, 15-10 in a clinical display.

Priyanshu Rajawat then defeated Korea's Lee Dong Keun 15-13, 15-9 in the men's singles match, while Vladimir Ivanov and N Sikki Reddy brushed aside KS Rang and Pia Bernadeth 15-8, 15-8 to edge out Mumbai at the GMC



PV Sindhu in action

The Mumbai ace has a 3-2 head-to-head record against World No. 42 Daren Liew on the BWF World Tour and he used all that experience against the Malaysian, whom he last beat at the Korea Open in November.

Showing all his rhythm and range, the Mumbai Trump was able to register a quickfire 15-8, 15-13 win.

In men's doubles, Kim Sa Rang and Kim Gi Jung easily beat Hyderabad's Ben Lane and Vladimir Ivanov 15-10, 15-8 to make it 3-0 in Mumbai's favour.

Sindhu then took the court and claimed a straight game win to start Hyderabad's recovery.

In the first game, it was a one-way traffic as Pardeshi found it difficult to counter Sindhu's pace and power.

In the second game, however, the Mumbai player was able to give a better account of herself. By speeding up the shuttle, she was able to put an end to Sindhu's domination.

As Sindhu fumbled at the net, Pardeshi was just two points away from the World No. 6 at 9-11 before the Hyderabad shuttler stopped her momentum and wrapped up the match.

## Tough opener for Nagal

PTI ■ PUNE

India's best singles players will try to exploit the home conditions while veteran Leander Paes will be seen in action for one last time here when the Tata Open Maharashtra begins here on Monday.

The left-handed Prajnesh is up against Yannick Maden, ranked 125, while Sumit Nagal finds himself pitted against former top-20 Serbian Viktor Troicki in their respective opening round matches.

Both of them are the only direct entrants in the men's singles main draw in which five Indians are competing.

Troicki has been in sensational form in the recent past. Partnering Novak Djokovic, he led Serbia to ATP Cup triumph. Troicki entered the main draw with an easy 6-2, 6-4 win over Evgeny Karlovskiy of Russia in the final qualifying round on Sunday.

Ramkumar Ramanathan, Sasi Mukund and Arjun Kadhe have been given the wild cards. Ramkumar will be seen in action on Monday when he competes against seventh seed Italian Salvatore Caruso.

For Paes, who has been awarded wildcard alongside his Australian partner Mathew Ebden, it could be his final tournament in India if he does not play at the Bengaluru Open.

"This edition is special in more than one way, while we are celebrating 25 years



of the tournament in India this will also be the last chance for Tennis Fans to watch Leander play live in Pune," said Sunder Iyer, Secretary of Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association (MSLTA).

Serbia's Nikola Milojevic, Italian Roberto Marcora and Czech player Lucas Rosol also made their way into the singles main draw with wins in their respective final round matches in the qualifiers of the ATP 250 event.

While Milojevic thrashed the Netherlands' Robin Haase 6-3, 6-3, Marcora upset Slovenian Blaz Rola 6-4, 7-6 in a hard-fought clash.

In the fourth match of the final qualifying round, Rosol managed a 6-2, 7-5 win over Ebden.

### RTCL LIMITED

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### NOTICE

Pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, Notice is hereby given that a Meeting of Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2020, at 3.30 P.M. at the Corporate office of the company inter-alia to consider and approve the Un-audited Financial Results of the Company for the quarter and nine months ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2019.

This Intimation is also available on the Company's website at [www.rtclimited.in](http://www.rtclimited.in) and on the Stock Exchange website at [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com).  
Further, in accordance with the SEBI (Prevention of Insider Trading) Regulations, 2015 and the Company's Code of Conduct for Prevention of Insider Trading, the Trading Window for dealing in the Company's securities was closed from Wednesday 01<sup>st</sup> January, 2020 and will open 48 hours after the said unaudited financial results are declared to the Stock Exchanges.

For RTCL Limited  
S/-  
(Vishal Saxena)  
Company Secretary

Place: Delhi  
Dated: 01.02.2020



India players pose for a group photo as they celebrate a 5-0 series win during the Twenty/20 cricket international between India and New Zealand

HAPPY WITH THE LEARNINGS IN NZ: BUMRAH



FIANS ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI



Not thinking about T20WC at the moment: Rahul

**MOUNT MAUNGANUI:** Chief architect of India's rare 5-0 clean sweep over New Zealand, India opener KL Rahul on Sunday said he is not yet thinking about the T20 World Cup but wants to carry his sparkling form into the big event.

The 27-year-old from Karnataka was named the Player of the Tournament for scoring 224 runs in the five-match series at an average of 56.

"I am batting really well now and I am happy to do the roles I am doing for my side. Not thinking too much about the T20 World Cup at the moment, but hopefully I can continue batting this way," he said.

India notched up a rare 5-0 whitewash over New Zealand with a seven-run win in the fifth and final T20 International and Rahul said the team's ability to find answers in difficult situations was the key to its success.

"I am pleased. It is great to be standing here winning 5-0. Very happy that my performances could result in victories for India. We were happy to come into this series with confidence and to keep executing our skills every game. We came up with answers from every situation and it is a great result for me and the side," he said.

"I think it is a winning habit that we have cultivated wherein we want to win every time we step onto the ground. As a team we keep believing in each other. Leading up to the World Cup, there were a few strategies that we wanted to try out. It just keeps giving us more and more confidence to keep going around." India will next play three ODIs against New Zealand beginning on February 5 and Rahul said they will follow the same process to achieve success in the 50-over format.

"We'll relax a little bit over the next couple of days and enjoy the victory. But once we start with the next series, the process will remain the same," he said.

PTI

PTI ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI

HIGH 5

Bumrah led pacers share seven wickets to help India win final T20 by 7 runs

YEAR	VENUE	OPPONENT	RESULT
2020	New Zealand	New Zealand	5-0
2016	Australia	Australia	3-0
2016	Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe	2-1
2018	South Africa	South Africa	2-1
2018	England	England	2-1

FAISEL FEATURES

India choked New Zealand yet again to turn it around for a seven-run win in the fifth T20 International, giving them a rare 5-0 series whitewash in the shortest format here on Sunday.

The Indian pacers, led by ever-reliable Jasprit Bumrah, shared seven wickets among them for 25 runs in match-changing 7.2 overs to restrict the Kiwis to 156 for nine while defending 163 for three.

Bumrah conceded just 12 runs in his four overs and got rid of three batsmen, bowling block-hole deliveries during death overs.

India's total was built around stand-in skipper Rohit Sharma's 60-run knock after they elected to bat.

Tim Seifert (50) and Ross Taylor (53) kept the Black Caps in hunt for a consolation win but the hosts again fell near the finish line.

This is only third time that India have whitewashed opponents in away T20 series and first time in a five-match rubber.

India had blanked the West Indies 3-0 in 2019 and beat Australia 3-0 in 2016.

New Zealand got off to a poor start and were quickly reduced to 17 for three in the fourth over. Bumrah had Martin Guptill (2) lbw, and Sundar bowled Colin Munro (15). Tom Bruce's run-out didn't help the situation either.

Taylor and Seifert came together at that juncture, putting on 99 runs for the fourth wicket, raising vision of an improbable win.

Seifert reached his half-century off 29 balls, including five fours and three sixes. While Taylor got to his half-century in

42 balls. He hit five fours and two sixes.

They took 34 runs off Shivam Dube in the 10th over, after which KL Rahul, who led in absence of injured Rohit Sharma, had to take corrective measures. He brought back his frontline pacers and they both etched out wickets.

Navdeep Saini (2-23) dismissed Seifert and then Bumrah bowled Daryl Mitchell (2) with a searing yorker.

New Zealand's chase was all but over when Mitchell Santner (6) holed out of Shardul Thakur (2-38) and Manish Pandey held a fine running catch at long on.

Ish Sodhi smacked 16 off 10 balls to provide some fireworks at the end but it was not enough.

Earlier, Rohit, batting at number three, was retired hurt after injuring his left calf whilst hitting a six and walked off the field in discomfort. He faced 41 balls and hit three fours as well as three sixes.

Virat Kohli was expectedly rested, with Rohit coming in, and it was the only change for India from Wellington. Rishabh Pant

was ignored once again.

For New Zealand, Kane Williamson didn't recover on time and Tim Southee led the side once again.

Despite Rohit's return, Sanju Samson (2) continued to open the innings and it didn't work again. Yet another opportunity went begging as he hit straight to extra cover and was out for two runs.

KL Rahul (45) and Rohit added 88 runs for the second wicket, providing vital momentum to the Indian innings.

The in-form duo dominated the Black Caps' attack and put on 50 off just 35 balls. Rahul hit four fours and two sixes in his 33-ball stay.

He fell in the 12th over against the run of play and finished with 224 runs in the series, the most for an Indian batsman in any bilateral T20I series.

Sharma scored his 25th T20I half-century off 35 balls. He looked to accelerate but then injured himself in the 17th over and retired.

The loss of both Rahul and Sharma impacted the Indian innings, and they lost all momen-

We need everyone to be the best version of themselves: Kohli

PTI ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI

India captain Virat Kohli on Sunday said he wants his players to be the "best version of themselves" in order to dominate world cricket in the coming years.

India notched up a rare 5-0 whitewash over New Zealand with a seven-run win in the fifth and final T20 International here.

"We need everyone to be the best versions of themselves. It is all about laying the vision in front of the boys, the way you think, prepare. The guys are taking notice of it and they realise that the team needs 120 percent from them every time," Kohli said.

"Because only then you will find ways to win. That has been a massive change for us in the last two-three years. We have seen the results; we obviously won't win everything and these victories give a lot more pleasure than the one-sided victories."

With Kohli resting himself from the inconsequential final game, Rohit Sharma was the stand-in skipper, but the opener suffered a calf injury while batting and had to retire hurt.

In his absence, KL Rahul led the side to victory.

Heaping praise on the team at the presentation ceremony, Kohli said: "All of us are really proud of how we played. It's about finding ways to win. Today, all these young guys were on the field after Rohit's unfortunate injury and them coming together and handling the pressure."

"That gives me a lot of pleasure watching from the outside and they will take this momentum going forward for many years."

Kohli also backed under-fire New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson, saying he is the right man to lead the Black Caps despite the 0-5 drubbing.



we speak the same language," he said.

"Despite what the scoreline suggests, I feel that New Zealand cricket is in the best hands and he is the right guy to lead this team. He is the perfect, perfect man to lead them. I wish him the best of luck and power to lead this side in the future. They are a side everyone loves to watch and play against."

It was the first time that New Zealand lost three or more matches in a bilateral T20I series at home. The hosts had gone down 0-2 to England back in February 2008.

New Zealand stand-in skipper Tim Southee said there wasn't much difference between the two sides.

"It's another close one, unfortunately on the wrong side again. If you give them a sniff, they take it with both hands. I don't think it is a massive gap, the scoreline does suggest that, but we only need to do the smaller things better," he said.

The two teams will next play a three-match ODI series beginning on February 5 and Southee hoped that the hosts will put up a better show with new players coming into the side.

"The ODIs are a different format, new personnel come in and it is a format where we have done well," he said.

India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who was adjudged the Man of the Match for his three-wickets haul, said he always had the belief that a couple of good overs can change the complexion of the game.

"Feeling very good. The match got close at one point but we had belief that if we can squeeze in one or two good overs, the match can get close," he said.

"It was windy, I was trying to use the wind and the longer side of the boundary. Very happy with the learnings, different ground dimensions, first time in New Zealand, great result."

0-5 series whitewash hurts: Taylor

PTI ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI

Senior New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor on Sunday admitted that the 0-5 whitewash by India has hurt his side badly and the whole T20I series has been a disappointment for them.

Taylor, however, said his side played better cricket than the results suggest though they knew from the beginning that it was going to be a tough task against a strong Indian team.

"The whole series has been a disappointment, the way we put ourselves in good positions and just were not able to capitalize. When you are up against a world-class side like India, we have played a lot worse and got better results than this," Taylor said after New Zealand lost the fifth and final match by seven runs to hand India a rare series whitewash.



Ross Taylor raises his bat

"Even though it's a different format (than ODI and Test), it still does hurt. Winning is a habit and losing those tight games. But we are going into a format that is one of our strengths. In ODI cricket, hopefully Kane's shoulder is all right, new personnel and some world-class players coming back and we are looking forward," he said of the three-match ODI series from February 5-12.

He said New Zealand have given a strong Indian side room to take advantage out of it and they had suffered from that.

"You can't give this Indian side an inch, we gave them a lot more than that and they took advantage. You got to learn a lot quicker than we are now with both bat and ball. Until then, we will get similar results," he said,

referring to the instances when New Zealand lost two matches in Super Over.

Taylor, however, hailed the Indian team for being able to win series away from home.

"More often than not it is tough to win away from home but to come over here with a couple of their star players missing that would add a different balance to their side. I am sure it is very good for Indian cricket."

"I probably say this, we were completely outplayed in the series last year and we came back and won that semi-final in the World Cup. Whenever we play India in a T20I game, we know it will be an uphill task but we know we can still beat them when it counts hopefully," he added.

Taylor, who hit 53 on

Sunday, said the target of 164 was achievable but the Kiwis came up short in a tight chase and could not recover from a poor start.

"I thought we were under pressure when I came out there. The way Tim Seifert came out and batted, we got ourselves to what once again would normally be a comfortable scenario with 66 off 60 balls. You win, maybe 95 times (from there)," said the 35-year-old right-handed batsman.

"When you got a world-class bowler like Bumrah, you have got to skin the cat slightly differently and he is able to be their X-factor for them. The way (Navdeep) Saini and others bowled put us under some pressure and wickets fell at different times," he said, explaining how New Zealand batsmen lost their plot.

Eves lose to Aussies in T20 tri-series

PTI ■ CANBERRA

Indian women suffered a four-wicket loss against the mighty Australia after a disappointing batting performance in their second match of the T20 tri-series here on Sunday.

India struggled to 103 for nine in 20 overs after being asked to bat. The visiting team's bowlers did well to stretch the game till the penultimate over but there were not enough runs on the board.

Elyse Perry was the undisputed star of the game, picking up three wickets in one before making 49 off 47 balls in Australia's chase.

India had beaten England in the tournament opener while Australia had lost to England in a Super Over finish on Saturday, leaving all three teams with a win each.

"Our lower order definitely needs to bat a lot better, especially when the top order doesn't get runs. However, really appreciate the performance of the bowlers," said India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur at the post-match presentation.

India next play against England at the Junction Oval in Melbourne.

Barring opener Smriti Mandhana (35) and Harmanpreet (28), Indian batters showed complete lack of application on a pitch offering extra bounce. India lost their last six wickets for



Elyse Perry in action

21 runs with pacer Perry (4/13 in 4 overs) picking three of them in 14th over over, removing Harmanpreet, Taniya Bhatia and Deepti Sharma.

Sixteen-year-old Shafali Verma, touted as the next big thing in women's cricket, lasted only three balls while Jemimah Rodrigues crawled to 1 off 11 balls, leaving their team at 16 for two in three overs.

The experienced Mandhana and Harmanpreet stitched a 40-run stand before the latter's dismissal triggered a collapse.

Gill smashes double century as India A save first unofficial Test

PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

Shubman Gill is expected to retain his place in India's Test squad after scoring an unbeaten 204 for the A team in the drawn four-day game against New Zealand A here on Friday.

Resuming the day four at 127 for two, India A went on to make 448 for three in their second innings with Gill scoring his second double century on an away tour (the first one came in West Indies last year).

Gill and Test regular Hanuma Vihari (100 off 113) shared an unbeaten 222-run stand for the fourth wicket to save the game for India A. Another valuable contribution came from Priyank Panchal (115 off 164).

Gill's 279-ball effort comprised 22 boundaries and four sixes. Vihari's quickfire century comprised 11 fours and three sixes.

It was a much improved batting effort from India A as the pitch eased out at the Hagley Oval. The team, captained by Vihari, made 216 in



Shubman Gill in action

the first innings in which Gill was the top-scorer with 83.

In response, New Zealand A had amassed 562 for seven before declaring the innings.

Mayank Agarwal, who will open alongside Rohit Sharma in the two-Test series against New Zealand later this month, had a forgettable

outing in the game as he got out for a duck in both the innings.

After a fine double century, Gill is certain to retain his place in the Test squad. The 20-year-old was also part of the squad in the home series against South Africa and Bangladesh but did not get a game.