

**OPINION 8**  
PSEUDO-CALIPHATE  
AND INDIA

**WORLD 12**  
CORONAVIRUS: 99 MORE CASES  
ON JAPAN CRUISE SHIP: MEDIA

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**KANGANA'S  
LOOK AS PILOT  
RELEASED  
14 VIVACITY**

## Women in non-combat command

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court on Monday opened the way for women in command positions in the Army and directed the Centre to grant permanent commission to all women officers within three months. The apex court orders, on grounds of the need to end gender bias in the Army and directed the Centre to grant permanent commission to all women officers within three months. The apex court orders, on grounds of the need to end gender bias in the Army and directed the Centre to grant permanent commission to all women officers within three months. The apex court orders, on grounds of the need to end gender bias in the Army and directed the Centre to grant permanent commission to all women officers within three months.

### Landmark judgment

- The SC orders, on grounds of the need to end gender bias in the Armed forces, will directly benefit more than 300 women officers, including making them eligible for pension
- The women officers, however, will not be inducted into the combat arms such as the infantry, artillery or armoured corps as the top court clarified that their deployment is a matter of policy as held by the Delhi High Court

given equal opportunity on a par with their male counterparts in the armed forces.

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

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

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

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

PTI

## 5 theatre commands for modern warfare by 2022

RAHUL DATTA ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



on Monday.

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

taking these reforms.

Rawat said the theatre commands will be geographically defined and demarcated and a study will be conducted from March 31 onwards. The study will be submitted for scrutiny by the end of next year and hopefully the commands will roll out by 2020, said Rawat, adding the study groups will evaluate the options of number of commands which could vary from two to five. At present, the three Services have their own commands and operate in silos.

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## Now, Nirbhaya rapists to hang on March 3

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

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



Nirbhaya gangrape case convicts PTI

The court was also informed that Vinay is on hunger strike. Vinay was assaulted in jail and has head injuries, his lawyer told the court, adding that he was suffering from acute mental illness and hence the death sentence cannot be carried out. The court directed the Tihar Jail superintendent to take appropriate care of Vinay as per law.

Pawan's counsel informed the court that he wanted to move curative petition and the mercy plea against the death sentence before the President. Pawan is the only one among the four convicts who has not yet filed the curative petition — the last legal remedy available to a person, which is decided in-chamber.

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## Protest a right, but can't block roads, SC tells Shaheen Bagh

Court asks senior advocate Hegde to persuade anti-CAA protesters to shift

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Blockade of the public road at Shaheen Bagh is "troubling us", the Supreme Court said on Monday and suggested that the anti-CAA protesters go to another site where no public place would be blocked.

The SC asked senior advocate Sanjay Hegde to "play a constructive role as an interlocutor" to persuade the protesters to move to an alternative site. People have a fundamental right to protest "peacefully and lawfully" but blocking public roads and public places is a matter of concern as it might lead to "chaotic situation", the apex court said, stressing that there has to be a "balancing factor".

"Democracy works on expression of views but there are lines and boundaries for it," a bench of Justices SK Kaul and KM Joseph said, adding, "The question which is arising is



Women during a sit-in protest at Shaheen Bagh in New Delhi on Monday

PTI

where to protest."

"Our concern is if everybody starts blocking public areas then where will it end," the bench asked.

The SC said Hegde can take assistance of advocate Sadhana Ramchandran and former Chief Information Commissioner Wajahat Habibullah for talking to the protesters.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Delhi Government and the Delhi Police, told the court that the solution is to remove these protesters from the site. "We will not go that far but the problem is that they (protesters) are keeping children and women as shield. We have held a series of

meetings with the local resident welfare associations, priests of mosques there and we are trying to persuade them that this is not the way to keep entire city to hostage under the garb of protest," Mehta said.

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### Sharjeel Imam sent to police custody

New Delhi: A court here sent Sharjeel Imam, arrested on sedition charge last month, to one day custody of the Delhi Police on Monday in a separate case related to violent protests against CAA at New Friends Colony on December 15.

## UK MP, leading anti-India Kashmir opinion, lands at IGIA, packed off to Dubai

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

British MP Debbie Abrahams — at the forefront of creating opinion against India on the Kashmir issue after the special status to the State under Article 370 was abolished — was stopped at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in Delhi on Monday and deported to Dubai.

The Labour Party parliamentarian, also the chairperson of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Kashmir in Britain, was not allowed entry into India and was told upon her arrival at the airport that her visa had been rejected.

The British MP said in a statement that she arrived in Delhi on Monday morning and was informed that her visa, which was valid till October 2020, had been cancelled. Countering her claims, the Union Home Ministry spokesperson said the British parliamentarian had been duly informed that her visa was cancelled and she arrived in Delhi despite that.

Reacting to Home Ministry's clarification, she said



Debbie Abrahams

she had "not received any emails before February 13". After that, she had been travelling and was away from office. In her statement, Abrahams said she had presented herself at the immigration desk along with her documents and e-visa.

"...The official looked at his screen and started shaking his head. Then he told me my visa was rejected, took my passport and disappeared for about 10 minutes. When he came back he was very rude and aggressive shouting at me to 'come with me'. I told him not to speak to me like that and was then taken to a cordoned off area marked as a Deportee Cell. He then ordered me to sit down and I refused. I didn't know what they might do or where else they may take me, so I wanted people to see me," the British MP said.

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## Sunni Waqf Board meet over Ayodhya land on Feb 24

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Sunni Central Waqf Board has called a crucial meeting on February 24 in which a decision is likely to be taken on accepting alternative land for a mosque in Ayodhya.

All the eight members of the board have been invited to take part in the meeting. The Uttar Pradesh government has allotted a 5-acre plot for the mosque at Dhannipur village in Sohawal tehsil of Ayodhya district, nearly 25 kilometres away from the Ram Janmabhoomi temple complex.

Sources said the Sunni Central Waqf Board would not only decide whether to accept the land but also about the usage of the land if it decides to take possession. There are several proposals like building a hospital or school at the site.

A senior member of the Sunni Central Waqf Board said, "All the members have been informed and called to the key meeting. The board will first decide whether it should accept the land or not,

Sources said the Sunni Central Waqf Board would not only decide whether to accept the land but also about the usage of the land if it decides to take possession. There are several proposals like building a hospital or school at the site.

after which it will be discussed if the board wants to construct a mosque or a public utility like a hospital or school on the land."

The sources said that two out of the eight members — Syed Imran Khan and Abdul Razaq — were not in favour of accepting the alternative land for the mosque as it violates Sharia. However, Sunni Central Waqf Board Chairman Zulfar Ahmad Farooqui is confident that the proposal to accept the land will be passed by the members.

Meanwhile, litigants in the Babri case said that the land allotted by the UP government was too far from Ayodhya town and the government should find some other land closer to Ayodhya

otherwise they would be left with no alternative but to approach the Supreme Court once again.

"The site for the mosque is too far from Ayodhya. It will be difficult for people to go that far to offer Namaz. The decision should be reconsidered and land must be allotted nearby," said Haji Mahboob, one of the litigants.

Iqbal Ansari, son of Hashim Ansari, one of the main parties in the case, also said that the alternative land should be close to the temple-mosque site. "The allotted land is quite far from Ayodhya. It should be within the municipal limits of Ayodhya. It is now up to the Sunni Waqf Board to accept the land or not," he said.

### CAPSULE

#### TWO CRIMINALS KILLED IN DELHI ENCOUNTER

New Delhi: Two men, involved in multiple cases of murder and robbery, were killed in a gunfight with the Special Cell of the Delhi Police here on Monday.

#### KASHI EXPRESS RESERVES SEAT FOR LORD SHIVA

New Delhi: The IRCTC on Monday said a seat was reserved for Lord Shiva in the Kashi Mahakal Express during its inaugural run as a "one-time affair" to seek "blessings" for the success of the new project, as some questioned the move.

#### TRS MLA'S 3 RELATIVES FOUND DEAD

Karimnagar: Mystery shrouds the death of three relatives of a ruling TRS MLA as their highly decomposed bodies were found inside a car in a canal near here on Monday, weeks after they went missing.

## Fresh smoke for you! 'Best before' date on cigarette packs

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Cigarette manufacturers may soon have another mandate to "benefit" smokers. Besides the statutory warning and other relevant details, the packets will have to specify "best before" or "expiry" details, on the lines of other edible and consumable items, including medicines.

Sources in the Bureau of India Standards (BIS) said that research is ongoing on the subject as this is the long pending demand of tobacco and gutkha associations and even by the consumers.

"The best before/expiry dates of cigarette packets may be introduced soon and we believe this will in a way also counter fake manufacturing of the cigarettes. Our research team have also found that cer-

tain products had traces of fungus which when inhaled is more harmful," said BIS sources.

Sources clarified that good quality cigarettes are manufactured after taking full precautions in processing of the tobacco to avoid any fungal growth but research has found that it goes stale after a certain period. Illicit cigarettes are on the rise and smoking them impacts the health more.

"Cigarettes don't really expire, they go stale. When a cigarette goes stale it has lost its moisture in the tobacco and tastes differently. Commercial cigarettes usually don't go stale unless the pack has been opened and it usually takes about two days. Usually, people look for an expiration date to make sure something won't taste bad, smell bad, or be bad

### SMOKING OUT DOUBTS

- The cigarette packets will have to specify "best before" or "expiry" details, on the lines of other edible and consumable items, including the drugs
- As per the existing BIS norms, a cigarette packet has to specify manufacturer details, month and year of production, length and price besides a toll free call centre and email address



for your health. Hence, work is on to incorporate expiration schedule or the best before date

on the cigarette packs which will be in the interest of consumers as well as manufactur-

ers," the sources said.

As per the existing BIS norms, a cigarette packet has to specify manufacturer details, month and year of production, length and price besides a toll free call centre and email address.

"A pictorial danger sign was incorporated on tobacco products on the directions of the Supreme Court a few years ago and expiration date will be the new addition," the sources said.

India ranks fifth, jointly with Hong Kong and Thailand, in terms of the largest pictorial warning on cigarette packs with 85 per cent of both sides of the packets covered, according to an international cancer society report.

The report found that 118 countries and territories now require pictorial health warn-

ings on cigarette packages, up from 100 in 2016.

A data from World Health Organization (WHO) shows that tobacco use kills nearly six million people in a year. The situation is equally bad in India with estimated number of tobacco users being 274.9 million as per Global Adult Tobacco Survey India (GATS). This includes 163.7 million users of smokeless tobacco, 68.9 million smokers and 42.3 million users of both smoking and smokeless tobacco.

"Cigarettes often come with best before information. While idea of an expiry date would be fine, its compliance is something that regulatory and enforcement agencies will have to deal with. We sincerely hope, as and when this comes into effect, it does take care of the growing menace of the illicit-

cigarettes in the Indian market. Over the years, India has emerged as world's 4th largest market for illegal cigarettes and besides causing huge revenue losses to the Government, it also poses severe risks to national security as illicit trade is known to fund organised crime, across the world," said RS Tiwari of Centre for Public Awareness that works on awareness on illicit cigarettes.

He also added that as per a World Bank Report, illicit cigarettes have severe implications on the health of the nation as the "availability of inexpensive illicit cigarettes increases the likelihood of young people developing addiction — particularly where illicit imports "glamorise" smoking through aspirational brands."

# CM: Oppn politicising Kanpur Dalits' incident

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday lashed out at the opposition parties for politicising the recent incident of 'atrocities' on Dalits in Mangta village under Gajner police station of Kanpur.

"It was a local dispute which led to a clash in the village in Kanpur and the opposition should refrain from pouring oil in the fire. It is regrettable that the opposition parties always look for drawing political mileage from any incident," the chief minister said and added, "Our government has worked for the uplift of every section of society and has ensured that the benefits of welfare schemes reach everyone irrespective of caste and religion."

He said, "The opposition parties have used a section of society as their vote bank and

have inflicted immense harm to their overall interests."

The opposition countered the chief minister saying the issue was not of politicising the incident but of the feudal mindset of the upper caste who still cannot tolerate the upward mobility of the Dalits and their attempts to assert their identity.

Not satisfied with the reply of the chief minister, the Samajwadi Party, the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Congress staged a walkout from the House.

Rebutting the opposition charge, the chief minister said, "The police took prompt action and FIR under the relevant provisions of the Prevention of Atrocities against SC, ST Act was lodged and 13 persons have been arrested and the police are camping in the village."

He said the accused were arrested even before the leaders of the BSP and the Congress

visited the village in Kanpur. Yogi said compensation had also been paid to the affected families as per the SC, ST Act and directions had been issued to the district administration for ensuring proper treatment of the Dalits injured in the incident.

The issue was raised by Lalji Verma of the BSP through adjournment notice during the zero hour. He said the Dalits of Mangta village had organised Buddha Katha in the village after obtaining due permission from the administration. He said the BJP government claimed of pursuing the agenda of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas but the fact was that earlier Muslims were targeted and now Dalits were at the receiving end.

The Samajwadi Party and the Congress also supported the notice of the BSP.

Speaker HN Dikshit later rejected the notice.

# Govt move to improve power service

LUCKNOW (PNS): To provide timely service to the power consumers, the Uttar Pradesh government on Monday issued notification of 'Standard of Performance Regulation 2019' through which the consumers would now get financial compensation for delay if there is delay in redressal of grievances by UP Power Corporation Limited. UP has become the first state to enforce this new law for the benefit of around 2.87 crore power consumers in the state.

The notification was issued by the state government after it was approved by UP State Electricity Regulatory Commission. Now if there is delay in rectifying technical faults the consumers will be entitled to get compensation.

The compensation to be given by the UPPCL to the consumers will be ₹100 per day for delay in cable breakdown, ₹250 per day for voltage fluctuation due to sub-station problem, ₹50 per day for delay in new connection, ₹200 for meter billing problem, ₹50 for billing fault, ₹150 per day for transformer fault (rural), ₹50 per day for no response by call centre.

# Yogi govt to present Budget today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Facing the unenviable task of promises to keep and deficits to bridge, the Yogi Adityanath government will present its fourth budget in the UP Assembly on Tuesday.

Finance Minister Suresh Khanna will present his maiden budget for next fiscal 2020-21.

The UP government in its fourth budget faces the tough task of balancing infrastructure and socio-economic development with populism. The challenge is further compounded from the fact that the 15th Finance Commission is likely to reduce the state's share in divisible pool of the total revenue of the Centre.

The landslide victory of the Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi on the plank of socio-economic development, freebies and mixing populism with social welfare has also added to the pressure on the UP government as assembly elections are not far away.

The economic slowdown has taken its toll on the state's industrial growth and consequently collection of taxes which is further putting strains on its finances.

UP collected about ₹80,000 crore in taxes during the first eight months (April-November) of 2019-20, which is 58 per cent of the target of over ₹1.40 lakh crore during the current fiscal. The shortfall has prompted the state government to pull the taxation department and plug tax evasion.

The state government has set a target of expanding the tax base under Goods and Services Tax by enrolling as many as 50 lakh traders in the next few years against the present 14 lakh traders.

The shortfall in collection of its own tax revenue coupled with the drop in state's share in Central taxes has aggravated the financial situation for the state government. UP, in the first six months of the current fiscal, has received only ₹56,000 crore or 36 per cent of the target of ₹1.50 lakh crore. The state also got less than 20 per cent of the promised Central grants of ₹68,000 crore in first half of the current fiscal.

The UP government faces an uphill task of financing mega infrastructure projects like Purvanchal Expressway, Bundelkhand Expressway,

Gorakhpur Link Expressway, Ganga Expressway linking Meerut with Prayagraj, Jewar international airport, Kanpur metro rail project.

Though the Purvanchal Expressway is likely to be opened for traffic by the year end, the government will have to manage finance for other projects to get them going before the 2022 UP assembly elections.

Liberal finance for the social sector is another challenge before the government. The government needs huge money for education, health, women and child welfare and law and order.

The government needs finance for this sector to battle the opposition onslaught of ignoring the poor and deprived sections of society. However, the shortfall in revenue and limited option of borrowing from the market gives little leeway.

The total debt burden on UP government by the end of March next will cross ₹5 lakh crore-mark, which is almost likely to be same as the budget size of 2020-21.

The annual burden of debt servicing on UP government is also likely to be over ₹1.5 lakh

crore by the end of 2020-21.

The power sector remains the Achilles heel of the Yogi Adityanath government. In the last three years, nothing much has been achieved for the turnaround of the ailing sector. Despite the bailout package of UDAY (Ujjawala Discom Assurance Yojana) the losses of the UP Power Corporation continue to mount.

The state government itself is the biggest defaulter as its departments owe over ₹15,000 crore to the power utility by the end of March 2019. The power tariff from November 30, 2017 to September 1, 2019 has increased by 27 per cent yet there is no let up in losses of the UPPCL.

The UP government has fixed a target to achieve one trillion dollar economy by 2024 to contribute to the country's target of five trillion dollar economy.

Official sources said that the budget would be infrastructure-centric, with the government providing funds for the major projects.

"The government however could introduce new measures for additional resource mobilisation," said an official of the Finance department.

# Din in both Houses over life threat to SP chief

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Party stalled the proceedings in both the Houses of the state legislature on Monday over alleged threat to the life of party president Akhilesh Yadav, saying he had received threat calls and some individual had tried to disrupt his meeting in Kannauj.

The question hour was washed away in the din in the UP Assembly while similar unruly scenes were witnessed in the Legislative Council, where the Samajwadi Party is in majority.

As soon as the Vidhan Sabha assembly on Monday, the SP members trooped into the Well of the House as leader of opposition Ram Govind Chaudhary charged that his party president Akhilesh Yadav was being given life threats on his mobile phone.

He alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party and the UP government were trying to kill their (SP) leader and were disrupting the political rallies of the SP.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna claimed that they respected Akhilesh Yadav, who was the former chief minister of the state.

"The entire society is under threat from the Samajwadi Party and Akhilesh Yadav does not need to worry

about threat to his life from a BJP *karyakarta* as the members are alleging," Khanna said.

Speaker Hriday Narayan Dikshit tried to pacify the Samajwadi Party members but when they refused to hear him, he adjourned the House for 30 minutes. Later, the adjournment was extended up to 12:20 hours and the question hour was suspended due to the disruption.

After the adjournment of the House, the Samajwadi Party members continued to sit on dharna in the Well of the House.

Later, when the House re-assembled, the parliamentary affairs minister said that Akhilesh Yadav had Z-plus security comprising 182 jawans.

"There is no threat to the life of Akhilesh Yadav," he said.

Earlier, the Samajwadi Party members had sought for an adjournment by giving a notice under Rule 311 to the Speaker.

In the notice they claimed that when Akhilesh Yadav

was addressing a public rally at Kannauj on February 5 last, a youth came near the leader and raised slogan against him.

The notice also said that the people were using abusive language against Akhilesh Yadav on social media.

The matter was also raised in the Legislative Council during question hour with the Samajwadi Party members alleging threat to the life of their national president.

SP leader Ahmad Hasan raised the issue, saying the Bharatiya Janata Party government had willfully reduced the security of Akhilesh Yadav.

Leader of the House Dinesh Sharma said that Samajwadi Party members should clarify under which rule they had raised this issue following which the SP members rushed to the Well of the House raising anti-government slogans.

Council Chairman Ramesh Yadav adjourned the House for half-an-hour. The adjournment was later extended to 12:20 pm.

# 'Ekal Abhiyan' proves service not medium of any trade: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the 'Ekal Abhiyan' proved that service was not the medium of any trade but a part of series of programmes to present the experiences of our conscience, retrieved from Sanatan tradition, to the world through our values.

He said that the campaign, which was launched by Ashok Singhal, had today crossed the one lakh-mark and it was working selflessly to spread education as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The chief minister said this at the inaugural ceremony of Parivartan Kumbh organised by Ekal Abhiyan in Lucknow.

Yogi said that when the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh pracharakas go to every nook and corner of the country and dedicate everything to the motherland, they rise above themselves and their family to serve the nation.

"This spirit takes such campaigns to new heights," he said.

The chief minister said that if the pace of facilities provided in the last five years had been in place since 1947, today everyone would have got the benefits of government schemes. "But this did not happen," he said.

In the last five years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has provided the facility of housing to 2.5 crore poor, free electricity connections to 4 crore poor families, free cooking gas connections to 8 crore poor families, toilets to 10.5 crore poor families, ₹6,000 per annum to 12.5 crore poor farmers through Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, financial support to 15 crore youth every year, linked 46 crore poor families with banking facilities, and provided free health insurance cover of upto ₹5 lakh to 50 crore poor families.

The chief minister said that after 70 years of Independence, a total of 12 medical colleges were built in the state while the present UP government was constructing 28 new medical colleges. "This is a change. At the government level, comprehensive pro-



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressing the inaugural function of Parivartan Kumbh organised by Ekal Abhiyan in Lucknow on Monday

teacher takes the support of a proxy teacher. The photograph of the appointed teacher has also been put up in the schools so that children recognise their teacher. To ensure the presence of teachers in schools, we have connected 1.58 lakh schools with Prerna App," the chief minister said.

Yogi said the path was being paved for the construction of Lord Ram's temple in Ayodhya. "All obstacles have been removed and now this work will be done on a war footing. The construction of Lord Ram's temple is also a work of recognising the faith of the country as well as the tribal life," Yogi said, adding that Thousands of years ago, Lord Shri Ram had given recognition to tribal life.

Along with the formation of the Tribal Affairs Ministry for the forest dwellers, Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave new momentum to the development of those areas, Yogi said, adding that in addition, plans were in place to set up tribal museum and carry forward various government schemes for them.

# 14 children injured as school bus overturns in Siddharthnagar

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Fourteen children were injured when a speeding private school bus overturned at Bahuli hamlet of Soharatgarh in Siddharthnagar on Monday morning.

With the help of local residents, the injured children were shifted to the community health centre in Soharatgarh for treatment.

Soon after learning about the accident, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath got in touch with the local administration and directed the officials to ensure best treatment to all the injured. He also asked the district magistrate and the district police chief to rush to the spot and take necessary action in the matter.

Reports said that the private bus attached with Saraswati Shishu Mandir in Siddharthnagar was going to collect the students on Monday morning.

According to local residents, there were 25 students in the bus when its driver suddenly lost control over the wheel and the bus overturned.

The locals rushed to the spot after hearing the screams of the students. They somehow took out all the students and found 14 of them injured.

Later they called the local police and ambulance and shifted the injured to Soharatgarh CHC where the doctors who attended on the children said their condition was out of danger.

Reports confirmed that Sub-Divisional Magistrate Anil Kumar, Circle Officer Sunil Kumar Singh, were the first to reach the spot followed by District Magistrate Deepak Meena and Superintendent of Police Vijay Dhul. They also went to the CHC to ensure best treatment to the injured.

Parents of the students admitted in the CHC told reporters that the bus driver was drunk at the time of the incident, and that they had made verbal complaints against him in the past.

District Magistrate Deepak Meena said if it was found after medical test that the driver was under the influence of alcohol, requisite action would be taken against him.

Meena however said the parents never made any complaint against the driver with the district administration, adding that if they had submitted a written complaint against the driver in the school, strict action will be taken.

A case has been registered in this regard and further investigations are on.

Efforts are being made to nab the bus driver who escaped after the mishap.

Meanwhile in a separate road mishap, four persons were killed and five injured when a car hit a man on the road and then while fleeing collided with an auto-rickshaw in Roza area of Shahjahanpur.

The car hit the man near Duria village, killing him on the spot. After that while fleeing, the car hit an auto-rickshaw in Roza area killing three other occupants, Superintendent of Police in Shahjahanpur, S Chinappa said.

The injured were rushed to a hospital where their condition was stated to be stable.

Police said while Pappu (45) was killed in Duria village, the other three deceased were Ankit Babu (35), Rakhi (3) and Kunan (12).

Police have seized the car and are trying to arrest its driver who abandoned the vehicle and escaped.

Meanwhile, three children were injured in a wall collapse at Muzaffarnagar's Sikri village.

Police said the accident took place on Sunday when a tractor-trailer hit the wall, resulting in its collapse.

The children, identified as Kadir (8), Nabil (11) and Anas (12), were shifted to a hospital for treatment after the accident.

**TWO DIE AFTER CONSUMING SPURIOUS LIQUOR**

In Sambhal, two people died allegedly after consuming spurious liquor during a wedding in Nagla Chaturbanpur area.

Locals claimed that the deaths were caused due to spurious liquor.

Uraman (48) and Taki (50) consumed liquor at the wedding on Sunday night and were rushed to the hospital after they started vomiting and complained of uneasiness.

Both died during treatment. The police said, adding that the exact cause of death had not been ascertained yet and they were awaiting the post-mortem report.

**FOUR STABBED**

Four people were seriously injured when they were stabbed by a youth following a dispute at a marriage function in Muzaffarnagar's Bhup Kheri village.

Police said the incident took place on Sunday night when guests were dancing.

The injured were identified as Deemashu, Jimanshu, Mohit and Sumit.

They were admitted to a hospital in a serious condition and police are searching for the accused.

# Cong hits out at govt over law and order

Lucknow (PNS): Uttar Pradesh Congress president, Ajay Kumar 'Lallu' hit out at the Bharatiya Janata Party government over "deteriorating" law and order and asked Yogi Adityanath to step down taking morale responsibility of pushing the state to jungle raj.

Lallu fired the salvo soon after meeting the family members of Dalit girl in Ayodhya who was raped and later forced to commit suicide after the rapist tried to blackmail her. Lallu demanded security and compensation for the victim's family, action against the cops responsible for the girl's death and immediate arrest of the accused. He threatened to raise the issue in the assembly if the government did not meet these demands.

A UPCC delegation led by Lallu went to Ayodhya on Monday morning and met the Dalit family. Lallu later said that the family was so terrorised that it was unable to even demand justice. Lallu said the family told him that even after they lodged a report of rape, the local police did not arrest the accused and he threatened to upload the videos of the rape on social media if the FIR was not withdrawn. Lallu said senior officers in Ayodhya were aware of the entire incident but they took no action due to which the victim committed suicide.

He said the cops were responsible for the girl's death.

**Ministry of Jal Shakti**  
**Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation**  
**Invite for Technologies/Innovations in Rural Water Supply and Sanitation**

Government of India has launched Jal Jeevan Mission which aims to provide Functional Household Tap Connection to every rural household by the year 2024. To achieve the goal of universal coverage in water supply especially on this scale and with speed, there are huge challenges for which innovative solutions with the use of new technologies would be required. Keeping this in view, a Technical Committee for examination of innovation and technologies in drinking water and sanitation sector has been constituted by Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, chaired by Principal Scientific Adviser to Government of India. The Committee now invites interested persons/institutions/companies to upload their technology/innovation on rural water supply and sanitation online on the DDWS portal (link: <https://ejalshakti.gov.in/MISC/InnovationTechnology.aspx>) for consideration by the Committee and its acceptance. For any queries, please write to [amdharan@gov.in](mailto:amdharan@gov.in). Dvnp- 35301/11/0012/1920

**EASTERN RAILWAY**  
**Notice of E-Auction Programme for the month of March 2020**

No.: S-4/S/DAP/2019-20		Date: 12.02.2020		
SN.	Auction Date	Day	Depot/Divn	Jurisdiction (Depot & Divn.)
1.	05.03.2020	Thursday	Halisahar Depot	Halisahar Depot & Sealdah Division
2.	06.03.2020	Friday	Belur Scrap Yard	BESY Depot, Howrah & Asansol Division
3.	06.03.2020	Friday	Howrah Divn.	Howrah Division
4.	07.03.2020	Saturday	Jamalpur Depot	Jamalpur Depot, MLDT Division
5.	12.03.2020	Thursday	Halisahar Depot	Halisahar Depot & Sealdah Division
6.	13.03.2020	Friday	Sealdah Divn.	Sealdah Division
7.	14.03.2020	Saturday	Jamalpur Depot	Jamalpur Depot, MLDT Division
8.	16.03.2020	Monday	Belur Scrap Yard	BESY Depot, Howrah & Asansol Division
9.	17.03.2020	Tuesday	Howrah Divn.	Howrah Division
10.	20.03.2020	Friday	Jamalpur Depot	Jamalpur Depot, MLDT Division
11.	20.03.2020	Friday	Halisahar Depot	Halisahar Depot & Sealdah Division
12.	23.03.2020	Monday	Sealdah Divn.	Sealdah Division
13.	24.03.2020	Tuesday	Belur Scrap Yard	BESY Depot, Howrah & Asansol Division
14.	26.03.2020	Thursday	Howrah Divn.	Howrah Division
15.	27.03.2020	Friday	Halisahar Depot	Halisahar Depot & Sealdah Division
16.	27.03.2020	Friday	Jamalpur Depot	Jamalpur Depot, MLDT Division
17.	30.03.2020	Monday	Belur Scrap Yard	BESY Depot, Howrah & Asansol Division
18.	30.03.2020	Monday	Sealdah Divn.	Sealdah Division

**N.B.:** Schedule of E-Auction, other details and terms & conditions are available on the website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> (STORES-78/2019-20)  
Tender Notices are also available at website: [www.e.indianrailways.gov.in/www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.e.indianrailways.gov.in/www.ireps.gov.in)

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# PSO's daughter shoots self UP Board exams commence today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Daughter of a police inspector attached with the Defence Minister as personal security officer reportedly shot herself in Vishnupuri Colony under Vikas Nagar police station on Monday afternoon.

Police claimed that the 16-year-old girl, identified as Srishti Singh of Vishnupuri Colony under Vikas Nagar police station, shot herself with her father's service revolver on Monday afternoon due to exam phobia. His father Ved Prakash Singh and mother were in the house while younger brother Abhay Singh in school when she took the extreme step.

As per reports, the girl went to her father's room and shot herself with his handgun around 12.15 pm. Her parents rushed to the room and were shocked to find the girl lying in a pool of blood. She was rushed to the KGMU Trauma Centre where she succumbed to injuries. She was a Class X student of Career Convent College while her brother is a student of Class IX in the same school. The girl was on preparation leave for board exams.

The police said that the girl's mother was busy in domestic chores while father engaged in some official work in the house. Sources said that as per police manual, keeping service weapon at an easily

## 5-month-old girl raped by uncle

**Lucknow (PNS):** A five-month-old girl was raped allegedly by her mother's cousin and thrown into the bushes in a vacant plot near a marriage hall in Daudnagar under Madaion police station. She was found in an unconscious state around 2 am on Monday. She was rushed to the KGMU Trauma Centre where she succumbed to injuries. The accused was arrested from Attauli in Hardoi late on Monday evening.

Police said that Raj Kumar Mishra, a resident of Attauli (Hardoi), reached here on Sunday afternoon along with his family for the marriage ceremony of a relative.

As per reports, Mishra's wife's cousin Prem Chandra Dixit alias Pappu took the infant around 7.30 pm for an outing so that his sister could mix up with the guests. Around 10 pm, Mishra and his wife noticed that their daughter and Pappu were not around.

Mishra started searching for Pappu in and around the wedding venue but failed to

trace him. Mishra's wife panicked on knowing that Pappu was untraceable. Guests present at the function joined the couple in finding Pappu and the girl.

Later, the profusely bleeding girl, who was in an unconscious state, was recovered from a nearby plot. It was suspected that she was raped. She was rushed to the Trauma Centre where doctors tried their best to revive her but she succumbed around 3.30 am.

The police, on the basis of information given by Mishra and others, conducted two raids but failed to trace Pappu.

Mishra's wife lodged a complaint at Chowk police station around 4.30 am alleging that her cousin raped her five-month-old daughter and then dumped her into the woods. On the basis of the complaint, a case of rape was registered and transferred to Madaion police station. The police said Pappu is the son of Mishra's wife's uncle Ram Prakash Dixit and both stay in the same locality in Attauli.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The anxious moments for the students will be over with the UP Board examinations commencing on Tuesday. District inspector of schools (DIOS) Mukesh Singh told this reporter that all the arrangements had been completed. A total of 1,01,276 students of Intermediate and High School are expected to appear for the examinations in Lucknow, including 45,377 of Class XII (22,642 boys and 22,735 girls) and 53,769 of High School (27,374 boys and 26,395 girls).

Singh said that 1,634 Intermediate students and 496 High School students will be appearing for the exams privately. There are 112 centres in the districts, included 32 sensitive and 12 very sensitive centres.

"There will be a total of 4,500 invigilators on duty while four zonal, 13 sector and 44 sector magistrates have been deployed for the centres to make sure that the examinations are conducted in a peaceful manner and remain copying-free," he said.

The DIOS said the examinees have to park their vehicles either in the parking stand



The control room set up at Education Directorate in Lucknow to monitor exam centres across the state

Pioneer

or away from the exam centres. "The students have to bring their admit cards, registration slips of Class IX and Class XI and Aadhaar cards to be able to enter the exam centres," the DIOS said. Singh said facilities of drinking water have been made at all the centres. He

added that for the convenience of students, buses are being run on routes near the centres.

Meanwhile, District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash carried out an inspection of the control room set up at the Education Directorate for monitoring of the exam centres

across the state.

The District Magistrate said arrangements should be made for a door-frame metal detector at the entrance of the control room. "No unauthorised person should be allowed entry into the control room," he said. He pointed out that

A TOTAL OF 1,01,276 STUDENTS OF INTERMEDIATE AND HIGH SCHOOL ARE EXPECTED TO APPEARING FOR THE EXAMINATIONS IN LUCKNOW. 1,634 INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS AND 496 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WILL BE APPEARING PRIVATELY

there will be four guards deployed for the security of the control room. "All the districts of the state will be monitored through this centre and for that, two persons each have been appointed from every commissioner. In the state capital, a district-level committee has been set up," he added. The DM said that the list of phone numbers of sensitive and extra-sensitive centres should be displayed at the control room. "Observers have been appointed for all the centres. In Lucknow, all the centres will be monitored," he added.

### Form No. 5 DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL LUCKNOW

6001 University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow-226007 (Area of Jurisdiction - Part of Uttar Pradesh)  
Summons For Filing Reply & Appearance By Publication  
O.A. No. 44/2019 Date: 29.01.2020  
(Summons to Defendant Under Section 19(3), of the Recovery of Debts due to Bank and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules, 1993)  
O. A. No. 44 / 2019

UCO Bank .....Applicant  
Bio Naka Hindola, Lucknow-226020 (U.P.)

VERSUS

ASHOK SHUKLA & ORS. ....Defendants

1. Ashok Shukla  
S/o Late Shri Jung Bahadur Shukla,  
R/o 2/312, Vaastu Khand, Near Fire Station, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow.
2. Snehlata Shukla,  
W/o Ashok Shukla,  
R/o 2/312, Vaastu Khand, Near Fire Station, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow.

In the above noted Application, you are required to file reply in Paper Book form in Two sets alongwith documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the Applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 29/04/2020 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Registrar  
Debts Recovery Tribunal  
Lucknow

### Form No. 5 DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL LUCKNOW

6001 University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow-226007 (Area of Jurisdiction - Part of Uttar Pradesh)  
Summons For Filing Reply & Appearance By Publication  
O.A. No. 45/2019 Date: 29.01.2020  
(Summons to Defendant Under Section 19(3), of the Recovery of Debts due to Bank and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules, 1993)  
O. A. No. 45 / 2019

UCO Bank .....Applicant  
Sanjiv LDA (1946), Vipin Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226020 (U.P.)

VERSUS

SANJEEV AGARWAL & ORS. ....Defendants

1. Sanjeev Agarwal S/o Mr. Sita Ram Agarwal,  
R/o 4/214, Vishal Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow - 226010.

Also at: M/s. Wealth Mantra Properties Ltd. 2F, First Floor, Pargati Kendra Kapoorthala, Aliganj - Lucknow PIN - 226024.

And also at: Flat No. 310-C, Big Sky Tower, Tulsiani Golfview Apartment, Sector -1, Pocket-D, Shushant Golf City, Sultanpur Road, Lucknow.

And also at: Flat No. 201, Block-J, Rohtas Plumeria, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow.

3. Tulsiani Constructions & Developers Pvt. Ltd. Having its Registered Office at: 13/1, Punjabi Colony, Alapbagh, Allahabad PIN - 211006.

Also at: Plot No. 3, Block - N, Green Park (Main), New Delhi - 110016, Through its Director.

4. M/s. Ansal Properties & Infrastructures Limited Having its Local Office at: 115, Ansal Bhavan, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, Lucknow, Through its Director.

In the above noted Application, you are required to file reply in Paper Book form in Two sets alongwith documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the Applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 29/04/2020 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Registrar  
Debts Recovery Tribunal  
Lucknow

## Social activist held for breach of peace

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Sandeep Pandey was arrested near Hussainabad Clock Tower on Monday for breach of peace. He was going to lead a protest march against the Citizen Amendment Act (CAA) and NRC. The march was to start from the Clock Tower and culminate at Ujariaon in Gomti Nagar.

The district administration had denied permission for the protest march last week. However, Pandey and others were bent on taking out the march. Hundreds of protesters are staging a sit-in at Clock Tower and Ujariaon against CAA and NRC. Pandey was arrested in the afternoon for breach of peace when he, along with dozens of protesters, came out on the street. He was booked under section 151 of CrPC.

## LU panel to prepare new PhD ordinance

**Lucknow (PNS):** Continuing the series of meetings being conducted to ensure the best choice-based credit system (CBCS) in the country, Vice-Chancellor of Lucknow University Alok Kumar Rai presided over a meeting held on Monday. The meeting was attended by all heads of the departments as well as deans of faculties.

LU's CBCS aims to have certain salient features, including a core course, value-added credited courses, value-added non-credited courses, frozen electives, open electives, inter-departmental credit transfer, intra-departmental credit transfer, MOOCs, dissertation and internship.

The Vice-Chancellor constituted a committee of the deans of Arts, Science and Law faculties to prepare a new

PhD ordinance to ensure timely intake of students into the university. Rai also reiterated his stress on digitising the university's work flow and electronic presence on the web. He instructed the Internal Quality Assurance Cell to put information online.

Each course will have specific programme outcomes and programme-specific outcomes, with syllabus details and references clearly marked. The meeting of different faculty boards is likely to be conducted by February 28.

A plan for integrated PhD courses was also floated for departments which may be interested. The VC said that institutes like Indian Institute of Science and several IITs already have several integrated PhD programmes and they may be looked at for reference.

## Students asked to use knowledge, skills for development of society

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

All the students who have received their degrees are entering a new era with immense opportunities, new challenges and innumerable social & economic complexities. They have to tackle all these by their wisdom, knowledge and skills which they have acquired during their educational training. The learners must use their knowledge and skills for development of society.

These views were expressed by Vice-Chancellor of Dr Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University Subir K Bhatnagar while speaking at the 33rd convocation of IGNOU. He also gave away degrees to acid attack survivors — Rupali and Anshu — and also felicitated Tharu tribal students who were part of the team for IGNOU's tableau in the Republic Day parade earlier this year.

The function was organised at the conference hall of regional centre, where 496 out of 2,860 students were awarded their degrees in person. In his convocation address, Prof Bhatnagar congratulated the gold

### 33RD CONVOCATION OF IGNOU



medallists and recipients of degrees. He appreciated the efforts made by IGNOU to democratise higher education and make it available to all sections of the society at their doorsteps.

Regional director Manorama Singh elaborated the need and significance of open & distance learning in providing opportunities to millions for acquiring higher education with a special role of IGNOU, which has

evolved successful models of democratisation of education, training and capacity building. Singh also presented the actions & activities being performed by the regional centre in the last one year to increase the access, equity and quality education at the doorsteps of learners. She said that 87-year-old Lakshmi Srivastava took admission to a programme and became a role model for all.

## Worked hard for this course, says acid attack survivor



SHARIMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

Acid attack survivor Rupali Vishwakarma was the cynosure of all eyes at the IGNOU convocation wherein she was conferred a degree for a course on Nutrition. She said she was happy to have received the degree as she had worked very hard. "It is important for us to know what

we eat and what are the nutritional aspects of food. It makes the course important," she said. Asked whether she will use this knowledge for any entrepreneurial venture in future, she said education and knowledge always helps. "I am a Class XII pass and this course will definitely help me. However, I am interested in photography and looking for a career in it," she asked.

Rupali, who works at a popular café in Gomti Nagar, recalled the attack which she was subjected to by a stranger in 2015. "I was working in Bhojpuri films as a heroine and I guess someone who was jealous of me got the attack done. The acid was thrown by an unknown person," she said.

Rupali said she had come out of the trauma and was now continuing with her life and doing her work. "There are times when I feel bad about what happened to me, but then I think if I continue to live with this grief, it would completely overpower me and if I use it to move further, there is a chance that I may be able to be very successful," she added.



## सभी परीक्षार्थियों को हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं

- योगी आदित्यनाथ  
मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

परीक्षार्थियों को ध्यान रखने योग्य बातें :-

- परीक्षा केन्द्र पर बोर्ड द्वारा जारी प्रवेश पत्र तथा कक्षा 9 / 11 का रजिस्ट्रेशन कार्ड अपने साथ अवश्य लायें।
- यथासम्भव परीक्षाथी आधार कार्ड अथवा सरकार द्वारा जारी कोई अन्य पहचान पत्र भी लायें।
- परीक्षाथी अपनी पूरी नीद तथा संतुलित आहार का ध्यान रखें।
- परीक्षाथी तनावमुक्त तथा सकारात्मक सोच के साथ समय से परीक्षा केन्द्र पर जायें।

- डॉ० दिनेश शर्मा  
उप मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

परीक्षार्थी हेल्पलाइन नं० - 18001805310, 18001805312 @upboardexam2020 माध्यमिक शिक्षा विभाग, उ.प्र.

# CM to review arrangements for Trump's visit to Agra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will be in the Taj city on Tuesday to oversee arrangements made ahead of US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump's visit to the Taj Mahal on February 24. Trump will be the second US president to visit the Taj Mahal after Bill Clinton.

Officials said here on Monday that the chief minister would reach Agra at 16:30 hours from Lucknow on Tuesday and hold a review meeting with the district officials at the Circuit House.

After the meeting, the chief minister is expected to go to some places where the US president could visit during his brief stay. Yogi Adityanath is also likely to inspect the route from Kheria airbase to the Taj Mahal.

Before the proposed inspection of the chief minister, all encroachments, unauthorised hoardings will be removed. Road repairing work has also been initiated. The entire VVIP route will be systematically maintained and decorated to welcome the guests, Agra District Magistrate Prabhun Narain Singh said.

All residential and government buildings along the route will be checked. Verification of people living in houses and working in shops and showrooms has been initiated.



Hotel owners have been asked to share details of all the guests on a daily basis from February 18 onwards, Singh said.

Meanwhile, officials said that over 5,000 security personnel would be deployed for the US president's visit. Another 200 officers of the intelligence unit would be in the Taj city. The advance security team of the US would reach Agra by Tuesday morning.

Trump is likely to stay in Agra for two hours and during this time the people near the Taj Mahal would be asked to stay indoors. All hotels, dharmshalas and guest houses are being searched and the tourists are being verified.

Police officials said tight security would be in place from February 23 night and would continue till the US president left Agra the follow-

ing day. The Agra Municipal Corporation has launched cleanliness drive on the route to the Taj Mahal. Senior officials of police and administration are getting all encroachments removed in the vicinity of the 17th century monument. The police have identified 400 possible troublemakers who had staged protest against the US on different occasions. Recently, some of them had protested against US attack on Iraq and killing of Iranian general Qasem Soleimani.

Local intelligence unit is keeping a close watch on the activities of these people and some of them may be put under preventive detention, ahead of the UP president's visit. Drone cameras will also be used to monitor public activities in localities situated along the route.

## Two int'l agencies to certify trees in 13 districts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

For the first time in the state, two international agencies will assess 13 districts and give certification for trees of private farmers that have been grown under the ambit of sustainable management. Principal chief conservator (Forest) Rajiv Garg said the certification can help the private farmers get a better income in the global market for their timber. He said the certification had earlier been done only for forest trees.

The senior official said it was being done under a government order notified on January 7. The state government directed the Uttar Pradesh Forest Corporation to help the private farmers sell their timber. He said Forest Stewardship Council and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification will be carrying out the task and collecting the samples of trees. "There are forests in the world which are under good management and there are others which are not managed. Once certified that the trees have been grown under the sustainable development management programme, the farmers can approach international markets directly, they can approach the markets through various companies or they can approach those who are making the wooden products and thus sell their timber at better prices and get a better income," he added.

## CITYBRIEFS

### CORNEAL TRANSPLANTATIONS AT COMMAND HOSPITAL

Corneal blindness is one of the leading causes of treatable blindness worldwide. In India, the burden of corneal blindness is approximately 6.8 million. The ray of hope for treatment of corneal blind patients is by means of corneal transplantation, wherein the diseased host cornea is replaced by the healthy cornea of the donor. The Eye department of Central Command Hospital has a fully functional eye bank. The transplantation team is led by surgeon Lt Col Bhupesh Bhatkoti. The department is routinely performing both full-thickness as well as state-of-the-art lamellar corneal transplantation where only a layer of corneal is replaced. This year, the department has performed 10 corneal transplantations so far, including four lamellar surgeries. This is testament to the hard work and dedication of the entire team under the guidance of Maj Gen Ramesh Kaushik, Commandant, Central Command Hospital. The goal of the hospital is to conduct in excess of 100 corneal transplantations in the current year to decrease the burden of corneal blindness in the society. After successful surgery, not only these patients have their eye sight restored but also their independence and livelihood which goes a long way to improve their quality of life.

### LAMP LIGHTING CEREMONY

The lamp lighting ceremony of the 15th batch of BSc (Nursing) and 29th batch of GNM (Nursing), Vivekananda College and School of Nursing, was celebrated at Vivekananda Polyclinic and Institute of Medical Sciences on Monday. Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama (Kanpur) Swami Atmashradhdhanandaji Maharaj was the chief guest on the occasion. He appreciated the endeavour of the Nursing College and School of Nursing to improve the nursing services by ensuring adequate flow of well-trained and disciplined nurses. He congratulated the students to have voluntarily opted for the nursing profes-



Nagar Nigam Karmachari Sangh elections being held on Monday

Pioneer

sion which demands round-the-clock service with the spirit of sacrifice, devotion, sincerity and selflessness.

### ELECTED

Ram Chandar Yadav was elected as patron, Anand Verma president and Om Prakash Upreti vice-president of Nagar Nigam Karmachari Sangh on Monday. The 18-member executive council was formed after bi-annual elections on Monday.

### CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

Cipla Foundation and Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI) on Monday announced their intent for setting up a centre of excellence for affordable therapeutics. In line with its consistent efforts to foster scientific learning and research, the Cipla Foundation will support this centre which will also serve school students and teachers through a science outreach programme designed for the community. "This is a unique initiative, supported through the

corporate social responsibility arm of Cipla. The initiative is owing to recent provision of government for creating corporate funding under CSR in research for science, technology, engineering and medicine through clause IX of schedule VII of the Indian companies act 2013," media spokesperson of CDRI Sanjeev Yadav said.

### BOOK FAIR

The first day of Uttar Pradesh Metro Book Fair, in association with Repertwahr foundation, attracted a large number of crowd. Over a hundred books of different genres were sold on the first day, UPMRC officials said. The book fair is open for commuters and book lovers from 11 am to 9 pm. Prominent personalities from arts, literature, culture etc will share their knowledge and experience with the audience. "UP Metro and Repertwahr foundation jointly organised this event to popularise the culture of book reading among Lucknowites.

## ANTI-CAA PROTESTS

# HC fixes date for hearing of PIL filed against police 'atrocities'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The Allahabad High Court on Monday fixed March 18 for hearing of PIL filed against alleged police atrocities during CAA protest in the state.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Govind Mathur and Justice Siddhartha Verma asked petitioners and the state government both to file their affidavits and documents. Earlier the court had directed the state government to file affidavit and apprise it with FIRs/complaints filed by any group or organisations alleging police atrocities on protesters during CAA protest in state. Manish Goel

Additional Advocate General appearing on behalf of the state government produced report regarding incidents. He told the court that during protest against CAA on December 20 and 21, 2019, in the state 22 persons had died and 83 others were injured. Besides 45 police personnel were also hurt.

He further submitted that for committing riot and destroying public properties FIR had been lodged against 883 persons out of whom 561 had been granted bail. Out of the remaining 332 bail application filed by 111 were pending in different courts. He informed the court that total

10 complaints were received against police personnel and they were being examined.

In the petitions it was alleged that excessive force was used by the police on protesters resulting in several deaths and leaving many seriously injured. Police action was unjustified and in violation of fundamental rights of protesters. Further it was alleged that the injured were not given proper medical aid and authorities were not providing post-mortem examination reports of those who died during agitation to their family members. The court has fixed March 18 as the next date of hearing in the case.

## SCHOOLSCAN



### FANCY DRESS COMPETITION

The pre-primary wing of DPS Eldeco organised a fancy dress competition where the tiny-tots of playgroup, Nursery and Prep came dressed up in various costumes and

expressed their feelings. The theme of the competition was based on animals, healthy & junk food, and electronic gadgets. There was a lot of enthusiasm and excitement as the little ones walked displaying their vibrant costumes.

### SCHOLARSHIP

Pratyush Yadav, a student of City Montessori School, Gomti Nagar Campus I, has been offered a scholarship of US\$ 76,000 by the prestigious Augustana University, USA, for pursuing higher studies. The scholarship has been offered to him for the entire study period of four years. CMS founder Jagdish Gandhi congratulated Pratyush on his achievement and also praised CMS teachers for their hard work and guidance.

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

### WOMEN IN...

The women officers had said according to the policy letter dated February 25, 2019, permanent commission to women officers is being confined to "staff appointments only", as against "criteria appointments/command appointments".

They had contended that no such confinement of women officers to staff appointments only, has ever been contemplated or notified in any of the advertisements or policy decisions since 1992, when women were first inducted into the Indian Army.

The Centre had submitted a written note in the apex court, containing the proposal of the government, that points out to several issues, including "physical prowess" and "physiological limitations" as challenges for women officers to meet exigencies of service in the Army.

In its written note, the Centre had said women officers up to 14 years of service would be considered for permanent commissions and further career progression in staff appointments only. It said women officers above 14 years of service would be permitted to serve up to 20 years without consideration for permanent commission and would be released with pensionary benefits subject to meeting disciplinary and medical criteria.

Women Army officers welcomed the Supreme Court order, saying it will help in uplifting women across the country and not just in the Armed forces.

Talking to reporters outside the court premises here after the SC order, a woman officer, who was accompanied by some other women colleagues from the Army, said whoever qualifies for the job should be given the opportunity to command.

Advocate Meenakshi Lekhi, who appeared for women officers, said the apex court judgment has given equal rights to the women officers as their male counterparts. She said a long-pending right has been given to women officers through this order.

### 5 THEATRE...

The proposed theatre commands will see assimilation of assets of three services to fight the war. The US and China have similar commands but the CDS said India need not follow those examples and instead have own models to meet our requirements.

Interacting with a group of journalists here, Rawat also said he favoured staggered procurement of weapons and equipment so as

to take care of the needs of the Army, Navy and IAF.

Elaborating upon the procurement issue, he said the focus is on prioritisation given the Budget and he was for buying weapons in tranches. Giving an example, he said if the Navy said it needs 10 submarines, the IAF wants aircraft and the Army 1,000 tanks, one option is that only one service will benefit if we go for large numbers in one go. However, if procurement is prioritised, then all the services can procure limited number of weapons at regular intervals, thereby, maintaining operational readiness, Rawat said.

Asked about the IAF's proposed acquisition of 114 aircraft, the CDS said a new approach of staggered acquisition was getting firm up. Similarly, he favoured buying submarines instead of the third aircraft carrier. Justifying his philosophy, Rawat said an aircraft carrier takes seven to ten years to build. Moreover, the second aircraft carrier INS Vikrant will be ready by next year and let the Navy evaluate its performance and then a call will be taken about the third carrier as mooted by the Service, he said.

On the proposed peninsular command to be formed by merging the Indian Navy's eastern and western commands, he said it is likely to take shape by end of 2021. The tri-services command under a naval commander will have air assets as well as support of the Army, and it will take care of entire responsibility of maritime security challenge in the Indian Ocean Region.

"The security of Indian Ocean region has to be dealt with by one commander and he will not be required to get approval from Delhi for operational matters including movement of ships," said Rawat. He said the proposed air defence command is likely to be rolled out by middle of next year and certain air assets like missiles of the Indian Army and the Navy will be part of it. He also said it the first priority right now and the IAF will be lead agency. A study group headed by the IAF Vice Chief on this issue will submit its report by April and the command will come into being within a year, Rawat said.

The CDS also said the Government plans to have a separate training and doctrinal command modelled on similar structure in the US, while a separate command will be set up to take care of logistical requirements of the three services. Similarly, the IAF is studying the feasibility of training fighter pilots of various type of aircraft at its Gwalior instead of training at

different locations at present. Also efforts are to enhance the pilot-aircraft ratio by even deploying those now working in administration wing of the IAF, the CDS said. His department is also looking at a proposal for having a logistics command to supply common equipment used by all the three services.

### NOW, NIRBHAYA...

He has not filed the mercy plea either. Akshay's counsel informed the court that he has prepared a fresh mercy petition to be moved before the President.

The court was hearing the applications by Nirbhaya's parents and the Delhi Government, seeking fresh death warrants for the convicts after the Supreme Court granted liberty to the authorities to approach the trial court for issuance of fresh date for the execution of these convicts.

Last Thursday, the court had appointed Qazi to represent Gupta after being informed by Tihar jail authorities that the death row convict refused to choose a lawyer offered by Delhi Legal Services Authorities (DLSA).

A day before that the court had expressed displeasure over the delay in the process from Gupta's side, after convict's father informed the court that he had removed his earlier lawyer and would need time to engage a new one.

The 23-year-old physiotherapy intern, who came to be known as 'Nirbhaya' (fearless), was gang-raped and savagely assaulted on the night of December 16, 2012, in a moving bus in South Delhi. She died of her injuries a fortnight later in a Singapore hospital.

Six people, including the four convicts, Ram Singh and a juvenile, were named as accused.

The trial of the five adult men began in a special fast-track court in March 2013. Ram Singh, the prime accused, allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself in Tihar jail days after the trial began. The juvenile, who was said to be the most brutal of the attackers, was put in a correctional home for three years. The juvenile was released in 2015 and sent to an undisclosed location amid concerns over a threat to his life. He, when released, was 20 years old. Mukesh, Vinay, Akshay and Pawan were sentenced to death in September 2013 by the trial court which was challenged by them in higher courts.

### PROTEST A RIGHT...

When the bench asked Hegde to talk to protestors, Mehta said, "Let a message

not go that every institution is kneeling on its knees in trying to persuade them... I do not want a message to go that we are praying to them to remove".

The Bench, however, observed, "We want to solve the problem and we have expressed our opinion. If nothing works, we will leave it to the authorities to deal with the situation".

The bench also asked Mehta whether an alternative site can be given to the protesters to hold their agitation. "It is unfortunate that we have to make designated area for protests like Jantar Mantar. We have so many professional protesters," Mehta said.

"It is important to allow people to protest," the bench said, adding, "The right to protest is recognised world over, more particularly in India. There is a fundamental right to assemble peacefully to protest".

At the outset, the bench said people or any section of the society have a right to protest against a law and they also have the right to express their grievance against it. "Whether traffic flow can be managed from here or there is not the issue. Today, it is protest against a legislation. Tomorrow, there may be protest against different legislation. The issue is if people start blocking roads and public places, what will happen then," the bench said and posted the matter for hearing on February 24.

The bench also dealt with an intervention application filed by Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Azad and two others, including Habibullah. The counsel appearing for the interveners told the court that protest has been going on and it is not that people of only one faith are agitating there.

The bench said a "lot of heat" has been generated on the issue and protesters have made their point as the agitation is going on for quite some time. When the bench was informed that children were not able to go to schools due to the protest, the bench said, "There must be a balancing factor. You may protest, may be, somewhere else. If this (blockade of public place during protests) applies to other places, this may lead to chaos".

"Somebody who may not be on the same page as you may get an idea to start a protest somewhere else? Then where do we end?" the bench said, adding, the people may "emulate" Shaheen Bagh also. "It is not a pleasant task which we have taken upon ourselves," the bench said, adding, "It should have been done by the executive".

The top court also said in an age of social media, there

is a tendency for anyone to go overboard. When the bench asked Hegde to talk to protesters, the senior advocate said he would be glad to assist retired apex court judge Justice Kurian Joseph on this. At this, Mehta said a former judge of the top court should not be asked to persuade protesters.

The counsel for one of the petitioners said interim directions should be passed so that school vans and ambulances could be allowed to ply on the road which has been blocked by the protesters since December 15 last year. Restrictions have been imposed on the Kalindi Kunj-Shaheen Bagh stretch and the Okhla underpass, which were closed on December 15 last year due to protests against CAA and National Register of Citizens.

The apex court was hearing an appeal filed by advocate Amit Sahni, who had approached the Delhi High Court seeking directions to the Delhi Police to ensure smooth traffic flow on the Kalindi Kunj-Shaheen Bagh stretch, which was blocked by anti-CAA protesters on December 15 last year.

Separately, former BJP MLA Nand Kishore Garg has filed a plea in the apex court seeking directions to authorities to remove protestors from Shaheen Bagh.

### UK MP...

The immigration officer disappeared again, she said, adding that she phoned her sister-in-law's cousin who she was going to be staying with. "Kai got in touch with the British High Commission and he tried to find out what was going on," she wrote on Twitter. She said later several immigration officials came to her but none of them knew why her e-visa was cancelled. "Even the person who seemed to be in charge said he didn't know and was really sorry about what had happened".

The British MP said she was waiting for her deportation. "So now I am just waiting to be deported... Unless the Indian Government has a change of heart, I'm prepared to let the fact that I've been treated like a criminal go, and I hope they will let me visit my family and friends," she said before being deported to Dubai in the evening.

According to senior officials, she was well aware that her e-visa was cancelled and tried to test her fortunes by landing from Dubai. "From her statements it is clear that she was caught by Immigration officials after checking the computer. This itself shows that her e-visa was cancelled and the computer showed it," said senior officials from the Bureau Immigration.

कानपुर विद्युत् आपूर्ति कंपनी लिमिटेड, 14/71, सिविल लाइन्स, केसा हाउस, कानपुर। अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा विस्तारण सूचना अपरिहार्य कारणों से ई-निविदा सं-25/19-20 दिनांक 28.02.2020 तक विस्तारित की जाती है, जो की वेबसाईट <https://etender.up.nic.in> पर उपलब्ध है। अधिशासी अभियन्ता (संभार क्रय) पत्रांक - 1109 दिनांक-17.02.2020, "सद्विहित में विजली बचार्प"

ई-निविदा संख्या 51-मु030 (पाठवपु)/2019-20 (सुवि पत्र सूचना) पारेषण क्षेत्र दक्षिण - पूर्व, प्रयागराज के अन्तर्गत विद्युत् परीक्षण एवं परिवहन खण्ड, मिर्जापुर के अन्तर्गत मल्ती फंक्शन धो फेज न्यूमेरिकल रिसे टैस्ट किट की आपूर्ति के लिये आमंत्रित इस कार्यलय की ई-निविदा संख्या-51-मु030 (पाठवपु)/2019-20, को प्राप्त करने एवं खोलने की निर्धारित तिथि 18.03.2020 एवं 03.03.2020 के स्थान दिनांक 17.03.2020 एवं 18.03.2020 पदा जाय। अन्य शर्तें सथावत रहेंगी। अधिशासी अभियन्ता (सं०), क्रो मुख्य अभियन्ता (पाठवपु), इलाहाबाद (कार्यालय), मुख्य अभियन्ता (पारेषण दक्षिण-पूर्व) 57-जार्ज टाउन, प्रयागराज-211002 पत्रांक- 282 दिनांक-17.02.2020 "सद्विहित में विजली बचार्प"

SEXUAL HARASSMENT CASE

# HRD to pursue action against Prof Jena

## Enquiry was stopped due to Delhi Assembly elections

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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- The don was held guilty of sexual harassment at workplace by HRD Ministry's Internal Complaints Committee during his tenure as Chairman of National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). Subsequently, IGNOU, parent cadre, had punished him by reducing his pay band and increments
- There are allegations in the complaints to the

increments.

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

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, as

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

# ED unearths unaccounted ₹3.75 cr cash, 39 kg gold

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Hawala denotes the illegal manner of transferring funds by skirting banking channels and dealing in cash through agents.

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

# India issues strong demarche to Turkey on Kashmir remarks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

**MEA said Erdogan's remarks reflected neither understanding of history nor of the conduct of diplomacy and that they will have strong implications on India's ties with Turkey**

issue.

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

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

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

JAMIA VIDEO

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

"Congress party is continuously supporting anti-social elements and those who indulge in violence. It raises voice against the security forces and police personnel of the country," BJP spokesperson GVL Narasimha Rao said.

Talking about the second video in which people were seen in the gangway with some covering their faces, Rao asked why were students wearing masks and what were they studying with stones in their hands. "Which academic discipline requires students to wear masks and hold stones while studying?" he asked.

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

CAA, NRC, NPR

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To control movement of people from outside State

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PERMANENT COMMISSION TO WOMEN IN ARMY

# Rajnath Singh welcomes SC ruling

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

"There have been instances where certain women officers have been in the job for nearly 20 years, while SSC term terminates in 14 years. In 2019, the Defence Ministry granted a permanent commission to women in all 10 branches of the Indian Army, including Signal Corps, intelligence, aviation, engineering, service corps and ordinance corps," Singh added. Before 2016, women made

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

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

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



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

denying them command posts "disturbing".

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

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

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

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

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



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

RAHUL GANDHI

# Bihar becomes 4th State to have bird tagging station

Other 3 are in Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Odisha

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

The other three ringing stations are in Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Odisha.

A pact was inked between representatives of the Bihar Government and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) at Gandhinagar in



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

denominations".

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

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

PALANISWAMI JOURNEY

EPS completes 3 yrs in CM office

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cong for conditional participation in J&K Panchayat bypolls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

No rifles missing from SAPB, says Kerala police

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Goa to get largest super-specialty facility under PMSSY

PTI ■ PANAJI

The country's largest super-specialty medical block under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) will be inaugurated within next six months in Goa, State Health Minister Vishwajit Rane said on Monday. The facility is coming up in Bambolim near the Goa Medical College and Hospital and the state will invite Prime Minister Narendra Modi to throw it open for the public, Rane added.

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



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

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

writing, music, performances," she said.

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

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

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

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

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

LOCUST ATTACK Central team reaches Raj to assess damage to crops

PTI ■ JAIPUR

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

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

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

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

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

भारतीय प्रतिभूति और विनियम बोर्ड Securities and Exchange Board of India

NOTICE

- The Noticee mentioned at Sl no. 1 in the table 1 below is hereby informed that Dr. Anitha Anoop (Adjudicating Officer, SEBI) issued a Show Cause Notice (SCN) (Sl. no. 1 a, Table-1) against it. However, the aforesaid SCN returned undelivered. The Noticee may download the soft copy of the aforesaid SCN from the SEBI Website (www.sebi.gov.in) under the head Enforcement -> Unserved Summons / Notices). The Noticee is further advised to submit reply to the SCN within 14 days from the date of the publication of this Notice, to the Adjudicating Officer at SEBI Bhavan 2, Plot No. C-7, G Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai - 400 051 ('SEBI office') as well as through email at anithal@sebi.gov.in and ead1@sebi.gov.in. In this regard, in the interest of natural justice the Noticee is hereby being granted an opportunity of hearing at the SEBI office (date and time mentioned in the Table-1 below).
- Further, the Noticee mentioned at Sl. No. 1, in the Table-2 below is hereby informed that the Adjudicating Officer, SEBI has passed an Adjudication Order (AO Order) against her. However, the AO order could not be served on the Noticee. A copy of the AO order may be downloaded from the SEBI website (www.sebi.gov.in) under the heads "Orders of AO" as well as "Orders that could not be served", or may be collected from the Office of the Adjudicating Officer at the address of the SEBI office, or may be obtained by a request email to ead1@sebi.gov.in.

Table - 1

Sl. No.	Details of the SCN	Name of the Noticee and last known address	In the metter of	Details of Hearing
1.	a) Show Cause Notice SEBI/EAD-1/AA/ASR/29 105/2019 dated November 01, 2019.	MG Capital Services Limited i) S-529, 1st Floor, School block, Shakarpur, Delhi - 110088. ii) BE-61, Shalimar Bagh (west), Delhi - 110088.	MG Capital Services Limited	Opportunity of hearing granted on March 17, 2020, 11:00 AM.

Table - 2

Sl. No.	Details of Adjudication Order	Name of the Noticee and last known address	In the metter of
1.	Order/AA/AR/2019 - 20/4160 dated August 27, 2019.	i) Sushma Gupta 19, Maha Paiika Shops, Near Allen Union Club, Bareilly - 243001.	Himachal Fibres Ltd.

Date : 13.02.2020 Place : Mumbai

davp 15204 / 11 / 0518 / 1920

Digital process fulfilled Muslims' haj dream: Naqvi

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

India has become the first country to make the entire Haj 2020 process 100 per cent digital, he said.

Online application, e-visa, Haj mobile app, E-MASIHA health facility, E-luggage pre-tagging providing information in India itself regarding accommodation/transportation in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina have been provided to Indian Muslims going for Haj, he said.

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

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

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

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

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

About 1.23 lakh Muslims

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

A total of 650 trainers participated in the training programme.

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

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

3 WB tourists rescued from Ganga in Rishikesh

PTI ■ DEHRADUN

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ BALRAMPUR

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

## CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT

# TN CM blames extremist organisations for riot-like situation

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

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

Many policemen injured in stone pelting have been admitted to various government hospitals in the city," said the Chief Minister. He said though nearly 100 trouble makers who went on a rampage were taken into custody by the police and put in various marriage halls in Chennai, all of them were released after filing charges against them.

"A fake news spread by the forces behind the agitation that an old man died in the police action aggravated the situation.

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

He disclosed that all those who fomented trouble in front of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant against the commissioning of the plant and who led the sit in at Marina Beach in early 2017 against the Supreme Court ban on Jallikattu were participating in the demonstrations at Chennai.

"Right now, a sit in is going on at the Washermenpet street with 150 persons shouting slogans against CAA. We have deployed sufficient police force to prevent the situation from

It was found that the old man who was ailing for some time breathed his last at his house which is far away from the spot. Nobody has been injured in the lathi-charge by police," said Palaniswami.

He disclosed that all those who fomented trouble in front of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant against the commissioning of the plant and who led the sit in at Marina Beach in early 2017 against the Supreme Court ban on Jallikattu were participating in the demonstrations at Chennai.

"Right now, a sit in is going on at the Washermenpet street with 150 persons shouting slogans against CAA. We have deployed sufficient police force to prevent the situation from

□ Nearly 100 trouble makers who went on a rampage were taken into custody by police & put in various marriage halls, all of them were released after filing charges against them

□ DMK and other opposition parties led by MK Stalin staged a walk out claiming that they were not content with the statement made by the CM

□ This is the 1st time TN Govt named the Islamist organisations & their role in the anti-CAA agitations across State

going out of control," the chief minister announced.

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

"We want Tamil Nadu

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

This is the first time the Tamil Nadu Government named the Islamist organisa-

tions and their role in the anti-CAA agitations across the State. Sunday night saw the Chief Minister holding a high level meeting which was attended among others by the Chief Secretary, Home Secretary, State Police Chief and heads of various intelligence wings.

"The Government has clear picture and evidence about the role of various political organisations in the demonstrations being held in the State. We will come out with more details in the days to come," said a senior source in Fort Saint George (Tamil Nadu Government's seat of power, the secretariat).

The Washermenpet sit in on Monday witnessed a novel protest by the Islamists as they held a marriage in the venue and offered sumptuous lunch to those who staged the rally. It may be remembered that Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, had told the Kerala Legislative Assembly that extremist organizations like PFI and SDPI had infiltrated into the anti-CAA agitations staged in the State under directions from religious clergy and the Mahuls.

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

# Mamta meets Guv with basket of sweets

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

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

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

"Had an extremely satisfying an hour long interaction with Hon'ble Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at Raj Bhavan" the Governor usual-

ly known for spitting fire against the State Government on his twitterhandle wrote.

Raj Bhavan sources would not throw much light on the agenda of the talks and said the twosome met privately for an hour and that no one was present during that occasion. "This meeting was between the CM and the Governor and no one else was present there," said sources.

The meeting of the two leaders just after the Budget Session assumed significance particularly considering the fact that the State Government and the Chief Minister regularly charging him with attempts of running a parallel Govt in the State.

With no love lost between the Raj Bhavan and Nabanna (Statesecretariat) and the Governor threatening to create "history" during his maiden



speech in the House the inaugural day of the Budget session was expected to be a tumultuous one.

After giving the Government goose pimples dropping veiled threats that he might deviate from the established tradition of reading out the speech prepared by the State Government the Governor had fallen in line reading out the text prepared by the Government.

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

The relations between the two sides was hit by controversies ever since the Governor assumed office and more so after he ignored the advice of the Chief Minister to personally visit the Jadavpur University to rescue Union Minister Babul Supriyo on September 19 after he was gheraoed by the agitating students for more than five hours.

Subsequently the Governor and the Government would not see eye-to-eye on a number of issues particularly when he was attacked by the Chief Minister for attempting to host administrative meetings in districts in an alleged defiance of the constitutional provisions. The mutual chemistry between the state's two highest offices worsened to the level of each side choosing to each other at a programme in the State Assembly.

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

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

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

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

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

CAA in both Houses of Parliament. But the chief minister after meeting a delegation of the minority community in Bhubaneswar, had said the state will not support the National Register of Citizens (NRC)."

This "change of stance" was creating confusion among the people, he said and sought to know whether the BJD leaders would also join Shah in the proposed pro-CAA rally or keep distance from it.

Saluja said the state government should have taken the people, who voted the BJD to power in the state five times in a row, into confidence before supporting the bill to amend the Citizenship Act.

# BJP likely to move pro-CAA resolution in Karnataka Assembly

PTI ■ BENGALURU

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

The resolution is expected to be moved towards the end of the special discussion on the Constitution, scheduled for March 2 and 3, the sources said. The move is bound to face stiff resistance from opposition parties - the Congress and JDS - in the Assembly.

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

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

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

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

too has witnessed a series of pro and anti-CAA protests and demonstrations.

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

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

Though there were expectations in some quarters that the Governor's

# Pawar calls for good coordination between Mins, CM

Ask party Mins to avoid controversial statements

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

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

Minister Uddhav Thackeray. Confabulating with his party's ministers in the Uddhav Thackeray Cabinet at the Yeshwantrao Chavan Centre in south Mumbai, Pawar advised them to have a good coordination with the Chief Minister, avoid tasking up controversial issues and also making controversial statements.

At the meeting which was also attended by the party's MPS Supriya Sule, Sunil Tatkare and Shrinivas Patil, Pawar reviewed the work of his party ministers in the State Cabinet.

# BHIMA KOREGAON-ELGAAR PARISHAD CASE

# NCP mulls over SIT probe

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

If the NCP—which holds

the Home portfolio in the state - decides to go ahead with the SIT probe into the Bhima Koregaon-Elgaar Parishad case, it will send a clear cut message to its ruling ally - Shiv Sena that the chief minister - can ill-afford to "overrule" his party's allies in the MVA on crucial matters like the one in the case. Simultaneously, the NCP is bound to trigger a confrontation between the State and Centre over a parallel probe on the Bhima Koregaon-Elgaar Parishad case. Monday's development should be seen in the context of the statement made by Pawar on Friday last, disapproving Uddhav's decision let the NIA take over the investigations into the 2018 Bhima Koregaon case.

# Action sought against Marathi preacher

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Nandashraddha Nirmulan Samiti (MANS), an outfit crusading against superstitious beliefs, on Monday demanded criminal action against popular Marathi kirtankar (preacher) Indurikar Maharaj for his questionable claim that "if an intercourse with female on an even date

will result in a male child and if it is done on an odd date, a female child is born".

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

Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act.

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

"If intercourse is done at inauspicious time, the child

that is born would bring a bad name to the family. If the timing (of intercourse) is missed, the quality of the output (child) will be sub-standard," Indurikar Maharaj also heard telling his followers, at a religious gathering held in a village in Ahmednagar district last week. Objecting to Indurikar Maharaj's claims which he described as "scientific, outlandish, irresponsible," "insult-

ing to women", and against the law and Constitution", MANS executive president Avinash Patil - in his representation to the district police superintendent and civil surgeon - said that the controversial preacher had violated the PCPNDT Act, which was enacted with an aim of stopping female foeticide and curb the declining sex ratio in the country.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, ALLAHABAD				
E-Tender No. ALD-Sig-137-2019-20		Date : 13.02.2020		
<b>E-TENDER NOTICE</b>				
Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/Coordination/North Central Railway/Allahabad, for and on behalf of the President of India, invite E-TENDER on prescribed form for the following works up to 12.00 hrs. on the opening date of E-tender mentioned therein. The details of the Tender are as under:-				
SN	Tender No.	Name of work		
1	137	"Annual Maintenance Contract of SSI (Solid State Interlocking) Systems of Ansaldo Make for 03 years at 06 Major Stations and 37 Way side stations installed in the section MGS-CNB on Allahabad division."		
Approx Cost of work (₹) : 77757364/-, Earnest Money (₹) : 538800/-, Cost of Tender Form (₹) : 10000/-, Completion Period : 36 Months, Date of closing of tender : 06.03.2020				
Availability of tender form : Tender forms shall be available on <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> . Time date & place of opening of tender : Tender will be opened through E-tender at office of Divisional Railway Manager, Allahabad on or after pre determined date at 12.30 hours. 225/20 (S)				
<b>E-Tender Notice Number: Ins-Comm.Publicity-LED Flange-Kanpur-2019 Dated: 10.02.2020</b>				
<b>E-TENDER NOTICE</b>				
Following open e-tenders on prescribed tender forms are invited by the Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Divisional Railway Manager's Office, North Central Railway, Allahabad on behalf of President of India.				
1.	Tender No.	01		
2.	Details of work including place	Contract of Commercial Publicity at Kanpur Central Railway Station through LED Flange for five years.		
3.	Approximate cost in ₹	39,50,640.00		
4.	Cost of Tender Form in ₹	3540.00		
5.	Office address from where the tender information can be obtained	i. Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Divisional Railway Managers Office, N.C. Railway, Nawab Yusuf Road, Civil Lines, Allahabad. ii- Dy. Chief Traffic Manager/Station Director, North Central Railway, Station Building, Kanpur Central.		
6.	Earnest Money to be deposited in ₹	79,100.00		
7.	Period of Contract	Five years		
8.	i. Date & time for dropping the tender form ii. Date & time for the opening of tender	i. From date of publishing of tender notice in newspaper to 17.03.2020 upto 13 hrs ii-At 15 hrs on 17.03.2020		
9.	Website & Notice board where the full detail of tender can be seen	Tender shall be available on <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> upto 13.00 hrs. on 17.03.2020 i.e. date of opening of the tender. The tender notice can also be viewed on Railway's website <a href="http://www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in">www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in</a> 223/20(S)		

E-Tender No. ALD-Sig-136-2019-20				
E-TENDER NOTICE		Dated : 12.02.2020		
Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer /Coordination/North Central Railway/ Allahabad, for and on behalf of the president of India, Invite E-TENDER on prescribed form for the following works up to 12.00 hrs. on the opening date. The details of the Tender is as under :-				
S N	Tender No.	Name of Work	Approx cost of work (₹)	Earnest Money (₹)
1	136	"Interlocking of LC Gate No 11 (MNJ-BRE) having TVU more than 20000 in ALD-FTP section over Allahabad Division	5199468/-	104000/-
Cost of Tender Form (₹) : 5,000/-, Completion Period : 06 Months, Date of Closing of Tender : 06.03.2020				
2. Availability of tender form: Tender forms are available on <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> , Earnest Money to be deposited: The prescribed amount of Earnest Money as mentioned above must be deposited along with the tender form Online through Internet Banking or Online Payment gateway only. The tenderer (s) should note that, in any case, the Earnest Money in any other form than specified above shall not be acceptable. Tenders without earnest money shall be summarily rejected. Time & place of opening of tender : Tender will be opened through E-tender at office of Divisional Railway Manager, Allahabad on or after pre determined date at 12.30 hours. In case tender opening date happens to be holiday, Tenders will be opened on the next working day. Validity of offer: 45 days from the date of opening. Right of Railway to deal with tender: Railway administration reserves the rights to postpone/modify or to cancel the tender without assigning any reasons. 222/20 (S)				

T. Notice No. 230-Elect/TRD/ALD/E-Tender Notice/2020/441 & 442				
TENDER NOTICE				
Sr. Divl. Electrical Engineer/TRD/N.C. Rly/Allahabad, for and on behalf of the President of India, invite the following E-Tender, the details of the tenders are as under:-				
Tender No.	Description of work	Advertised value	Tender Document Cost	Earnest Money
230-Elect-TRD-ALD-WC-807-2020	25 KV OHE Modification and Electrification due to Yard Remodelling and Jn arrangement at Jeonathpur & Block Hut K in Allahabad Division (IInd Call).	₹ 120546403.19	₹ 10000/-	₹ 752700.00
Completion period : 09 months, Tender Closing date & Time : 16.03.2020 & 14.00 Hrs. Bidding system : Two Packet				
230-Elect-TRD-ALD-WC-808-2020	Modification in 25kV OHE due to construction of FOB at Karbigwan, Etawah, Jaswant Nagar, Bhadan, Kaurara & Hirangaon station in Allahabad Division (4th Call).	₹ 24031430.02	₹ 10000/-	₹ 270200.00
Completion period : 09 months, Tender Closing date & Time : 16.03.2020 & 14.00 Hrs. Bidding system : Single Packet				
Note:- 1. The complete information along with tender document of above E-Tenders shall be available on Website <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> 21 days prior to the date of opening of the tender. 2. Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with Digital Signature Certificate. 3. In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the website of IREPS may be approached. 231/20 (S)				

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE NO. 20/10 Dt. 14.02.2020				
On behalf of President of India The Principal Chief Materials Manager, North Central Railway, Allahabad (An ISO 9001:2015 certified unit) invites the following E-Procurement Tenders.				
S. N.	Tender No.	Description	Qty.	Tender Opening Date
1	50205005	All In One Smart Class System	5 Nos.	05.03.2020
2	30191672	Double Acting Hydraulic Shock Absorber	2665 Nos.	06.03.2020
3	30191896	POH KIT FOR KE2 TYPE DISTRIBUTOR VALUE	1000 Nos.	11.03.2020
4	30192378	KIT FOR BRAKE GEAR BUSHES	1037 Set	02.03.2020
5	30192188	LAVATORY WINDOW ARRANGEMENT	507 Nos.	09.03.2020
6	30192452	SOLE BAR	318 Nos.	23.03.2020
7	30191211 A	Bogie centre pivot bottom	200 Nos.	13.03.2020
Note:- (1) The complete information of above E-Procurement Tenders are available on IREPS website i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">http://www.ireps.gov.in</a> . (2) Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above Tenders. For this purpose, Vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with class III digital signature certificates issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. (3) Rate entered into financial rate page and duly signed digitally shall only be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form/letter head if attached by vendor shall be straight way ignored and shall not be considered. 233/20 (S)				

E-Procurement Tender Notice No. 29P-69/2019-20/TMC/HQ/NCR/ALD					
OPEN TENDER NOTICE					
On behalf of the President of India, Principal Chief Engineer, North Central Railway, Subedargan, Allahabad-211015 invites the following E-Procurement Tenders. (The complete information along with tender document of this E-Procurement Tender are available in website on <a href="http://ireps.gov.in">http://ireps.gov.in</a> upto 15.00 hrs. of the due date of tender opening).					
SN	Tender No.	Brief Description	Quantity	Tender Value	Earnest Money
1	TMC 01191920	Lubricating Oil, Hydraulic Oil, Transmission Oil. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. (Acceptable Make : IOC, BPCL, HPCL, Bharat Shell, Balmer Lawrie, Gulf Oil Co. Ltd. only)	As per Section IV of tender document	29,61,210/-	59,300/-
2	TMC 01201920	Wheel and Axle. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. (Acceptable Make: Plasser or Equivalent)	-Do-	1,34,14,184/-	2,68,300/-
3	TMC 01211920	Various types of Hydraulic Cylinder. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. (Acceptable Make: Plasser or Equivalent)	-Do-	24,06,214/-	(Exempted)
4	TMC 01221920	Lining Transducer with Strip and Potentiometer, Transducer Complete with imported potentiometer. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. (Acceptable Make: Plasser or Equivalent)	-Do-	8,26,000/-	(Exempted)
5	TMC 01231920	Portable D.C. welding generator, as per RDSO specification no. TM/SM/20 dt. 19.11.92. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document.	15 Nos.	28,32,000/-	56,700/-
Note :- For S.No. 1 to 5 Date of Opening : 18.03.2020. Note-1. The complete information along with Tender document of above E-Procurement Tender is available on website <a href="http://ireps.gov.in">http://ireps.gov.in</a> Upto 15.00 hrs. On the due date of tender opening. 2. Following condition has been included in Tender Document vide Railway Board Letter No. 2001/RS(g)/779/7 Pt I Dated 29.06.2017. "Whenever tender is floated with purchase restriction from sources approved by nominated authorities and there exists a suspected cartel situation by approved sources or the rates available from approved/sources are adjudged unreasonably high, despite fair efforts as permissible, the purchaser reserves the right to place order on firms outside the approved vendors list, without any restrictions." 3. Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above Tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with Class III Digital Signature certificates issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. 4. This tender notice has also been uploaded on <a href="http://www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in">www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in</a> . 5. Allocation for Security deposit and Earnest money is "Deposit Misc stores 00844523. 6. In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the website of IREPS may be approached. 234/20 (S)					

## Lead from the front

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



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

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

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

## Smashing heads

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



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

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

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

# Pseudo-Caliphate and India

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



SANDHYA JAIN

Even if we overlook the facts about which nation is "occupying" Kashmir, by stating that there is "no difference between Gallipoli and occupied Kashmir", Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan unambiguously signalled his intention to emerge as the "imam" of the new (pseudo) Caliphate he hopes to lead by 2023, the centenary of the Turkish Republic. Addressing a joint session of Pakistan's Parliament (February 14), he lauded sacrifices made by it in the war on terror and the "positive contributions" it made to the Afghanistan peace process and promised support during the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) meet in Paris (February 16-21, 2020). His denunciation of US President Donald Trump's Mideast plan hints at an eventual challenge to Riyadh in the region.

Erdogan's determination to restore the Caliphate has created a visible schism between the Arab States formally led by Saudi Arabia and the non-Arab States led by Turkey. A nascent axis is discernible between Turkey, Malaysia and Pakistan; Iran and Qatar complete the anti-Riyadh alignment. Erdogan declared in February 2018, "The Republic of Turkey is a continuation of the Ottoman Empire... the essence is the same, soul is the same..." Unsurprisingly, Ankara has emerged as the new hub for anti-India activities by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Unknown to most people, Turkey has universal jurisdiction laws as part of its domestic laws. Article 13 of the Turkish Penal Code states, "Turkish law shall apply to" the crime of torture "committed in a foreign country whether or not committed by a citizen or non-citizen."

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SOUNDBITE

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



MEA Spokesperson —Raveesh Kumar

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



Actor —Kareena Kapoor

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



UN chief —Antonio Guterres

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



Congress leader —Sanjay Dutt

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Corrupt rule the roost

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

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

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

### The dark side of Indian politics

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

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

Law-abiding citizens believe that the electoral bond is one such corrupt practice that has been made official to benefit the BJP as more than 93 per cent of the bond's amount goes to the party. It's a pity that neither the

Reserve Bank of India, (RBI) or the Election Commission (EC) or the Supreme Court is really bothered with this white-collared corruption.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee  
Faridabad



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

Abhijit Roy  
Jamshedpur

### Digest the irony

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

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

Ruchi  
Via email

### When will we learn?

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

PP Sen  
New Delhi

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

FIRST COLUMN

## A win-win for Modi and Trump

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



SIMI MEHTA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(The writer is CEO and Editorial Director, IMPRI)

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

—WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER  
**MAMATA BANERJEE**

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



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

—STATE BJP PRESIDENT  
**DILIP GHOSH**

# Make your choice

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



UTTAM GUPTA

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

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

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

At present, a person having an income of ₹2,50,001-₹5,00,000 per annum pays a tax of five per cent, those earning more than ₹5,00,000 but less than ₹10,00,000 pay 20 per cent tax whereas, someone having an income higher than ₹10,00,000 pays 30 per cent. Accompanying this are a plethora of exemptions and deductions viz. Section 80C (annual investment, expenses, life insurance premium and so on, up to ₹150,000), Section 80D (health insurance premiums), Section 24 (interest on home loans), Section 80CCD (including extra NPS contribution up to ₹50,000), Section 80E (education loan interest) and Section 16 (standard deduction on salary income) and so on.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Pay taxes for a developed nation

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



RAJEEV AHUJA KEERTI PRADHAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

for its performance, including its welfare role.

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

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

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

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



## LEND A HAND TO IDLIB REFUGEES

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

(The Guardian editorial)

# Moody's cuts India growth projection to 5.4 pc for '20

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Moody's on Monday slashed India's growth forecast for 2020 to 5.4 per cent from 6.6 per cent projected earlier, on slower than expected economic recovery.

In its update on Global Macro Outlook, Moody's Investors Service said India's economy has decelerated rapidly over the last 2 years and economic recovery is likely to be 'shallow'.

"While the economy may well begin to recover in the current quarter, we expect any recovery to be slower than we had previously expected. Accordingly, we have revised our growth forecasts to 5.4 per cent for 2020 and 5.8 per cent for 2021, down from our previous projections of 6.6 per cent and 6.7 per cent respectively," Moody's said. Moody's growth projections are based on calendar year and as per its estimates, India's GDP grew 5 per cent in 2019. The rating agency had in November 2019 projected economic growth in 2020 and 2021 at 6.6 per cent and 6.7 per cent respectively. In its latest update, Moody's said the reduction in India's growth rate reflects domestic challenges rather than external factors.

Stating that the key to stronger economic momentum would be the revival of domestic demand and bank credit growth, Moody's said the Union Budget 2020 did not contain a significant stimulus to address the demand slump.

With a weak economy and depressed credit growth reinforcing each other, Moody's said "it is difficult to envision a quick turnaround of either, even if economic deceleration may have tapered". "As similar policies in other countries have shown, tax cuts are unlikely to translate into higher consumer and business spending when risk aversion is high," Moody's said.

The rating agency said it expects additional easing by the Reserve Bank. However, if the recent rise in CPI inflation, mainly as a result of higher food prices, is seen to have second-round effects, this would make it more challenging for the central bank to cut interest rates further, it added. The RBI has lowered the

repo rate by a cumulative 135 bps in 2019. Inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose to a 68-month-high of 7.59 per cent in January. RBI's mandated target range for retail inflation is 2-6 per cent and the central bank aims to keep it at 4 per cent over the medium term. Moody's said that resumption of credit growth is equally important as reviving demand, and banks have been reluctant to lend or lower lending rates despite successive rate cuts by the RBI, "...credit impulse in the economy has deteriorated throughout the last year as a result of the drying up of lending from non-bank financial institutions as well as from banks," Moody's said.

BPSL in connection with its money laundering probe linked to an alleged bank loan fraud by its former promoters.

# NCLAT allows JSW Steel to acquire Bhushan Power & Steel

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal on Monday allowed JSW Steel to acquire of Bhushan Power & Steel Ltd for Rs 19,700 crore by providing it immunity from prosecution by Enforcement Directorate.

Mukhopadhyaya, said that JSW Steel will be immunised from the acts done by the former promoters of Bhushan Power & Steel Ltd (BPSL).

However, it also said that prosecution against the former promoters under the money laundering act by the Enforcement Directorate can continue. It has also rejected the

petitions filed by operational creditors, seeking higher claims. The bench said that the EBITDA (earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization) earned by BPSL during its Corporate Insolvency resolution period will be given to JSW Steel.

On October 10, the ED had attached assets worth over Rs 4,025 crore of debt-ridden

Less than a month after the Supreme Court stayed an order reinstating him as Tata Sons chairman, Cyrus Mistry has moved the apex court seeking removal of many anomalies in the NCLAT order, saying his family deserved more relief from the tribunal.

Mistry, whose family owns 18.37 per cent stake in Tata

# Market ends lower for 3rd day

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Domestic equities clocked losses for a third session in a row on Monday as worries over economic slowdown and financial impact of coronavirus outbreak continued to play in the minds of investors.

At the closing bell, the BSE gauge Sensex was down 202.05 points, or 0.49 per cent, at 41,055.69. The index swung about 390 points during the session.

The NSE barometer Nifty fell 67.75 points or 0.56 per cent to close at 12,045.80.

On the Sensex chart, ONGC led the fall with a 3.20 per cent drop after the company posted halving of its December quarter net profit.

Other top laggards on the index were Sun Pharma, NTPC, Bajaj Auto and HDFC — slipping as much as 2.37 per cent.

On the other hand, Titan, Nestle, TCS, Kotak Bank and Tata Steel emerged as major gainers, rising as much as 1.86 per cent.

Of the Sensex constituents, 19 closed in the red and 11 in the green.

Sectorally, oil and gas index fell the most (2.39 per cent), followed by utilities (2.07 per cent), power (1.76 per cent), realty (1.53 per cent) and healthcare (1.50 per cent).

In contrast, consumer durables, IT and tech emerged as gainers. In the broader market, BSE Midcap and smallcap indices fell 0.91 per cent and 1.02 per cent, respectively.

Further weakening investor sentiment, Moody's Investors Service has slashed India's growth forecast to 5.4 per cent for 2020 from 6.6 per cent projected earlier on slower-than-expected economic recovery.

Meanwhile, worries over rising death toll and the economic fallout from the novel coronavirus continued to haunt investors globally.

The coronavirus epidemic that emerged in central China has now killed nearly 1,800 people and spread around the world.

The latest figures from China show there are more than 70,000 people infected in the country.

"Domestic growth concerns seem to be back in the market as indicated by a recent downgrade by Moody's. Banks having significant exposure in telecom players continue to be in the limelight as lack of funds could delay the payments and degrade the quality of banks balance sheet," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Continuous rise in coronavirus cases has forced major

Asian peers to downgrade their growth outlook which could cause a ripple effect in other nations in the first quarter while recovery is expected from the second, he said.

In fresh developments on the AGR matter, Vodafone Idea and Tata Group have made part payment of about Rs 2,500 crore and over Rs 2,190 crore, respectively, to the telecom department towards statutory dues, a government official said on Monday.

Bharti Airtel also paid Rs 10,000 crore to the telecom department towards statutory dues. Reacting to the developments, telecom stocks closed mostly lower.

Elsewhere, Asian markets closed mixed, while European bourses opened higher.

Global crude benchmark Brent was quoted trading at USD 57.28 per barrel, down 0.07 per cent.

# Mistry files appeal in Supreme Court

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Less than a month after the Supreme Court stayed an order reinstating him as Tata Sons chairman, Cyrus Mistry has moved the apex court seeking removal of many anomalies in the NCLAT order, saying his family deserved more relief from the tribunal.

Mistry, whose family owns 18.37 per cent stake in Tata

Sons, has filed a cross appeal in the court.

Generally, a cross appeal refers to an appeal made against certain facets of a judgement.

On January 25, a three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice Arvind Bobde stayed the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) order, dated December 18, wherein Mistry was reinstated

as Tata Sons chairman. The stay came on an appeal filed by Tata Group.

In the petition, Mistry has described the group's relationship with 'Tatas' as "a quasi-partnership relationship of a vintage of over 60 years, holding 18.37 per cent in the equity share capital of Tata Sons and whose stake is now worth over Rs 1.5 lakh crore".

According to the petition,

which has been accessed by PTI, the Mistry camp has sought remedies for many anomalies in the NCLAT order, including about not looking at alleged oppression of minority shareholders as well as converting Tata Sons into a private limited company as a post-facto move.

The conversion happened after Mistry was removed as chairman on October 24, 2016.

## NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	12131.80	12159.60	12037.00	12045.80	-67.65
TITAN	1293.05	1321.60	1288.35	1315.80	22.35
GAIL	122.00	122.00	117.15	118.00	1.85
NESTLEIND	16413.00	16615.00	16373.00	16614.95	258.50
VEDL	141.30	143.80	140.80	142.10	1.20
TCS	2196.95	2217.00	2190.20	2202.05	17.85
TATASTEEL	435.50	440.90	433.00	437.95	3.40
KOTAKBANK	1685.00	1699.20	1672.25	1693.85	12.90
UPL	593.00	599.80	591.15	595.20	3.55
ZEE	240.15	242.20	233.50	240.15	1.40
TATAMOTORS	170.40	171.35	166.35	170.00	0.90
WIPRO	242.90	245.00	241.95	243.85	0.95
INFY	790.30	793.45	783.30	788.85	2.40
ULTRACEMCO	4443.90	4465.00	4401.10	4447.65	13.30
M&M	524.10	525.40	516.00	524.50	1.50
AXISBANK	737.40	743.10	730.20	738.50	2.00
ASIANPAINT	1879.90	1893.50	1870.60	1880.25	3.20
MARUTI	6920.00	6980.00	6880.00	6925.00	11.20
BHARTIARTL	564.95	568.70	560.50	565.40	4.00
TECH	835.95	837.00	827.45	834.20	0.05
HINDUNILVR	2248.00	2289.00	2243.20	2254.05	-1.00
BAJFINANCE	4871.75	4798.00	4750.05	4779.00	-2.75
HDFCBANK	1225.00	1233.00	1214.45	1218.00	-1.35
INFRAEEL	234.85	239.95	232.00	235.10	-0.35
INDUSINDBK	1176.00	1209.00	1164.50	1173.65	-2.35
BRITANNIA	3095.00	3112.30	3072.05	3087.25	-9.40
HEROMOTOCO	2335.00	2335.00	2269.55	2283.50	-8.00
JSWSTEEL	289.15	290.90	285.30	288.00	-1.15
DREDDY	3325.80	3342.05	3287.20	3290.00	-14.30
RELIANCE	1489.00	1506.15	1474.30	1478.50	-9.10
ICICIBANK	543.00	545.35	537.75	542.30	-3.50
POWERGRID	185.00	185.80	180.55	182.90	-1.20
EIGHERMOT	18400.00	18948.75	18450.10	18568.95	-134.60
GRASIM	73.80	75.00	73.30	73.70	-5.75
ADANI	1297.00	1297.85	1277.00	1281.50	-13.65
ANDHRA	366.85	366.85	359.40	362.45	-4.40
HCLTECH	623.00	623.50	612.35	613.45	-8.20
SBIN	320.95	321.15	311.65	314.70	-4.70
ITC	208.00	208.65	204.00	204.25	-3.45
BAJAJFINSV	9699.80	9785.25	9514.55	9530.00	-160.50
HINDALCO	194.00	194.70	189.75	190.45	-3.55
SUNPHARMA	416.20	418.50	407.30	407.65	-7.90
HDFC	2401.75	2406.65	2345.15	2349.90	-51.85
NTPC	113.10	113.75	110.20	110.10	-2.60
IOC	115.00	115.30	111.25	111.80	-3.30
BPCL	447.45	447.45	430.00	461.75	-14.70
CIPLA	478.50	445.75	430.10	433.25	-13.85
ONGC	101.50	102.90	98.80	100.00	-3.30
COALINDIA	174.75	175.20	166.80	168.10	-6.65
YESBANK	39.50	40.10	36.60	37.35	-1.55

## NIFTY NEXT 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	28513.65	28572.75	28143.40	28169.60	-331.45
BOSCHLTD	1400.00	1495.00	1400.00	14910.00	294.90
ASHOKLEY	80.25	82.70	79.60	81.65	1.40
INDIGO	1441.30	1465.00	1436.05	1465.00	15.90
VIDEALB	2158.00	2170.00	2133.60	2157.00	10.55
PAGEIND	22639.00	23279.00	22325.05	22540.00	92.95
PEL	1530.90	1540.00	1514.45	1533.05	2.40
SBILIFE	915.50	919.45	904.00	914.05	-0.20
PIDILITIND	1582.10	1606.00	1575.10	1582.90	-0.45
GODREJCP	626.10	630.95	618.05	625.75	-0.35
BERGEPAINT	578.50	587.65	577.00	579.05	-0.55
MCOWELLN	703.65	713.80	695.80	702.75	-0.80
NMDC	106.75	107.75	105.80	106.20	-0.15
PEC	127.40	131.15	125.65	126.30	-0.35
SRTRANSF	1289.00	1300.00	1275.50	1282.30	-4.10
HINDZINC	190.65	190.65	188.30	189.75	-0.90
OFSS	2885.00	2929.55	2888.00	2870.60	-13.70
COLPAL	1347.35	1352.00	1314.55	1332.35	-7.95
PGH	11533.00	11533.00	11359.15	11417.95	-80.60
MOTHERSUMI	124.05	124.40	122.10	123.00	-0.95
BAJAJHLNG	3766.00	3770.00	3680.00	3727.00	-29.55
UBL	1290.00	1295.00	1267.65	1276.00	-10.40
DABUR	506.45	510.00	500.25	501.70	-4.40
AMBUJACEM	205.35	206.35	202.30	203.85	-1.80
LUPIN	718.50	731.25	710.60	711.20	-6.45
ICICIGI	1353.60	1356.00	1331.25	1340.00	-13.60
SIEMENS	1406.55	1406.55	1374.30	1383.70	-14.20
ACC	1445.00	1445.00	1416.10	1422.00	-18.40
NHPC	22.90	22.90	21.75	22.00	-0.30
HDFCLIFE	574.90	575.00	564.05	566.05	-7.90
CADILHACS	271.30	276.80	263.15	266.25	-3.75
HAVELLS	613.00	613.95	600.00	603.85	-6.65
BIOCON	309.05	311.50	302.30	303.30	-4.50
IDEA	3.70	4.20	3.30	3.35	-0.05
ICICIPRULI	479.25	480.45	467.00	474.00	-7.30
HINDPETRO	234.00	234.70	229.15	230.00	-3.85
L&T	126.30	127.00	123.35	124.05	-2.25
SHREECEM	24320.00	24455.50	23955.00	23975.10	-58.50
MARICO	303.00	303.20	296.00	296.20	-6.00
PETRONET	260.80	260.80	255.10	255.60	-5.20
CONCOR	561.70	562.20	548.85	548.85	-11.30
HDFCAMC	3327.00	3335.65	3287.75	3246.00	-81.80
GICRE	218.00	221.50	210.20	211.90	-6.10
DLF	228.40	229.80	217.85	219.50	-6.70
NIACL	136.95	137.75	132.40	132.85	-4.05
DMART	2354.50	2379.30	2330.05	2336.00	-72.35
BANDHANBNK	452.90	456.55	432.60	435.50	-17.05
AUROPHARMA	515.05	519.00	492.20	493.15	-19.45
IBULHSGFIN	320.70	324.40	306.20	307.95	-12.85
PNB	54.10	54.35	51.65	51.80	-2.40
BANKBARODA	85.30	86.35	82.00	82.25	-4.20

## BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP
RELIANCE	1490.00	1506.00	1474.65	1478.40
APLAPOLLO	2008.30	2014.00	1970.00	2000.00
LICHSGFIN	401.00	401.00	361.30	379.85
DMART	2355.00	2379.00	2332.70	2340.50

# China virus death toll rises to 1770; total cases climb to over 70,500

PTI ■ BEIJING

China reported 105 new deaths due to the new coronavirus on Monday, pushing the overall death toll to 1,770, as officials announced stringent measures such as closing non-essential public venues and traffic restrictions to control the epidemic in the worst-hit Hubei province.

The National Health Commission said 2,048 new cases of the virus have been confirmed, taking the total number of COVID-19 infected cases to 70,548, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Of the new deaths, 100 were from Hubei Province, three in Henan, and two in Guangdong.

Though 10,844 people had been discharged from hospitals after recovery, the commission said in its daily report said that 7,264 people were still suspected to be infected by the deadly virus.

By Sunday, 57 confirmed cases including one death had been reported from Hong Kong, 10 in Macao, and 20 in Taiwan including one death.

Hubei, where 18 cities with over 50 million people are under lockdown since January 23, announced a slew of more stringent measures to control the epidemic, including enforcing province-wide traffic restrictions on all non-emergency vehicles and closing all non-essential public venues.

A circular by the provincial

government said the health screening campaign should be strengthened and no one should be missed. Also, companies should not resume production unless allowed by local authorities. Those that have resumed work including public institutions should follow strict prevention measures.

The measures came as the situation remains "grave", the circular added. However on Sunday, the commission announced a "significant drop" in new cases, suggesting that epidemic control measures were taking effect.

"In Wuhan, the epicentre of the epidemic, the proportion of severe cases among the confirmed cases fell from a peak of 32.4 per cent on January 28 to

21.6 per cent on February 15," Mi Feng, a spokesperson with the NHC, said during a media briefing.

Meanwhile, a 12-member team of World Health Organisation experts began assisting their Chinese counterparts to control the virus.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said international experts were now on the ground in China to understand the outbreak and inform the next steps in the global response.

Ghebreyesus also met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Munich Security Conference.

He said "given the misinformation about the novel coronavirus epidemic, WHO

has communicated with some companies including Google to ensure that the public will get the authoritative information from the WHO".

He said one of the goals of the joint mission is to rapidly inform the public of the next steps and preparedness activities in China and globally. "Particular attention will be paid to understanding the transmission of the virus, the severity of disease and the impact of ongoing response measures."

In Beijing, the NHC said the joint mission will pay field visits in China's three provincial-level regions to learn the implementation and effectiveness of the epidemic control measures.



Emergency medic helps Alla Ilyina, who broke out of the hospital on Feb. 7 after learning that she would have to spend 14 days in isolation instead of the 24 hours doctors promised her, to fasten a seat belt inside an ambulance after a court session in St. Petersburg, Russia on Monday. A woman who escaped from a hospital in St. Petersburg, where she was being kept in isolation for possible infection by the new coronavirus, was ordered by court on Monday to return back to the quarantine for at least two days. AP

## 99 more coronavirus cases on Japan cruise ship: Media

AFF ■ TOKYO

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

That would take the total number of positive cases on the Diamond Princess to 454. The health ministry declined to confirm the reports immediately.

It was also not clear whether the figures included 14 US citizens who tested positive for the virus but were allowed to board evacuation flights home.

The Diamond Princess vessel moored in Yokohama near Tokyo has become the second-largest cluster of coronavirus cases outside the epicentre in China.

Passengers have been largely confined to quarters since

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

The quarantine period is over on Wednesday but many countries have decided to repatriate their citizens after an alarming climb in cases on board.

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

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

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

## India to send medical supplies, bring back Indians from Wuhan

PTI ■ BEIJING

India will send medical supplies on board a special relief plane to China's Wuhan city, the epicentre of the novel coronavirus, this week and bring back Indians as well as citizens from all neighbouring countries who are still stuck there on the return flight, the Indian Embassy said on Monday.

Indian Ambassador to China Vikram Misri said that subject to capacity, the special flight to Wuhan can take nationals from "all our neighbouring countries", besides Indians.

"Subject to capacity limitations and space availability on the incoming aircraft, India is also willing to facilitate nationals from all our neighbours boarding it on its return journey to New Delhi. Those interested are requested to contact @EOIBeijing," Misri tweeted.

China is grappling to contain the deadly disease as the death toll climbed to 1,770 after 105 more people died, mostly in the worst-hit Hubei province, officials said on Monday.

Of the new deaths, 100 were from Hubei, three in

Henan, and two in Guangdong.

The Indian Embassy also announced that the Indian government will be sending a consignment of medical supplies on board a relief flight to Wuhan later this week to aid and assist China in its efforts against the COVID-19 epidemic.

"On its return, the flight will have some limited capacity to take on board Indian nationals wishing to return to India from Wuhan/Hubei Province", it said, asking the Indian nationals to get in touch with it.

Indian officials said they are in touch with the Chinese authorities to grant necessary permissions to the flight to land and take the stranded Indians.

India operated two special Air India flights on February 1 and 2 and airlifted 647 Indian nationals, mostly students, and seven Maldivian nationals.

"Many Indian nationals currently in Wuhan/Hubei Province and wishing to return to India have already been in touch with @EOIBeijing in the past two weeks," a tweet by the Indian Embassy said.

"We urge all Indian nationals from Wuhan/Hubei

Province who intend to avail this flight for India and have not yet contacted @EOIBeijing, to urgently call our hotlines +8618610952903 and +8618612083629 or send email to helpdesk.beijing@mea.gov.in before 1900 hours today (17 February 2020)," it said.

Indian officials said there are still 80 to 100 Indians still stuck in the worst-hit Wuhan and other areas of Hubei province and many of them have been making desperate pleas to the Indian government to airlift them.

This includes 10 Indians who could not board the two special flights due to high body temperatures. They were expected to make it in the third flight as they reported to have recovered.

Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh have airlifted their nationals, while 800 to 1000 Pakistanis are still held in Hubei.

Those who are held up in the province were being taken care of by Chinese authorities with regular supplies for food and other essential materials.

The Indian officials said the operation to earlier airlift two batches of Indians was a

logistical nightmare as both Wuhan and Hubei were locked down with a ban on public and private transport.

On Sunday, Misri said in a video message that India will do everything within its means to assist the people of China to combat the deadly coronavirus outbreak and would soon send a consignment of medical supplies.

Earlier, India lifted the ban and cleared some of the medical equipment ordered by the Chinese importers to meet the requirements. China said it needed medical masks, gloves and suits especially for the medical staff attending the virus-infected patients.

Masks also have become scarce in China in view of the nationwide demand in the last three weeks.

On February 9, Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrote to Chinese President Xi Jinping, offering India's assistance to China to deal with the coronavirus outbreak.

Hubei and its capital Wuhan have become the epicentre of the virus and most of the fatalities in China have been reported from the province.



Runners, some wearing masks, compete in a Kumamoto castle marathon in Kumamoto city, western Japan. Organizers of the Tokyo Marathon set for March 1, 2020 are drastically reducing the number of participants out of fear of the spread of the coronavirus from China. The general public is essentially being barred from the race. AP

## Automakers in China gradually reopen after virus shutdown

AP ■ BEIJING

Automakers are reopening factories in China that were idled by anti-virus controls as they try to reverse a sales slump in their biggest market.

Local officials have orders from the ruling Communist Party to get businesses functioning again while still enforcing anti-disease curbs that shut down much of the world's second-largest economy.

"Local governments are putting their full weight behind helping businesses open," the president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai, Ker Gibbs, said in a

statement.

Toyota Motor Co. said two factories reopened Monday with one of the usual two daily shifts working. Volkswagen AG, Ford Motor Co., Mercedes Benz and Chinese brand Geely resumed some operations last week. General Motors Co. said a "staggered start" across its factories began Saturday. Nissan Motor Co. plans to restart this week.

Automakers say they are checking employees for the virus's telltale fever, barring visitors and telling employees to stay home if they have been in Wuhan, the city at the center of the outbreak, or other areas that have imposed travel

curbs.

The outbreak prompted the government to extend the Lunar New Year holiday to keep factories and offices closed and workers at home.

The government has told employees who can work from home to stay there, but China's vast manufacturing industries that supply the world with smartphones, toys and other goods need workers in factories.

Obstacles include a requirement for workers who return from other areas — as millions are doing after the holiday — to make sure they are virus-free by staying at home for its 14-day incubation peri-

od.

"Most factories have a severe shortage of workers, even after they are allowed to open," said Gibbs. "This is going to have a severe impact on global supply chains that is only beginning to show up."

Automakers are under pressure to reverse a 2-year-old sales decline in a Chinese market they hope will propel global revenue.

Sales of SUVs, minivans and sedans hit an annual peak of 24.7 million in 2017 and have declined since then. Last year's sales tumbled 9.6% to 21.4 million.

The virus "adds to the challenges that the sector is already facing," said Fitch Ratings in a report.

Groupe Renault said one of its factories in the southern city of Guangzhou, near Hong Kong, reopened Monday but the French automaker gave no indication of the status of another factory in Wuhan.

Sales of vehicles are likely to be depressed through April, Fitch said. It said production might fall by the high single digits in the first half of 2020 compared with a year earlier.

GM, Toyota and others said the pace of production depends on how fast they can restart the flow of components from thousands of Chinese suppliers that also shut down.

That disruption could have global repercussions: UBS estimates China supplies 8% of auto parts exports worldwide.

AP ■ PHNOM PENH

The feel-good story of how Cambodia allowed a cruise ship to dock after it was turned away elsewhere in Asia for fear of spreading the deadly virus that began in China has taken an unfortunate turn after a passenger released from the ship tested positive for the virus.

News over the weekend that an 83-year-old American woman who was on the ship and flew from Cambodia to Malaysia was found to be carrying the virus froze further movement of the passengers and crew of the MS Westerdam. Some are now in hotels in Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh, while others are still aboard the ship.

The American woman was among several hundred passengers who were flown out of Cambodia on Friday and Saturday. According to authorities in Malaysia, 143 continued their flights home from that country, while the woman and her 84-year-old husband, who was diagnosed with pneumonia, remained behind for treatment.

The virus has infected more than 71,000 people globally and killed more than 1,770, with the vast majority of the cases in China, where the outbreak began two months ago.

The dispersal around the world of passengers from the ship with possible exposure to the virus has sparked concern.

"I think now given that there is a confirmed case that is suspected to have acquired infection on board the ship, the other passengers should be asked to quarantine themselves at home and alert health authorities if they develop fever or respiratory symptoms within the 14 days since disembarkation," said Professor Benjamin Cowling from the



School of Public Health at Hong Kong University.

Dr. Gagandeep Kang, executive director of India's Translational Health Science and Technology Institute, said it is unclear whether the woman's infection would result in an outbreak in another part of the world.

"We will have to wait and see," she said, adding that it would depend on where the woman got the infection, and at what stage of the infection she was in while in contact with other people.

The ship's operator, Holland America Line, said in a statement Monday that Cambodian health officials were on board the ship testing the 255 guests and 747 crew who were awaiting clearance, and that guests currently staying at a Phnom Penh hotel had all been tested.

"At this time, no other guests or crew on board or at the hotel have reported any symptoms of the illness. Guests who have already returned home will be contacted by their local health department

and provided further information," it said.

The statement pointed out that the American woman who tested positive in Malaysia was not one of the 20 people on board the Westerdam who had reported to the ship's medical center during the cruise. All of those 20 have tested negative for the virus, it said.

The rest of the passengers and crew had health checks that included filling out a written health questionnaire and having their temperatures checked, which has become standard procedure for air and sea passengers considered at risk.

Several Westerdam passengers from the United States and elsewhere have already returned home and spoken to the media.

Two of the passengers, Joseph Schaeffer and his wife, Paulette, a retired nurse, told the Las Vegas Review-Journal from their home in Henderson, Nevada, that they felt the hue and cry over the released passengers was not totally merited.

"It doesn't seem to me that the whole world should be jumping at this," Joseph Schaeffer said.

"There are more deaths from the flu than there have been from this particular virus," his wife said.

The couple said they were screened on their way home at airports in Phnom Penh and Singapore by thermal scanners that remotely monitor arriving passengers.

On arrival in Los Angeles, they said, they were among a large crowd getting screened that included fellow cruise passengers. They said they answered questions given by someone from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that included whether they felt sick, had visited mainland China or knew anyone who had contracted the virus.

Two Canadians who returned via Vancouver International Airport were asked to put on protective face masks on arrival but were not otherwise isolated, Canada's CBC News reported.



# Imran warns of refugee crisis due to Indian govt's policies

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday warned that Pakistan may face another refugee crisis if the international community failed to take notice of the current situation in India.

Speaking at the two-day refugee summit in Islamabad on 40 years of hosting Afghan refugees in Pakistan, he said India's "ultranationalist ideology going unchecked could lead to destruction and the region could become a flash-point". The Express Tribune quoted him as saying.

He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement that India can destroy Pakistan in 11 days is not a responsible statement by a huge population, the paper reported. Khan made the statement in the presence of visiting UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, who was also attending the summit.

He said because of the "Hindutva" ideology, Kashmiris have been lockdown for over 200 days. He alleged under the same ideology, the BJP-led government passed two discriminatory nationalistic legislations, targeting 200 million Muslims in India.

Khan was referring to India's Citizenship Amendment Act and the revocation of the



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (centre) talks with Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi during the Refugee Summit attended by Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan (right) in Islamabad on Monday. Guterres is on a three-day visit to meet with country's top leadership and attend an international conference to recognize 40 years of Afghans living as refugees.

special status to Jammu and Kashmir. The new citizenship law passed by the Indian Parliament in December 2019 offers citizenship to non-Muslim persecuted religious minorities from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

The Indian government has maintained that the CAA is an internal matter of the country and stressed that the goal is to protect the oppressed minorities of neighbouring

countries. India revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status on August 5. Reacting to India's move, Pakistan downgraded diplomatic ties with New Delhi and expelled the Indian High Commissioner.

India has always maintained that Jammu and Kashmir is its integral part and ruled out any third party mediation, including either from the UN or the US, saying it is a bilateral issue with Pakistan.

Khan said if the international community does not take notice of this situation, it will create another refugee crisis for Pakistan as Muslims of India will move to Pakistan.

"This is not the India of Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi. The United Nations (UN) must play its role otherwise it will become a very big problem in the future," Duniya News quoted Khan as saying.

# Pak no longer a 'safe haven' for terror groups, claims PM

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

There are no "safe havens" for terror groups in Pakistan "right now", Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Monday while acknowledging publicly that it was possibly not the case earlier.

Addressing an international conference marking 40 years of hosting Afghan refugees in the country, he said Pakistan seeks peace in Afghanistan and instability in the war-torn neighbouring country was not in its interest.

Khan's assertion on terror safe havens came as the Financial Action Task Force, the global anti-money laundering watchdog, began a crucial meeting in Paris where Pakistan is trying to wriggle out of being blacklisted for not doing enough to combat terror financing.

The United States, India and Afghanistan have long accused Pakistan of providing safe havens to terror groups like the Taliban, the Haqqani network, the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed. "I can tell you that there are no safe havens here," Khan said at a conference here, also

attended by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

"Whatever the situation might have been in the past, right now, I can tell you... there is one thing we want: peace in Afghanistan," Khan said. He admitted that it was possible that such safe havens were operating in the country after 9/11 in the Afghan refugee camps. The News reported.

"How is the government capable of checking how militants operate from the camps," Khan said, adding that it was not possible because the Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan have had a population of over 100,000.

Prime Minister Khan's assertion came after Afghanistan's second vice president, Sarwar Danish accused Pakistan of allowing the Taliban to recruit new fighters from Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan to launch attacks in his country.

While Pakistan cannot fully guarantee that no Taliban militants are hiding among the huge number of Afghans living in Pakistan, Khan said his government had done all it can to prevent attacks in Afghanistan, including by

building a border fence.

The whole country is on the same page in Afghanistan, he said, adding that previously it was said that the government and the country's security forces were not on the same page. However, this was not the case now, he said.

He highlighted that Pakistan was not seeking peace in Afghanistan because it has been hosting 1.4 million Afghan refugees, but because the people of Afghanistan deserve peace.

Earlier, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres in his address stated that the people of Pakistan for 40 years have responded with generosity in hosting the Afghan refugees.

"Even though major conflict has erupted in some other part of the world; Pakistan is still the second largest refugee host. I am struck by the extraordinary solidarity and compassion," he said.

At the same time, he urged the international community to step up support for Pakistan in tackling the problem of Afghan refugees. "The global community must step up," Guterres said.

# Body of Pak reporter found hours after he went missing

AP ■ KARACHI

The body of a Pakistani journalist was found dumped in a canal just hours after he went missing while on his way to work, police said Monday.

His family said he was brutally killed but that they have no idea who was behind the slaying.

The 56-year-old Aziz Memon had worked as a reporter and cameraman for a local TV station in southwestern Sindh province. He went missing while going to work on Sunday. Police chief Mohammad Farooq said the body was found in a canal in Mehrabpur village and that an investigation was under way. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the abduction and killing of Memon.

His brother, Abdul Hafeez, said Memon had received threats last year after reporting that a politician from the area had paid bribe money to locals to attend an opposition rally.

The International Federation of Journalists and its affiliate, the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, have asked the government to investigate.

# Gunmen kill 24 in attack near church in Burkina Faso

AP ■ OUAGADOUGOU

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

The mayor of Boundou commune, Sihanri Osangola Brigadie, said the attack occurred in the town of Pansy in Yagha province. The roughly 20 attackers separated men from women close to a Protestant church. At least 10 other people were injured.

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

Both Christians and Muslims were killed before the church was set on fire, said a government security official in Dori who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak to the media.

Attacks have targeted reli-

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

Extremist violence has dramatically escalated in once-peaceful Burkina Faso. Analysts are concerned that attacks against civilians, including against Christians, are increasing "at an alarming rate," said Corinne Dufka, West Africa director for Human Rights Watch. "Perpetrators use victims' links to government or

their faith to justify the killings, while others appear to be reprisal killings for killings by the government security forces," she said.

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

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

# UAE issues reactor licence for first Arab nuclear power plant

AFF ■ ABU DHABI

The United Arab Emirates said Monday it has issued a licence for a reactor at its Barakah nuclear power plant, the first in the Arab world, hailing it as a "historic moment".

The UAE has substantial energy reserves, but with a power-hungry population of 10 million it has made huge investments in developing alternative power sources including solar.

The Barakah plant, located on the Gulf coast west of Abu Dhabi, had been due to come online in late 2017 but faced a number of delays that officials attributed to safety and regulatory requirements.

But the national nuclear regulator has now approved the operating licence for the first of four reactors at the plant, said Hamad al-Kaabi, the UAE rep-

resentative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

"This is a historic moment for the UAE, making it the first Arab country in the region to operate a nuclear power plant," Kaabi told a press conference.

"This milestone was achieved due to the UAE's vision and its leadership to build a peaceful nuclear energy programme to cater for the future needs of energy in the country." The plant is a regional first — Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, has said it plans to build up to 16 nuclear reactors, but the project has yet to materialise.

Abu Dhabi authorities said in January that the plant would start operating within a few months. No new date was given on Monday but Kaabi indicated it would happen soon. "The full operation of

Barakah plant in the near future will contribute to the UAE's efforts for development and sustainability," he said, adding that the operator would "undertake a period of commissioning to prepare for commercial operation".

The plant is being built by a consortium led by the Korea Electric Power Corporation at a cost of some USD 2.4 billion.

When fully operational, the four reactors have the capacity to generate 5,600 megawatts of electricity, around 25 percent of the nation's needs. The remaining three reactors are almost ready for operation.

The Barakah plant is situated on the Emirates coast, separated from Iran by the troubled Gulf waters. It is just 50 kilometers (30 miles) from the border of Saudi Arabia, and is closer to the Qatari capital Doha than it is to Abu Dhabi.

Amid a tense confrontation between Iran and the United States over Tehran's nuclear programme, the UAE has said it will not be developing an uranium enrichment programme or nuclear reprocessing technologies.

But relations between Iran and the UAE, a staunch US ally, have deteriorated as Washington pursues a "maximum pressure" policy against Tehran and accuses it of attacking oil tankers in Gulf waters.

The UAE has repeatedly said its nuclear ambitions were for "peaceful purposes" and moved to dispel any concerns over safety. It says it has welcomed more than 40 international missions and reviews from the IAEA and World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO) since 2010, as proof of its commitment to transparency.

# Locust-hit Pak may import insecticides from India

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Reeling under a major locust attack, Pakistan may allow a one-time exemption to import insecticides from India despite the trade ban which was imposed after New Delhi revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir in August last, according to a media report on Monday.

Importing insecticides from India will be discussed during the Pakistan federal Cabinet's meeting on Tuesday, the Dawn News reported.

Pakistan is facing its worst locust attack in decades, after insects destroyed crops on a large scale in Punjab province, the country's main region for agricultural production.

In a meeting earlier in the month, Prime Minister Imran Khan declared the locust attack a national emergency.

The meeting, which was attended by federal ministers and senior officials of the four provinces, also approved a National Action Plan that requires a sum of Rs 7.3 billion to overcome the crisis.

Other topics to be discussed by the Cabinet on Tuesday include gas pricing and power bill mandates for getting the International Monetary Fund's next tranche of funds of USD 450 million, the report said.

The Pakistan government considering the import of insecticides from India comes seven months after Islamabad on August 9 decided to suspend all trade ties with India following New Delhi's decision to abrogate Article 370 on August 5, revoking the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan also expelled the Indian High Commission in Islamabad.

# Trudeau cancels trip over Canada pipeline protests

AFF ■ MONTREAL

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau canceled an official visit to the Caribbean at the last minute due to indigenous protests that have paralysed railways in eastern Canada for more than a week, his office said Sunday.

Following a tour of Africa and Europe, which wrapped up on Friday, Trudeau was scheduled to visit Barbados on Monday and Tuesday as part of Canada's bid for a seat on the UN Security Council.

"The Prime Minister will no longer attend the CARICOM Intersessional Heads of Government Meeting this week," his office said in a statement. Foreign minister Francois-Philippe Champagne will go in his place.

Trudeau called for a crisis meeting Monday morning with

the ministers of finance, public safety, transport and indigenous services, among others, to try and find a peaceful solution.

The prime minister has been criticized by the opposition for his repeated absences while protesters have blocked roads, rails and ports across the country and occupied government offices in a bid to "shut down Canada".

Canadian National Railway (CN), the third largest railroad in North America, moves an estimated Canadian dollar 250 billion (USD 190 billion) worth of goods across Canada each year.

The demonstrators support certain leaders of the indigenous Wet'suwet'en First Nations people, who are fighting construction of the Coastal GasLink natural gas pipeline through their traditional lands in westernmost Canada.

The pipeline is part of a Canadian dollar 40 billion natural gas export project that also includes a new Pacific coast terminal.

Indigenous Services Minister Marc Miller visited one of the roadblocks in Ontario on Saturday. He spent all day talking with protesters and Mohawk First Nation officials.

He said the discussions had produced modest progress, but no blockades were lifted.

Several authority figures, including Conservative opposition leader Andrew Scheer, have called for law enforcement to intervene and lift the blockades, but Trudeau's administration has rejected this option.

The ongoing protests are an important test for Trudeau's efforts for reconciliation with First Nations people, which he has said is a priority.

# Storm Dennis wreaks havoc across UK, parts of France

AFF ■ LONDON

Britain on Monday began to clear up after Storm Dennis battered the country over the weekend, leading the government's weather agency to issue a rare "danger to life" warning amid widespread flooding and high winds.

Hundreds of flood warnings remained in place, including five "severe" warnings around the River Teme in Worcestershire in western England, after more than a month's worth of rain fell in 48 hours in some parts of Britain.

A record 594 warnings and alerts had been put in place on Sunday, extending from Scotland's River Tweed to Cornwall in southwest England, while major incidents were declared in South Wales and parts of western England due to flooding.

The storm also battered much of France, with some 20,000 people still without electricity on Monday after suffering power cuts in the northwest of the country and rail traffic disrupted.

In south Wales, the government's weather agency issued a rare red warning, saying there was a risk of "significant impacts from flooding"



that included a "danger to life from fast flowing water, extensive flooding to property and road closures". Pictures circulated on social media showed the nearby River Taff bursting its banks, while rescue workers rushed to reach people trapped in their homes in Powys.

Police said a man in his 60s died after entering the River Tawe, north of the Welsh city Swansea, but later clarified that the death was not "linked to the adverse weather".

Winds of over 90 miles (150 kilometres) per hour were recorded in Aberdaron, south

Wales.

In northern England, the government deployed the army to help deal with the situation.

Environment Secretary George Eustice, visiting York, said the government had done "everything that we can do with a significant sum of money" to combat increased flooding.

Britain were badly affected by the downpours and winds, having barely recovered from a similar storm last week.

The defence ministry deployed troops in West Yorkshire, northern England, which suffered badly from flooding caused by last weekend's Storm Ciara.

"Our armed forces are always ready to support local authorities and communities whenever they need it," said defence minister Ben Wallace.

British Airways and easyJet confirmed they had grounded flights, with footage posted online showing a massive Airbus A380 jet being blown about as it attempted to land.

Earlier, two bodies were pulled from rough seas off the south England coast on Saturday as the storm barreled in. One of the men is assumed to have been the subject of a search triggered when an LPG tanker reported that one of its crew was unaccounted for.

France was also affected by the storm, especially north-western Brittany where the Finistere and Morbihan regions were temporarily placed on orange alert for rain and flooding, according to the national weather service, Meteo-France.

# Trump threatens intelligence block over Huawei

Washington (AFP): The United States' ambassador to Germany said Sunday that President Donald Trump had threatened to cut off intelligence-sharing with countries that dealt with Chinese tech firm Huawei.

Washington has been pressing allies to ban Huawei, one of the world's largest

tech firms, from next-generation 5G mobile data networks, saying it is a security risk.

Ambassador Richard Grenell said Trump "instructed me to make clear that any nation who chooses to use an untrustworthy 5G vendor will jeopardize our ability to share intelligence and information

at the highest level."

Grenell said on Twitter that the president had called him on Sunday from Air Force One, the presidential plane, to convey the message.

Key US allies in Europe, notably Britain and France, have said they will not ban Huawei from building 5G networks but will impose restric-

tions.

Publicly, the US has been restrained in its response, but Trump was reportedly furious with London.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told the Munich Security Conference on Saturday that Huawei was a "Trojan horse for Chinese intelligence."



BeSmart

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



DOCYARD

DR ARUN KUMAR VERMA

Senior Oncologist

MAX HOSPITAL,  
NEW DELHI



Oral cancer can be prevented

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

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

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

**While, there is no proven way to prevent mouth cancer, one can reduce the risk. See the dentist regularly. Ask him to inspect the entire mouth for abnormal areas that may indicate cancer or precancerous changes**

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

Treatment:

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

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

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

WARMFOODS

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

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

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

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



BELLY OH BELLY

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

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

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

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

Better safe than sorry

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bacteria can also grow rapidly when foods such as meats, dairy products, and sauces are not kept at the right temperature. The bacteria and other harmful organisms can produce poisonous substances that cause inflammation of the intestines when eaten. Symptoms can vary depending on the source of the infection. Common cases of food poisoning will typically include at least three of the following symptoms — abdominal cramps, diarrhoea, vomiting, loss of appetite, mild fever, weakness, nausea and headaches.

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

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

DadiKaKehna

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

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



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

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

There is a reason why everyone suggests a saltwater gargle. Make a saltwater solution by putting half a teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water. Just like salt, lemons, which are packed with Vitamin C help to boost the immune system and give it more power to fight infection. Mix one teaspoon of lemon juice into a glass of warm water and drink for quick relief. They say prevention is better than cure. If you sense a sore throat coming, dilute one-two tablespoons of apple cider vinegar in one cup of water and gargle with it. Do this on an hourly basis. Do drink plenty of water in between the gargling sessions.



TIPTOP

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

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

Speaking on cervical cancer, Dr Amita Naithani, Consultant — Gynae Oncology, RGCIRC argued in favour of early screening of cervical cancer which can be easily

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

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

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

SLIMLINE

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

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

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

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

SECRET TO GOOD SLEEP

A safe, non-toxic mattress determines whether your child sleeps well.

PANKAJ GUPTA tells you things to look out for

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

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

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

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

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

- Side Sleepers: If your child sleeps on their side, they need a little more cushion to reduce tension and pressure on their developing skeletal system. Check out the Naturepedic Verse with encased coil support if your child is older or a side sleeper. You can also get a quilted mattress pad to provide extra comfort.
- Tummy Sleepers: For kids who sleep on their stomachs, a firm mattress is important to help reduce pressure on the back and shoulders.
- Back Sleepers: If your big kid sleeps on their back, this is the best position for spinal health! Medium or cushion firm support is great for back sleepers, but remember that kids need a little more firmness than adults.

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

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

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

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

The writer is Director, RP Foam Home India Pvt Ltd

STUDYCENTRE

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

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

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

Trend Blazer

Kangana's first look as pilot released

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

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

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



'It's my dream to become India's pop icon. That dream is going to be fulfilled through non-film songs. It also gives me a chance to feature in my own videos and the song is associated to my face and name instead of being a voice for someone else's face. I have never let success get into my head. I think that's how a person can grow.'

—Dhvani Bhanushali

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



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

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

I smell like a crayon: Robert

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

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

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

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



ONE LOVE IS ALL WE NEED

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

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

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

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

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

What inspired the collection?

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



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

ship and design at their highest level.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Photo: Pankaj Kumar



The show must go on

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Cameras flashed as the Beckham family turned out in style to support Spice Girl-turned-designer Victoria Beckham, who staged her catwalk show at central London's grand Banqueting Hall. Her sons Romeo and Cruz shared the front row with father and former soccer star David Beckham, while 8-year-old Harper got a comfy seat in her father's lap.

On the catwalk, models wore checked shirts, smart tailored coats, culottes and velvet blazers, all paired with skin-tight, thigh-high leather boots in shades from blue to bright red. Beckham said "we're using the boot to throw things off in a little bit of a strange way."

Elsewhere, French designer Roland Mouret turned to 1980s London under Margaret Thatcher for inspiration. There were double-breasted blazers, exaggerated shoulders and androgynous suits; a sugary pink boxy blazer, worn with matching culottes, stood out in a mostly austere palette of greys, khakis and monochrome.

The fashion industry has come under increasing scrutiny from green groups, and Mouret — who counts Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, among his celebrity fans — was keen to respond to calls for more transparent and environmentally-friendly practices. Sustainable fashion "is at the heart of my collection in a time where the process of creating clothes carries with it a personal responsibility," he said, and emphasised that he aimed for the brand to be carbon neutral within the year.



SOCIAL MEDIA WAR ON FILMFARE

The latest Filmfare Awards had disappointed some netizens. People have taken to social media to express their dissatisfaction with the winners and #BoycottFilmfareAwards has been trending on Twitter since Monday.

Some argue that the earthy song of the pro-Right *Kesari* should have been chosen over *Gully Boy*, which celebrates protest poetry against social inequity, others cried nepotism. Luckily, the war played out in social media that allows a democracy of opinions. Unluckily, it also gave vent to political biases.

While fans tweeted their ire, lyricist Manoj Muntashir declared that he is heartbroken over not winning an award for penning the heart-wrenching track *Teri Mitti* from *Kesari*. He took to Twitter to announce that he would not be attending any award ceremonies for the rest of his life. Manoj penned an emotional note, "Dear Awards, even if I try all my life, I won't be able to write a better line than *Tu Kehti Thee Tera Chaand Hoon Main Aur Chaand Humesha Rahta Hai*. You failed to honour the words which made millions of Indians cry and care for their motherland. It would be a great disrespect to my art if I still continue caring for you. So here I bid you a final good bye. I officially announce that I

won't attend any award show till I breathe my last. *Avida*."

Netizens came up in support of him because *Teri Mitti* is a song that touched hearts of almost all Bollywood buffs, especially due to its lyrics. Commenting on his post, a user wrote, "@filmfare and @jiteshpillai, you literally killed faith of many Indians and lyricist by not giving award to #TeriMitti. This song is best of the decade."

The mood has been similar for many fans. Accusing the awards of propagating nepotism and awarding actors and filmmakers who are star kids, a user wrote, "They have to promote betis some renowned people Akhtar, Bhatt and Pandey. Nepotism rules in Bollywood. It's so sad that quality cinema does not matter. #BoycottFilmfareAwards."

Another user wrote, "Worst filmfare awards. Some splendid films were ignored. It was never expected from such a jury. Was it only to please the boss Karan Johar or Ranveer Singh. *Teri Mitti* song, *Super 30* film ignored. #BoycottFilmfareAwards. Another tweet reads, "#BoycottFilmfareAwards they simply ignored Sushant Singh Rajput who gave two powerful performances in *Sonchirya* and *Chhichhore*. The songs of these films are far better than *Gully Boy*."

# ITALY RECEIVE NEW SMS

Lazio topple Inter 2-1 to go 2nd behind Juventus

AFP ■ ROME

Lazio coach Simone Inzaghi gave warning his side are ready to fight for their first Serie A title since 2000 after moving into second in Serie A on Sunday, just one point off leaders Juventus after a come-from-behind 2-1 win over Inter Milan at Stadio Olimpico.

Juventus reclaimed pole position thanks to Paulo Dybala and Juan Cuadrado's goals as the Turin giants rediscovered their winning form 2-0 at home against Brescia.

Inter Milan dropped from top spot to third — three points behind the eight-time reigning champions — after falling to just their second defeat of the season.

"We need to stay humble and focused but I'm sure we will succeed. We have nothing to lose," said Inzaghi.

"We know that Juventus and Inter are two great teams and we will do everything to fight to the end, knowing that it will be very difficult."

In a fiery clash in the Stadio Olimpico defender Ashley Young broke through just before the break with his first Serie A goal for Inter Milan after his move from Manchester United.

The 34-year-old got his foot to tap-in off a rebound after Thomas Strakosha had cleared from former Lazio player Antonio Candreva.



Sergej Milinkovic-Savic celebrates with Lazio teammate Lucas Leiva after scoring his side's second goal AP



Ciro Immobile scores Lazio's opener against Inter Milan from penalty spot at Stadio Olimpico AP

A Stefan de Vrij foul on **CIRO** Immobile allowed the Serie A top scorer to slot in his 26th goal in 24 games this season, five minutes after the break.

Sergej Milinkovic-Savic snatched the winner after 69 minutes amid confusion in front of goal.

"We gifted Lazio two goals," said Inter coach Antonio Conte as the northerners fell to their second defeat after Juventus in October.

Lazio extended their unbeaten run to 19 games as they target their second Scudetto, with a return to Champions League football on the cards for next season.

## MERTENS LIFTS NAPOLI

In Sardinia, Napoli got back to winning ways with a Dries Mertens' 65th-minute goal sealing a 1-0 success over Cagliari.

The Belgian completed a give-and-go with Elseid Hysaj with the ball curling in with a deflection off the post.

It was the 32-year-old's 120th goal for Napoli, one short of Marek Hamsik's all-time record, and five ahead of club legend Diego Maradona.

"Dries is a phenomenon, a champion who makes difficult things seem simple," said coach Gennaro Gattuso. Gattuso's side overtake Cagliari, moving up to eighth.

## Dortmund defence key against PSG



AFP ■ DORTMUND

Borussia Dortmund coach Lucien Favre says how his team defend against Paris Saint-Germain stars such as Neymar and Kylian Mbappe will be the deciding factor in today's Champions League clash.

Dortmund host PSG in the last 16, first leg at Signal Iduna Park.

"They're a dangerous team," Favre said in Dortmund on Monday.

"When you lose the ball, they move very fast up front. The key will be how we defend."

"It's important that we're very strong on winning the ball and then, when in possession, that we stay calm."

Under former Dortmund coach Thomas Tuchel, PSG are looking to break their last-16 jinx having failed to progress past the first knock-out stage for the last three seasons.

Dortmund are looking to emulate their run to the 2013 Champions League final and have some serious attacking prowess of their own.

New signing Erling Braut Haaland, 19, has scored nine goals in six

games and forged a successful partnership with England winger Jadon Sancho, also 19.

The teenagers are set to lead Dortmund's attack with Germany pair Marco Reus and Julian Brandt both out injured.

Dortmund's Belgian midfielder Axel Witsel has positive memories from his last game against Neymar — in the quarter-finals of the

## Neymar returns from injury

AFP ■ DORTMUND

Neymar has been named in the Paris Saint-Germain squad for today's Champions League last-16 first leg at Borussia Dortmund, despite missing the French club's last four games through injury.

The world's most expensive player has been struggling with a

rib problem, but was expected to be fit in time for the game at Signal Iduna Park.

The Brazilian missed last season's surprise last-16 loss to Manchester United with a foot injury, while he also sat out the second leg of the defeat at the same stage of the competition by Real Madrid in 2018.

"If he plays, we'll have to pay attention to him, but not only to him, because Paris has a lot of qualities in attack."

"We'll have to be very compact, we'll have to defend together as a team and be very strong."

2018 World Cup. "It's a good memory because we (Belgium) won (2-1), but tomorrow (Tuesday) will be different," he said.

"If he plays, we'll have to pay attention to him, but not only to him, because Paris has a lot of qualities in attack."

"We'll have to be very compact, we'll have to defend together as a team and be very strong."

in the quarter-finals of the

## Celta put brake on Real

AFP ■ MADRID

Real Madrid's winning streak ended when they conceded a late goal to draw 2-2 at home to Celta Vigo and finish the weekend with their lead over Barcelona down to one point.

Real manager Zinedine Zidane was philosophical. "There's nothing to explain, it's just the way things are, it's football," he said.

"I'm not worried about it, but I'm disappointed, as always when you drop two points at home."

On Sunday they welcomed back Eden Hazard, who had been out since November. Coach Zinedine Zidane also recalled his other 100 million euro player Gareth Bale to complete an all-star attack with Karim Benzema.

Yet Celta leapt into the lead after seven minutes. A pass from Iago Aspas sent Fedor Smolov galloping clear up the middle and he shot low past Thibaut Courtois.

"There were mistakes, especially for the first goal," said Zidane. "We were not well positioned, it happens, and it'll happen to us again."

Real levelled in the 52nd minute, Marcelo, not for the first time, found space on the left. His low cross deflected to Toni Kroos following the attack. The German drilled in the equaliser. It was the sixth straight season Kroos had scored against Celta.

In the 65th minute, goalkeeper Ruben



Sergio Ramos celebrates after scoring from spot AP

Blanco pulled down the impressive Hazard. Ramos slammed the penalty into the bottom corner of the net.

However Celta responded by rediscovering their attacking nerve.

With four minutes left, a sharp pass from Denis Suarez, who had come on in the 71st minute, caught the Real back four rigid on the edge of their own area. Santi Mina, who had been on for just two minutes, raced onto the ball and drilled a shot past Courtois.

AGENCIES

## Boult back for India Tests

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Fit-again senior pacer Trent Boult has been named in the 13-member New Zealand squad for the first Test against India starting at Basin Reserve on February 21.

According to a media release issued by New Zealand Cricket, the 6 feet 8 inch giant pacer Kyle Jamieson, who made his ODI debut against India in the recent series, has also earned his call up in the Test squad, which will have slow left-arm orthodox Ajaz Patel as the only spinner.

Boult's comeback is a big boost for the New Zealand side as he missed the entire limited overs leg due to a fractured right hand.

"It's terrific to have Trent back with us and we're looking forward to the energy and experience he adds to the group alongside his obvious class with the ball in hand," head coach and chief selector Gary Stead said.

Jamieson, on the other hand, has been included in a pre-series Test squad for the first time.

"Kyle will offer us a point of difference with the bounce he could extract on what is traditionally a good surface in Wellington," Stead said.

Mumbai-born Patel was chosen over leg-spinner Ish Sodhi because of his consistency.

"We're excited to welcome back Ajaz (Patel) who has done a great job for us overseas and has a

proven domestic record in New Zealand conditions," the coach said.

Daryl Mitchell of Northern Districts is also in the squad as a batting all-rounder.

"Daryl showed his batting prowess in his Test debut against England in Hamilton and he naturally offers us great versatility with the different roles he can play," Stead said.

Tom Blundell will continue to open the batting along side Tom Latham following his breakthrough century in Melbourne.

The Wellington Test will also be Ross Taylor's 100th Test, joining ranks with his former teammates Brendon McCullum, Daniel Vettori and Stephen Fleming.

Taylor will become the first cricketer in the world to complete 100 games across three international formats.

"To play 100 Tests for your country is an incredible achievement and a testament to his work ethic and complete professionalism," Stead said of Taylor.

"We have received a list of 44 applicants and we should have the two selectors appointed by the end of New Zealand tour," Lal said, referring to the ongoing tour, which will end on March 5 after a two-Test series starting Friday.

The national selection panel also includes Devang Gandhi, Jatin Paranjpe and Sarandeep Singh, all of who have one more year left in their tenure.

"Out of the applications, how many applicants we will call for the interview is not yet decided," he added.

The applicants include former India pacers Ajit Agarkar and Venkatesh Prasad among others.

"There are big names in the list but it is not about that. It is about best picking the right man for the job and that will be our focus. Also there is no word yet from BCCI on whether to continue with zonal policy or not," Lal said.

## It's going to be very big if we win T20 WC: Harman

PTI ■ SYDNEY

The void left by legends such as Mithali Raj and Jhulan Goswami is not easy to fill, India captain Harmanpreet Kaur conceded on Monday but also asserted that her young side has grown substantially to be a top contender for this month's women's T20 World Cup.

Mithali retired from T20 cricket last year while Goswami previously played in the format before the 2018 edition. The average age of India's squad in Australia is 22.8 with Harmanpreet being among the seasoned ones.

"We already miss the experience they share with us, but these young girls and showing their talent and ability," said the 29-year-old, while speaking at the captains' media day at Taronga Zoo.

The ICC Women's T20 World Cup will open with a mouth-watering



The captains of the 10 countries participating in the Women's T20 World Cup pose for a photo AP

clash between India and defending champions and hosts Australia in Adelaide on February 21.

"In the last two years...I've gone from being the youngest one to one of the oldest in the team," she said.

"They (her teammates) never show us that they're young, they can always do what we expect of them. The team is looking in really good shape and showing what they can do with extra responsibility," she added.

She is still not over the disappointment of missing the ODI world title in 2017 and Harmanpreet said the T20 World Cup trophy would go a long way in making up for that debacle.

"Our team is growing day by day, everyone is looking so positive," Harmanpreet said.

"It's going to be very big if we win, I was very surprised at all the reaction from 2017. My parents didn't tell me, they didn't want us to feel the pressure. If we win, it's going to be very big for us. We will try to give our best."

Harmanpreet is well aware of what a long run in an ICC tournament can do for her country.

"Over the last two years, we have already had a few games as part of the Women's T20 Challenge and this year we are looking forward to more," said the aggressive batter, who became the first Indian cricketer to join an overseas league by signing up with Women's Big Bash League side Sydney Thunder in 2016.

"If we win the World Cup, there's no doubt things will change. That tournament would bring a lot of confidence to the girls.

"If we get a women's IPL that will be really good for us. If we win the World Cup, it's going to be very big for us as a team, so we will try to give our best," she said.

## Faf quits as SA captain



Faf du Plessis & Mark Boucher CSA/Twitter

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

Senior batsman Faf du Plessis on Monday stepped down as captain of South Africa's Test and T20 teams with immediate effect, citing "the

need to facilitate the emergence of next generation of leaders."

The 35-year-old Du Plessis, who stepped aside from the ODI captaincy to make way for Quinton de Kock during the recent series against England, said he took the decision to help South Africa start a new era.

"In a perfect world I would have loved to lead the team in the Tests for the rest of the season as well as the T20 World Cup," du Plessis said in a statement.

"But sometimes the most important attribute of a leader is to be selfless. I am healthy, fit, energised and motivated and certainly see myself playing an important role in the squad for as long as I continue putting in winning performances for the team," he added.

"As the team heads into a new direction with new leaders and a young crop of players, I feel it will be in the best interests of South African cricket to relinquish the captaincy in

all formats."

Du Plessis termed the decision as one of the toughest but said he remains fully committed to help de Kock in the transition phase.

"This was one of the toughest decisions to make, but I remain fully committed to supporting Quinton, Mark (Boucher) and my teammates as we continue to rebuild and re-align as a group," said the 35-year-old.

## RABADA RETURN FOR T20s

Faf du Plessis and fast bowler Kagiso Rabada will return to the South African squad for a three-match T20I series against Australia, starting at the Wanderers on Friday.

Fast bowler Anrich Nortje, one of South Africa's successes in a losing Test series, has also been included in the squad.

Temba Bavuma's selection is dependent on a scan of his right hamstring after he was injured during final match against England.

## SINGLES

### KOHLI SLIPS TO 10TH IN T20 RANKINGS

**DUBAI:** India skipper Virat Kohli slipped to the 10th position but KL Rahul and Rohit Sharma remained static at the second and 11th place respectively in the latest ICC T20I rankings. Batting mainstay Kohli (673 points) dropped down as England captain Eoin Morgan (687), who scored 136 runs including two fifties against South Africa moved to the ninth place.

### CASILLAS TO RUN FOR RFEF PRESIDENCY

**MADRID:** Spain's World Cup-winning captain Iker Casillas confirmed he will run for the presidency of Spanish Football Federation (RFEF). The date of the election has not yet been decided but Casillas said he has informed his current club Porto of his decision, with the 38-year-old now expected to retire from playing the game. "Yes, I will run for the presidency of the RFEF when the elections are called," Casillas wrote. "Together we will put our federation at the top of the best football in the world, the football of Spain."

### HARSIMRAN INVITED TO NBA GLOBAL ACADEMY

**NEW DELHI:** India's Harsimran Kaur has been invited to participate in a multi-week training camp at The NBA Global Academy at Basketball Australia's Centre of Excellence in Canberra. The training camp started on Monday and will end on March 3. This will be her second stint at the NBA Global Academy after attending a camp from November 7 to 24 last year.

### INDIA WILL HOST FIH JR MEN'S WC IN 2021

**LAUSANNE:** International Hockey Federation (FIH) on Monday announced India as the hosts for next year's junior men's World Cup. This is the second time that India will be hosting the prestigious tournament, having staged it in Lucknow in 2016, where the hosts lifted the coveted trophy. FIH said that the competition will be played towards the end of 2021 but exact venue and dates for the tournament will be announced at a later stage. The junior men's World Cup will see 16 teams compete for the title, out of which six will be from Europe, four from Asia, including hosts India, two from Africa, two from Oceania and two from Pan America.

### JR WEIGHTLIFTERS WIN 5 SILVER, 6 BRONZE

**NEW DELHI:** India claimed five Silver and six Bronze medals at the ongoing 2020 Asian Youth & Junior Weightlifting Championships in Tashkent. KVL Pavan Kumar (45kg) won Silver medals in both youth girls and junior women section, while Sidhanta Gogoi (61kg) claimed Silver in youth boys and junior men events after lifting a total of 145 and 269kgs respectively. Mukund Aher (49kg) then clinched a Silver in youth boys category with a lift of 189kgs. Harshada Goud (45kg) clinched two Bronze medals with a lift of 139kgs in youth girls and junior women sections. Other lifters to win Bronze medals are Boni Manghky (55kg), Ch Nirmala Devi (59kg), S Gurunaidu (49kg) and Golom Tinku (55kg).

### TOKYO MARATHON CANCELLED FOR 38K RUNNERS

**TOKYO:** Organisers said on Monday they are cancelling the amateur portion of the Tokyo marathon, affecting around 38,000 runners, on fears about the spread of the new coronavirus in Japan. "We reached the conclusion that unfortunately it is difficult to organise the event... After several cases (of the virus) were confirmed in Tokyo," the Tokyo Marathon Foundation said. The decision will not affect elite runners, including elite wheelchair participants, the organisers said. But they only account for around 200 of the tens of thousands of people who had registered for the March 1 race.

### MAREGA WALKS OFF AFTER MONKEY CHANTS

**LISBON:** Porto's Mali striker Moussa Marega walked off the pitch in disgust after being subjected to a torrent of monkey chants in a stormy Portuguese league game at Vitoria Guimaraes on Sunday. The 28-year-old had scored a 60th-minute winner for Porto against his former club which sparked the home fans to aim even more vitriol at the France-born player which had started as early as the pre-match warm-up. In the 71st minute, Marega signalled to the bench that he was walking off in protest even though teammates, Porto coach Sergio Conceicao and Vitoria players tried to get him to stay on the pitch. As he walked off, an angry and upset Marega gave a thumbs-down signal with both gloved hands to the home fans.

# PUNIA, VINESH LEAD INDIAN CHALLENGE

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Defending champion Bajrang Punia will look to retain his 65kg freestyle title while six-time medalist (3 Silver and Bronze each) Vinesh Phogat will aim to upgrade the 53kg Bronze she won in the 2019 edition at Xi'an, China to Gold when the Asian Wrestling Championship begins here at Indira Gandhi Arena today.

The six-day event at the KD Jadhav Wrestling Stadium will act as a platform for the Indian wrestlers to test their skills against the best in Asia ahead of the Tokyo Olympics.

The championship has been classified as a ranking tournament for the Tokyo game by the United World Wrestling.

Besides Punia and Vinesh, the 30-member India squad will also feature Deepak Punia, Ravi Kumar Dahiya and 2016 Rio Olympic Bronze medalist Shakshi Malik.

Anshu Malik, Ashu and Sonam Malik are the three youngsters who would look to make a mark in the tournament.

The tournament will be played in three categories — men's freestyle, Greco-Roman and women's wrestling. The first two days will see Greco-Roman competition, followed by women's wrestling (next two days) and men's freestyle (last two days).

There was initially uncertainty over the participation of four Pakistani wrestlers and two officials due to political tension but they have been cleared by the government to take part in the championship.

However, a 40-strong Chinese contingent will not be taking part in the championships as they have not been granted visas by the government due to the novel coronavirus outbreak there.

The Senior Asian Championship is returning to India after a gap of two years. India last hosted the championship in 2017. In the 2019 edition, India had won 16 medals, including the lone Gold from Punia in 65kg category.

World No 2 and India's leading medal hope, Punia said, "It is a great opportunity for all



Indian wrestler Bajrang Punia (red) in action during 2019 World Wrestling Championship match in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

PTI/File Picture

Asian Wrestling C'ship  
Live from 11:30am IST  
STAR SPORTS FIRST

of us. We will be playing in front of our home fans. Though to many it might seem as pressure, but I believe it will work as an advantage and I am hopeful that large numbers will be coming in to fill the stands and support us."

Dahiya, who has already qualified for the Olympics courtesy his Bronze medal-winning performance at the 2019 World Championships, echoed Bajrang's feelings.

"We are excited about the tournament. I am personally looking at ensuring that in my weight category I end up winning Gold. 57 kg is a tough weight category and has probably the stiffest competition but



losing is not an option when you are playing in your home ground," he said.

Fresh from her Gold medal at the Ranking Series in Italy, Vinesh is India's brightest medal prospect in the women's category.

"We have a strong contingent in both men and women's category. Asia has a very good set of wrestlers and being the Olympic year everyone will be looking to get as many wins as possible heading to the Tokyo Games. Personally, I am looking at this competition as a launchpad for my upcoming competitions," said Vinesh.

One of the dark horses of the tournament will be Sakshi (65 kg) who has not done anything of note last year. While she is not competing in her regular weight category, she could utilise the tournament to redeem herself.

Sakshi had won a Bronze in 62kg in the last edition.

Apart from the Indians, there will be a number of top international wrestlers as well, like Kenichiro Fumita, Gold medalist at 2019 World Wrestling Championships, and Nurislam Sanayev from Kazakhstan in freestyle.

In Greco-Roman, wrestlers like South Korea's Ryu Han Su

## Coronavirus impact: No entry for Chinese wrestlers in Delhi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chinese wrestlers will not compete in the Asian Championships beginning here today as they have not been granted visas by the government due to the novel coronavirus outbreak there, a top official of the national federation said on Monday.

Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) assistant secretary Vinod Tomar said that the government has denied visas to the 40-strong Chinese contingent.

"We have got to know that the government has not granted visas to the Chinese contingent and so they are not taking part in the Championships," Tomar said. "The world is grappling with the issue of coronavirus and so health of the athletes is the primary concern now. It is understandable why the government has not given visas to them," he added.

(a two-time world champion) and Uzbekistan's Elmurat Tasmuratov (a five-time Asian Championship Gold medalist) will be in action.

Aisuluu Tynybekova of

Asked what could be United World Wrestling's reaction on the denial of visas to the Chinese wrestlers, Tomar said, "We do not see any issues here, it is not something which happens in normal times. We are dealing with a grave health issue facing the world."

"It is not happening just in this championship, other countries have also done the same to Chinese athletes in other sporting events. Moreover, the UWW has not told us anything or given any direction about the Chinese wrestlers in the past week or so."

Talking about the granting of visas to the Pakistani wrestlers, Tomar said, "There could be issues had we not granted visas to the Pakistani wrestlers. So, we tried hard to get it done. But in case of Chinese wrestlers, it is for the health and safety of the participating athletes."

Kyrgyzstan, Gold medalist at 2019 world championships and a three-time Asian Championship winner, will be headlining the women's wrestling category.

## Saina, Srikanth chase Olympic berth

PTI ■ BARCELONA

Seasoned Indian shuttlers Saina Nehwal and Kidambi Srikanth will look to keep their Olympic hopes alive when they compete at the \$170,000 Barcelona Spain Masters starting here today.

The Indian duo has been inconsistent in 2019 and didn't enjoy a good start to the new year.

While Saina has crossed the first round in only one of the three events in 2020, Srikanth has lost in the opening round in all three tournaments that he has played so far this year.

Saina and Srikanth are currently ranked 18th and 15th respectively, while being placed 22nd and 26th in the *Race to Tokyo* rankings, which takes into consideration only the points accumulated from the tournaments played in the last one year.

According to the BWF Olympic qualification rules, only two players from each singles category can qualify if their ranking is within the



top-16 by April end.

Among the Indians, world champion P V Sindhu and B Sai Praneeth and men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have almost secured their berths for the Tokyo Games.

With the Olympic qualification cut-off date ending in April, there are only seven tournaments, including the Barcelona Spain Masters, left in the calendar and the Indian duo will have to produce consistent performances to earn a ticket to Tokyo.

London Bronze-medallist Saina, who is looking to make her fourth Olympics, will begin her campaign here against Germany's Yvonne Li.

Third seed Srikanth, on the other hand, will face fellow Indian Subhankar Dey, who notched up a morale-boosting win over world No 20 Indonesian Shesar Hiren Rhustavito in the Asia Team C'ships on Saturday.

Srikanth, who was also a part of the team in Manila, won two of his singles matches and lost one last week and he would hope to go deep in the draw in the tournament.

## Sania returns to action in Dubai

PTI ■ DUBAI

Indian tennis star Sania Mirza will return to action at the ongoing Dubai Open on Wednesday after recovering from a calf injury which had cut short her campaign at the Australia Open in January.

The 33-year-old Indian will pair up with her French partner Caroline Garcia and they face Russia's Alla Kudryavtseva and Slovenia's Katarina Srebotnik in the opening round of the women's doubles event.

"Quitting off a grand slam tournament due to an injury is a sad experience. Especially, when you are back into the game after a long break. But thanks to my physio for making me fit for the tournament. I have started practicing and look forward to a great tournament," she said.

## 'United by Emotion': Tokyo 2020 unveils Games motto

AFP ■ TOKYO



is *Citius, Altius, Fortius* or *Faster, Higher, Stronger*, but each host city chooses its own motto to accompany the Games.

London's motto in 2012 was *Inspire a Generation*, whereas Athens in 2004 went for *Welcome Home* — a nod to the birthplace of the Games in Olympia.

Less well-received was Sochi, which plumped for *Hot. Cool. Yours.* sparking derision in some quarters.

Tokyo said the motto would be beamed onto the Skytree tower in the Japanese capital to raise awareness as it will be seen for miles around.

The opening ceremony will be on July 24 and organisers have stressed there is no discussion about changing this date despite the coronavirus crisis hitting global transport.

Tokyo 2020 organisers on Monday rolled out the motto for this year's Olympics, *United by Emotion*, which they said reflected the "universal values" and "unifying power of sport". "Crowds of spectators who do not know each other prior to the Games will come together and learn that there is more that unites them than divides them," Tokyo 2020 said as it unveiled the motto.

The official Olympic motto



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