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Education, infrastructure focus of UP budget

Ayodhya, Jewar airports get ₹2,500 crore

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yogi Adityanath government tabled its fourth Budget for 2020-21 in the excess of ₹5.12 lakh crore with focus on education, infrastructure and self-employment programme for educated jobless youth on Tuesday.

The total allocation for education sector — primary, secondary, higher, technical and medical education, was over ₹78,000 crore.

The 2020-21 budget is almost 7 per cent higher than the 2019-20 budget which stood at ₹4.79 lakh crore.

Finance Minister Suresh Khanna's budget speech was laced with frequent quotes from Urdu and Hindu poetry and loaded barbs aimed at the previous Samajwadi Party regime and eulogising the Yogi government.

In his fourth consecutive budget, the state government sought to pursue fiscal discipline and tamed fiscal deficit at 2.97 per cent, akin to the current financial year, at ₹53,195 crore — which is within the mandated 3 per cent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) under Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act.

At the same time, public debt was also projected at a manageable 28.8 per cent of GSDP. The government proposed new schemes worth

nearly ₹11,000 crore. Although the 2019-20 budget, tabled on February 7, 2019, was of ₹4.79 lakh crore, the total size of the budget burgeoned to ₹4.96 lakh crore due to tabling of two supplementary budgets worth ₹13,595 crore and ₹4,210 crore tabled on July 23 and December 17, 2019, respectively.

As per the 2020-21 budget presented on Tuesday, the state had estimated receipts of over ₹5 lakh crore including ₹4.22 lakh crore and ₹78,000 crore in revenue and capital receipts respectively. Under budgetary expenses, more than ₹3.95 lakh crore and ₹1.18 lakh crore were estimated under revenue and capital expenditures, respectively.

The government projected net State Goods and Services Tax (SGST) and Value Added Tax (VAT) kitty of ₹91,568 crore, apart from ₹37,500 crore in Excise revenue.

Meanwhile, the state allocated more than ₹5,400 crore for airport, metro and expressway projects, including Ganga Expressway (₹2,000 crore), Jewar International Airport (₹2,000 crore), Ayodhya Airport (₹500 crore) and Metro rail projects of Kanpur, Agra and Gorakhpur (₹844 crore). A sum of ₹92.50 crore was also provided for other airports under regional connectivity scheme.

The state government also



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Finance Minister Suresh Khanna before the presentation of State Budget 2020-21 in the UP Legislative Assembly in Lucknow on Tuesday.

allocated ₹300 crore and ₹210 crore for socio-economic development in backward regions of Purvanchal (Eastern UP) and Bundelkhand, respectively.

Besides, more than ₹7,400 crore was provided for different rural road and highway projects under Public Works

Department (PWD), apart from road projects funded by World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The Yogi government set aside ₹250 crore for promotion of state micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) under flagship 'One District, One

Product' (ODOP) project. Besides, ₹250 crore was allocated by the government for marriage of girls from poor families.

For skill development of the youth, the state government proposed to set up 'Yuva Hub' at all 75 districts and provided

₹1,200 crore in the budget. The state allocated nearly ₹9,000 crore for different water projects, including canals, potable water, water conservation, irrigation etc.

Besides, ₹900 crore was earmarked for Regional Rapid Transit system from Delhi to Meerut.

The government provided ₹200 crore each for Ballia Link Expressway and Gorakhpur Link Expressway while a 'Prerna Sthal' would be set up in Lucknow at a cost of ₹50 crore.

The government also sanctioned ₹300 crore for Purvanchal Development Fund and ₹210 crore for Bundelkhand Development Fund.

In the social sector, the government provided ₹1,200 crore for Mukhyamantri Kanya Sumangla Yojana, ₹1,432 crore for Destitute Women Pension Scheme and ₹4,000 crore for National Nutrition Drive.

The government announced to launch two new schemes — Chief Minister Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme and Yuva Udyamita Vikas Abhiyan (YUVA), to link the youth with self-employment and earmarked ₹100 crore for CM Apprenticeship Promotion to provide stipend and ₹50 crore for setting up YUVA hub in districts.

In the education sector, the government has plans to set up Ayush University in Gorakhpur, Law University in Prayagraj and Police Forensic University in Lucknow.

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UP on path to be \$1 trillion economy: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After the budget for 2020-21 was presented in the UP Assembly on Tuesday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said it focuses on employment of youths and centres will be opened in each district for self-employment programmes.

The government had earlier launched apprenticeship scheme for educated youths, enabling them for self-employment. The Chief Minister said that the 2020-21 budget will play a major role in achieving the goal of making the state a one trillion US dollar economy to meet the target of India aspiring for a US 5-trillion economy.

Addressing the post-budget presser, Yogi said that a number of schemes were already in place for youths and the government launched scheme for every educated unemployed.

A provision was also made in the budget to boost employment in every district to enhance overall development of the state. Yogi said that his government's first budget had focused on the farm sector, the second on promoting infrastructure & industrial development, the third for women empowerment, and the focus of the fourth budget is on development of youths by enabling

them for self-employment with an aim to unleash the potential of Uttar Pradesh.

The Chief Minister said that arrangements have also been made in the budget to strengthen education in the state. There are provisions to set up Atal University in Lucknow for medical education and for modernisation of UP Police.

Yogi said that by next year, the government will be able to carry forward the work of setting up a medical college in all 75 districts of the state, which will be built either by the state or in PPP mode.

The CM said that only 12 medical colleges were established between 1947 and 2016 in Uttar Pradesh but in the last three years, the process of opening 28 new medical colleges was underway.

Yogi said that every investor of the world wanted to invest in UP and the state received proposals for investment of ₹50,000 crore in the recently concluded Defence Expo-2020.

The CM further said that Purvanchal Expressway will be opened for public by the end of 2020 and the foundation of Bundelkhand Expressway will be laid this month.

Funds have been allocated for Ganga Expressway linking Meerut with Prayagraj and

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UK MP's visa revoked for anti-India activities

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

Justifying the decision to cancel the visa and deporting the MP, sources said Abrahams was issued an e-Business visa



on October 7 last year for attending business meetings. The visa was valid till October 5, 2020. "Her e-Business visa was revoked on February 14, 2020 on account of her indulging in activities which went against India's national interest. The rejection of the e-Business visa was intimated to her on February 14," they said. Sources also asserted the grant, rejection or revocation of a visa or electronic travel authorisation is the sovereign right of a country. Abrahams was not in the possession of a valid visa at the time of her arrival at the IGI

Airport here on Monday and she was asked to return, the sources said.

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

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

Continued on Page 7

Bid to paint 26/11 as Hindu terror

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

PNS/AGENCY ■ MUMBAI

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

But it didn't happen so as Pakistani terrorist Mohammed Ajmal Kasab was caught alive.

Had Kasab not been caught alive, his body would have been found with an I-card bearing a fictitious Hindu name, writes Maria about the investigation helmed by him in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack.

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

"Ramesh Mahale, Prashant Marde and Dinesh Kadam



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In one of the most horrific terrorist attacks in the country's history, 166 people were killed and over 300 injured as 10 heavily-armed terrorists from Pakistan created mayhem in Mumbai on November 26, 2008. Kasab, the lone terrorist captured alive, was hanged to death on November 21, 2012.

FATF subgroup wants to keep Pak in Grey List

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

two terror financing cases inside Pakistan.

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

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

Saeed, a UN designated terrorist on whom the US has placed a USD 10 million bounty, was arrested on July 17, 2019 in the terror financing cases. The 70-year-old fiery cleric is lodged at the high-security Kot Lakhpat jail in Pakistan.

Pakistan has also recently informed FATF that JeM founder Masood Azhar and his family are "missing".

It has claimed that there were only 16 UN designated terrorists in Pakistan, of which "seven are dead".

Out of the nine who are alive, seven had applied to the UN for exemption from financial and travel restrictions.

Pakistan needs 12 votes out of 39 to exit the 'Grey List' and move to 'White List'. To avoid 'Black List', it needs support of three countries.

In the last month's FATF meeting in Beijing, Pakistan has got support of Malaysia and Turkey besides FATF current chair China.

The FATF plenary held in October 2019 had noted that

Pakistan addressed only five out of the 27 tasks given to it in controlling funding to terror groups like the Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad and Hizbul Mujahideen, responsible for a series of attacks in India.

The FATF had said it strongly urges Pakistan to swiftly complete its full action plan by February, 2020.

In the Beijing meeting, Pakistan provided a list of its action taken to comply with FATF directions.

Pakistan was placed on the 'Grey List' by the FATF in June, 2018 and was given a plan of action to complete it by October, 2019 or face the risk of being placed on the 'Black List' along with Iran and North Korea.

The FATF is an inter-

governmental body established in 1989 to combat money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.

The FATF currently has 39 members including two regional organisations — the European Commission and Gulf Cooperation Council. India is a member of the FATF consultations and its Asia Pacific Group.

If Pakistan continues with the 'Grey List', it will be difficult for the country to get financial aid from the IMF, World Bank, ADB and the European Union, thus further enhancing problems for the nation which is in a precarious financial situation.

Record rice, wheat output likely despite flood, Pak locust attack

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Despite flood in 15 States and loss of crops due to locust attack in Rajasthan, Punjab and Gujarat, record output in rice and wheat is likely, pushing up the foodgrains production in the country to an all-time high of around 291.95 million tonnes (MT) in the current year.

According to the sec-



ond advance estimates of foodgrains production released by the Agriculture Ministry on Tuesday, the output projected for 2019-20 is 6.7 MT higher than the 2018-19 final estimates of 285.21 MT. The rice output during the same period is expected to be 117.47 MT (against 116.48 MT in 2018), while wheat is slated to hit a best-ever 106.21 MT (103.60 MT).

Wheat is the main rabi (winter) crop, harvesting of which will begin from next month. However, the production during 2019-20 is higher by 26.20 million

tonnes than the previous five years' (2013-14 to 2017-18) average production of foodgrain.

As per estimates, the cumulative rainfall in the country during the monsoon season (June to September, 2019) has been 10 per cent higher than Long Period Average (LPA). "Accordingly, the production of most of the crops for the agricultural year 2019-20 has been estimated higher than their normal production. These estimates are subject to revision on account of more precise information flowing over the time," officials of the Agriculture Ministry said.

Total production of rice during 2019-20 is estimated at

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Total debt likely to be 28.8 pc of SGDP in 2020-21

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The debt burden on the state government is mounting and the total debt on it from different sources is likely to be over Rs 5.16 lakh crore by the end of next fiscal 2020-21. The budget size of 2020-21 at Rs 5.12 lakh crore is a little less than the debt burden. The total debt of the state, however, came down from 29.6 per cent of State Gross Domestic Product (SGDP) in 2017-18 and is estimated to be 28.8 per

cent in 2020-21. With a debt burden of over Rs 5.16 lakh crore, every resident of UP has a debt of Rs 22,442 on their head.

"The debt per person in the state during the 2019-20 fiscal is estimated to be Rs 20,702 as the total debt burden would be little over Rs 4.76 lakh crores," Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna said while tabling the budget for 2020-21 in the Assembly on Tuesday.

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

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

In 2018-19, the debt per person was around Rs 19,239 with a total loan of Rs 4.42 lakh crore and was around Rs 18,476 in 2017-18, when the total debt on the state was Rs 4,064 lakh crore.

Thus, after BJP took over in 2017 and with infrastructure development being focused



Finance minister Suresh Khanna presenting the UP Budget at Vidhan Bhawan in Lucknow on Tuesday

within a year, each citizen's debt rose by Rs 1,676.

With a population touching 230 million, the state's debt burden was hovering around 28 per cent to 30 per cent of the State Gross Domestic Product (SGDP).

Of the total fresh borrowings by the state government during 2020-21, the highest would be market borrowing at Rs 32,346 crore, 18.1 per cent of the total loans. The UP government was also expecting loan of Rs 11,815 crore from the Centre, Rs 19,368 crore from financial institutions and Rs 42,277 crore from power bonds.

As per budget statistics,

total receipts of the state are estimated at Rs 5,0055 lakh crore, of which 33 per cent would come from state taxes, 30.4 per cent from state share in Central taxes and 14.4 per cent from Central assistance. It will also collect 13.1 per cent of revenue from public loans.

With a total expenditure of Rs 5.12 lakh crore, the highest 37.1 per cent will be spent for payment of wages, pension and allowances to government employees and aided educational institutions and pension. The state will also spend a little over 16 per cent for repayment of loan, while 16.1 per cent will be spent on capital expenditure. The government

will also pay 3.3 per cent of its expenditure on subsidy.

₹900 CRORE FOR ARTS

In a major boost to regional connectivity in National Capital Region (NCR), the state government allocated Rs 900 crore to the country's first Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) in the budget on Tuesday.

Earlier this year, the Centre had allocated Rs 2,487 crore to RRTS in the Union budget. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation of 82-km-long Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor on March 8, 2019. With meticulous plan-

ning and expertise of NCRTC team, construction was initiated immediately. Construction on the 17-km priority section of Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor is underway in full swing.

The construction of pillars has been underway between Sahibabad and Duhai. First girder (segment) for viaduct of the RRTS Corridor has been cast at NCRTC's casting yard at Vasundhara, Ghaziabad. Operation on the priority section with four station - Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, Guldhar and Duhai, is proposed from March 2023.

Simultaneously work is in progress at other sections as well, and initial pile load test is underway between Shatabdi Nagar and Modinagar.

Sources said tenders have been floated for carrying out initial pile load test in Delhi section from Sarai Kale Khan to Anand Vihar. Tenders for design and construction of tunnels of Delhi portion by tunnel boring machine from New Ashok Nagar Ramp, New Delhi, to Sahibabad Ramp in Ghaziabad have also been floated. Engagement of Detailed Design Consultant (DDC) for Sarai Kale Khan and New Ashok Nagar RRTS stations, including the Multimodal Integration scheme and setting up a station at Jangpura, New Delhi, is also underway.

Medical facilities to people in rural areas

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The government has made provisions to provide full medical facilities to people living in rural areas.

Under this, telemedicine has been started in the state under which patients from remote villages can also get medical consultation from the control room through mobile phones.

Mukhyamantri Arogya Mela is being organised every Sunday at primary health centres across the state.

The government has made a provision of Rs 30 crore for the establishment of 100-bed joint hospitals in newly-formed districts. A total of Rs 65 crore has been given for CHC buildings and equipment.

The CHCs located in rural areas will be upgraded to 100-bed hospitals and for this, there is a provision of Rs 50 crore made.

The government has also made a provision of Rs 70 crore for improvement-expansion and renovation in district men and women hospitals in the budget 2020-2021.

Besides, a provision of Rs 50 lakh has been made for the expansion of OPDs and wards in the premises of Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Civil Hospital (Lucknow) and Rs 12.50 crore for con-

struction of the Trauma Centre building.

The government has made a provision of Rs 291 crore for the Pradhan Mantri Vandana Yojana.

A total of Rs 919 crore have been allocated for King George's Medical University, Rs 820 crore for SGPGL, Rs 309 crore for Saifai Rural Institute of Medical Sciences, Rs 477 crore for Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences, Rs 187 crore for Cancer Institute (Lucknow), Rs 40 crore for free medical services for treatment of incurable diseases, and Rs 96 crore for Government Medical College (Azamgarh).

A provision of Rs 73.86 crore has been made to establish medical colleges by upgrading district hospitals.

NOTICE

It is to inform that, the proposal for mortgage of the property i.e. Plot, Part of Khara No.382, measuring area 111.524 Sq. Meter, situated at Alingar Sunahra, Pargana-Bijnour, Tehsil & District-Lucknow is pending before L.I.C. HOUSING FINANCE LTD in respect of chain of original sale deed executed on dated 21.08.2013, registered in the office of Sub-Registrar-I, Lucknow, vide Book No.1, 2/1d No.15860, pages-275288 at Sr. No. 11446, which has been misplaced/lost. If the bid original sale deeds is mortgaged as an instrument by any Person(s), Public/Private Banks/Financial Institution(s)/Co-Operative Societies, then the information of same may inform immediately to L.I.C. HOUSING FINANCE LTD, A-1, Metro Tower-1, Shahjahan Road, Opp. Saharajganj Mall, Ph. No. 0522-2625257 or Mr. Anoop Kr. Singh, Advocate Mobile No.9455032591, otherwise the bid proposal shall be finalized and shall be acceptable immediately and after expiry of 15 day of this publication, any claim or possession of any person/institution will be null and void.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE
Malika Anas daughter of Mohammad Anas user ID Roll No. 7052398 index no. 1207643/202 is appearing in ICSE 2020 in 10th grade. In her Admit Card mother name (Asma Bano) is wrongly printed to (Husna Farooq) and father's name correctly (Mohammad Anas) has a spelling mistake which has to be changed so her documents must not have any correction in future.

NOTICE
I Rashmi Agarwal W/o Shri Raj Kumar Agarwal aged about 48 years R/o 195/57/04 Golaganj Jagat Naryan Road Aminabad Park Lucknow do hereby dealer that my father's name is Shri Harish Agarwal and my date of birth is 25/05/1971

NOTICE
Be it known to all that I, K. T. Ramesh Kumar, age 57 S/o Late K.S. Thamy have Changed my name to Shambhavidas Shishya/o Guru Sri Swamy Keshavadas. R/o : 54B, Sri Abhay Sanyas Ashram, Vill. Sansarpur. PO. Mir Nagar, Sitapur. UP

OBITUARY
SUB RAGURAMAN R
18 MAY 1976 - 27 JAN 2020
ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS SOLEMNLY PRAY TO THE ALMIGHTY TO BESTOW PEACE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL AND GRANT STRENGTH TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY TO BEAR THE GREAT LOSS OF SUB RAGURAMAN R WHO DIED WHILE SERVING WITH CH (CC) LUCKNOW.

OBITUARY
HAV SANJAY KUMAR
08 JUL 1975 - 01 FEB 2020
ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS SOLEMNLY PRAY TO THE ALMIGHTY TO BESTOW PEACE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL AND GRANT STRENGTH TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY TO BEAR THE GREAT LOSS OF HAV SANJAY KUMAR WHO DIED WHILE SERVING WITH 4016 FD HOSP.

OBITUARY
FROM: LT GEN NAVDEEP SINGH LAMBA AND ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

WANTED
POSTS FOR DIPLOMA IN PHARMACY & BACHELOR IN PHARMACY COURSE
Application are invited for the posts of Director-1, Professors-4, Asso. Professors-6, Assistant Professor-6, Computer Operator-1, Accountant-1, Lab Assists.-4. For teaching of Diploma in Pharmacy and Bachelor in Pharmacy. Academic qualification and experience, pay scale as per norms of PCI & AICTE. The interested candidates may appear in WALK IN INTERVIEW to be held on dated 21.02.2020, from 9.00 am to 6.00 pm in the office of Secretary ShriKashi Chandra Dev Yadav Pharmacy College Vill. & Post-Bamhaur, Distt. Azamgarh (U.P.) TA will be paid to selected candidates as per norms. All original Marksheets, experience certificate Photo, Aadhar Card, are essential during interview for verification.

Chandrave Ram Yadav (Chairman)
Mob. : 9415839455

UP budget directionless: Oppn Protest ahead of budget

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Describing the budget presented by the Uttar Pradesh government as "directionless" and a "betrayal" of all sections of people, opposition parties on Tuesday said it offered nothing concrete and failed to explain how the state will become a trillion dollar economy.

While the Congress alleged that the budget has nothing for farmers, youth and women, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) said it was the same as last year's.

The Uttar Pradesh government presented a Rs 5,12,860.72 crore budget for FY 2020-21, which also includes Rs 500-crore allocation for constructing an airport in Ayodhya.

The budget, the size of which is Rs 33,159 crore more than last year's, has provisions for new schemes worth Rs 10,967.87 crore. "The government is betraying all sections (of people), be it youth, farmers or women. The BJP says that it wants to make the state a trillion dollar economy but it is not telling from where the investment will come," Samajwadi Party (SP) supremo Akhilesh Yadav told reporters, adding that in future, people will "betray" the government (in polls).

"MoUs were inked and groundbreaking ceremonies held. The government should tell how much incentive it has given to the industry and which banks have signed the agreements," he said.

Yadav said unlike the previous SP-led state government, the BJP government has proved to be a "failure".

"Do something which they (people) can remember when you are not in power. Previous UP government was known for expressway, metro, laptops, but now the perception has changed. With government-sponsored deaths, including custodial deaths and shooting protesters, the BJP govern-



Lucknow (PNS): Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee president Ajay Kumar Lallu, along with other party leaders, on Tuesday staged a protest in the state assembly premises ahead of the annual budget. The Congress alleged that only 40 per cent of the previous budget has been utilised so far and after that two supplementary grants were obtained by the government. "There is discontent among people of the country as they are not getting jobs. They are dying of poverty, committing suicide but the government is not bothered. The government is not listening to us, so we have come in the assembly tying a black cloth around our arm," Congress state president Ajay Kumar Lallu said.

Congress leaders raised a question saying, "What is the need to bring a budget when the funds are not being spent?" The government always used to present the budget in the Legislative Assembly after 12 pm and before that the Question Hour used to take place. The Opposition says that the government is going to bring the budget during the Question Hour itself, moreover Congress has claimed that this is a conspiracy against the opposition.

ment is a failure," he said.

On Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath describing the budget as "historic", Yadav said, "It is nothing but historic 'jumlebaazi' of the BJP".

BSP chief Mayawati said the budget is a result of the BJP's lack of willpower to address issues of public welfare.

"The budget presented by the state government is a farce. With this budget, welfare of 22 crore people of the state cannot be done. The budget is same as the previous one," she said.

"The promises and claims

made in the budget appear hollow and are only on paper. Like the Centre, why does the UP BJP government make promises and claims that people find far from the ground realities and cannot trust," she said.

Terming the budget "directionless", Congress state president Ajay Kumar Lallu said it is only "jugglery of figures" and offers nothing concrete.

"There is very little provision for women's security. The budget has nothing for youths, farmers, women and poor," he said. This is the fourth budget of the Adityanath government.

Nothing special for uplift of MSMEs: IIA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

There is nothing special for the uplift of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the UP budget 2020-21, IIA said on Tuesday. A member from IIA said that MSMEs in Uttar Pradesh contribute greatly to economy and employment generation after agriculture.

"As per government data, 89 lakh MSMEs exist in the state. In this context, the state ranks first in the country in terms of number of MSME entrepreneurs. The state has about 14 per cent share in the total MSMEs in the country. In the budget presented today, provisions have been made for agriculture, infrastructure

facilities like roads, airport etc, medical facilities, city development, education and social activities. But for MSMEs, there is hardly any budget except Rs 250 crore for ODOP scheme," he said. He added said that in almost all the industrial estates located in Uttar Pradesh, there is a lack of infrastructure facilities like roads, water and drainage etc. "Customers coming from outside the states, countries in these industrial areas, get a poor image of the state. In some places, industries are being closed due to restrictions on groundwater extraction and due to non-availability of piped water supply. IIA was expecting that in this budget, provisions would be made to improve these infrastructure facilities in industrial areas," he said.

Stress on improving irrigation facilities

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Buttressing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's slogan of 'Per Drop More Crop', the Yogi government has focused on improving irrigation facilities and making water available for the farm sector in its 2020-21 budget, which was presented in the UP Assembly on Tuesday.

To further the objective, the state government wants to complete Saryu Canal, Madhya Ganga Canal (Second Phase) and Arjun Sahayak projects, pending for decades, in the current financial year and has allotted sufficient funds for these schemes in the budget.

Besides providing adequate water for irrigation, the government's priority is to ensure supply of drinking water to every household, especially in rural areas, and a fund of Rs 3000 crore has been set aside for this. The government allotted Rs 1,554 crore for Saryu Canal project, Rs 1,736 crore for Madhya Ganga Canal (Second Phase) and Rs 252.65 crore for Arjun Sahayak project. Likewise, Rs 393 crore, Rs 296 crore, and Rs 200 crore have been proposed for Rajghat Canal, Water Sector Restructuring and Kanhar

A provision of Rs 48 crore was also made for rainwater harvesting through redeveloping ponds of area 1 to 5 hectares

Irrigation projects respectively.

Besides, a provision of Rs 966 crore has been made for flood control and drainage projects and Rs 300 crore for construction of damaged structures of canals.

A provision of Rs 216 crore was proposed to implement free boring scheme, medium deep tubewell scheme and deep boring scheme under Mukhyamantri Laghu Sinchai Yojana. A provision of Rs 48 crore was also made for rainwater harvesting through redeveloping ponds of area 1 to 5 hectares.

Under 'Har Khet Ko Pani' scheme, a component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana, the state government made provision of Rs 50 crore for boring in 69 development blocks in 18 districts, which receive not more than 750 mm of yearly rainfall.

RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION, LUCKNOW
OPEN TENDER NOTICE
Tender Notice No. LKRE-TELE-GR302-SPT Dt. 17.02.2020
Dy. Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer, Railway Electrification, Lucknow for & on behalf of the President of India invites sealed open E-tenders on the prescribed form for the under-noted works:

1. Tender No.	LKRE-TELE-GR302-SPT
2. Name of work with its Location	"Supply, installation, testing & commissioning of way station equipments, Head quarter control equipment with power supplies, emergency sockets etc in SP/SSP/TSS including Trenching, laying, Back filling, jointing of 6F-quad, PUJ cable, OFC cable, Splicing for providing communication to SP/SSP/TSS and station in Shahjahanpur-Pilibhit-Tankapur section of Izzatnagar Division of NE Railway."
3. Completion period	06 months from the date of issue of Letter of Acceptance.
4. Approx. Cost of the work	₹ 19557878.51 (Rs. One Crore fifty nine lakh fifty seven thousand eight hundred seventy eight and paise fifty nine only)
5. Earnest Money (EMD) to be deposited	₹ 229800.00 (Rs. Two lakh twenty nine thousand eight hundred only)
6. Cost of Tender document	₹ 5,000/- (Rs. Five thousand) only.
7. Tender closing date and time	12.03.2020 up to 15.00 hrs.
8. Validity of offer	30 days from the date of opening of tender.
9. Website particular and notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen etc.	(http://www.ireps.gov.in) Notice Board at the office of Chief Project Director, Railway Electrification, Station Road, Charbagh, Lucknow-226001. Note: - Original/revised bids are to be submitted online upto closing date and time on IREPS website only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be summarily rejected. Tenderer should get the digital signing certificate and register them on this website to participate in the tender. The Tenderers are advised to keep themselves updated regarding any corrigendum to be published in this tender. All corrigendum will be published on line. No separate corrigendum notice will be published in newspaper.
10. PVC clause	No PVC clause is applicable in this tender.
11. JV/Consortium/MOU	JV/Consortium/MOU shall not be considered.

(Sushil Kumar)
Dy. Chief S&T Engineer/RE/Lucknow
For & on behalf of President of India
PR/229/20 (FA)
"Serving Customers with a Smile"

उत्तर प्रदेश राज्य कर्मचारी कल्याण निगम
742, जवाहर भवन, लखनऊ
दिनांक: 18.02.2020
संख्या: 268WB/वर्ल्स-2020 लखनऊ
ई-निविदा निरस्त की सूचना
उत्तर प्रदेश राज्य कर्मचारी कल्याण निगम द्वारा वित्तीय वर्ष 2020-21 में प्रदेश के कारगारों में निरुद्ध बर्तियों के लिए स्वायत्त (नेट एव चालव) उल्लेख करायें जाने हेतु व्यापारिक सहयोगी/इम्प्लिमेंट एजेंट के चयन के लिए उ0प्र0 के चार भागों में पूर्वी क्षेत्र, मध्य क्षेत्र, पश्चिमी क्षेत्र एवं उत्तरी क्षेत्र के लिए (प्रत्येक क्षेत्र हेतु पुन्य-पुन्य) खुली ई-निविदाएं (बिड) कार्यालय के पत्र सं-220 अख्य0/0 दिनांक 05.02.2020 के द्वारा आमंत्रित की गयी थी, जिनकी विज्ञापन सैनिक समाचार पत्र हिन्दुस्तान व पयनियर अंग्रेजी के संस्करण में दिनांक 06.02.2020 को प्रकाशित करायी गयी थी। अपरिहार्य कारणों से निरस्त किया जाता है।
(अशोक कुमार श्रीवास्तव)
अधिकांशी निदेशक

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

कार्यालय उपनिदेशक (वि/याँ)
राज्य कृषि उत्पादन मण्डी परिषद, उ0प्र0
नवीन गल्ला मण्डी स्थल, महवा चुंगी, गोरखपुर-273016
ई-मेल : ddeemgrkhpur2016@gmail.com
पत्रांक : वि/याँ(निविदा)/2020-66 दिनांक 18.02.2020
ई-निविदा सूचना
ई-निविदा सूचना पत्रांक: वि/याँ(निविदा)/2019-57 दिनांक 13.02.2020 विभिन्न समाचार पत्रों द्वारा नवीन मण्डी स्थल तुलसीपुर में नलकूप निर्माण (300x200mm) एवं 7.5 एच0पी0 सबमर्सिबल पम्प आपूर्ति/स्थापना कार्य की ई-निविदा दिनांक 28.02.2020 को आमंत्रित किया गया था। जिसको अपरिहार्य कारणों से दिनांक 28.02.2020 के स्थान पर दिनांक 03.03.2020 को दोपहर 1:30 बजे आमंत्रित किया जाता है। दिनांक 02.03.2020 को सायं 05 बजे तक निविदा डाली जा सकती है। ई-निविदादाता को दिनांक 03.02.2020 को अपराह्न 1.00 बजे तक बिड डाक्यूमेंट से सम्बन्धित समस्त आवश्यक प्रपत्र कार्यालय उप निदेशक (वि/याँ), राज्य कृषि उत्पादन मण्डी परिषद, नवीन गल्ला मण्डी, महवा चुंगी, गोरखपुर में जमा करना अनिवार्य है। शेष नियम एवं शर्तों पूर्ववत् रहेगी।
उपनिदेशक (वि/याँ)
मण्डी परिषद, गोरखपुर

Notice Inviting Re-e-Tender
No. SSA/MIS/Support-materials/OD/336/2006/843 Date : 18.02.2020
Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites re-tender through e-Tendering process from Reputed Organization for supply and installation of Laptop, Desktop Computer, UPS, Scanner and Printer.
To participate in the tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of class-II (minimum) and have to register in the portal https://assamtenders.gov.in by themselves.
The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website https://assamtenders.gov.in, with proof of payment of non refundable tender fee of Rs. 1,000/- (Rupees one thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.
Sd/- Mission Director,
SSA, Assam,
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Lucknow only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

Govt bid to provide relief to economically weaker section

... to extend 10% quota in jobs with retrospective effect

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

With an aim to provide relief to economically weaker section among general category, the state government has decided to extend 10 per cent reservation in government jobs for those entitled with retrospective effect from February 11, 2019. It was announced after a cabinet meeting in Lucknow on Tuesday.

A government source said that a bill will be brought during the ongoing Budget session and will be made an act after being promulgated by the Governor.

"The Government of India has made an Act under which poor among general category were entitled to 10 per cent reservation in state-run educational institutions. The state government extended the same in such institutions from February 18, 2019. Now, the government has decided to provide reservation benefits to the poor among general category in jobs," an official said.

"As per guidelines, any person whose annual family income (including agriculture and wages) is less than Rs 8 lakh will be entitled for this benefit. Those people or families who own 5 acre or more

farm land, 1000 ft or more residential land or have a house measuring 200 yards in municipal area will not be entitled for this benefit," the official said.

In another decision, the government made an amendment to UP Krishi Mandi Parishad Act, wherein cess for charitable organisations was increased from 2 to 4 per cent. This was done to ensure better upkeep of stray cattle. The organisations willing to take care of stray cattle will be benefited," the official said.

The state cabinet also approved a decision to improve infrastructure in office of Police Commissioner in

Gautam Budh Nagar (Noida) and instructed Noida Development Authority to provide Rs 76.96 lakh.

In another decision, the government amended Rajya Sampati Act allowing chairmen for different state-run corporations and different organisations, advisors and vice-chairmen of different organisations for government accommodation. The government also approved Rs 28460.53 lakh for construction of a paediatric (children's) ward in BRD Medical College, Gorakhpur, and allotted Rs 17,537.42 lakh as scholarship money for students of Backward caste.

Depressed over daughter's illness, man shoots self

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A man, identified as Vinod Kumar Rawat of Rajajipuram under Talkatora police station, shot himself in the compound of a mazaar near KGMU in Chowk on Tuesday. His daughter Muskan said he shot himself with his licenced revolver. She told the police her father was under depression as his younger daughter was critically ill. He, along with his wife, used to go to the mazaar to pray for their daughter.

Muskan said her father used to tell her mother that he would kill himself if the health of the daughter did not improve. The couple went to the mazaar on Monday night and Vinod took the revolver with him without telling his wife. He told his wife that they would stay at the mazaar overnight to offer special prayers. He took his revolver and shot himself when his wife had gone to fetch eatables. He was taken to the KGMU Trauma Centre where he succumbed to injuries.

Meanwhile, a 17-year-old boy, identified as Pankaj, hanged himself from a tree in Mangal ki Baghia, said to be over half-a-kilometre from his house. Police said the deceased got ready in the morning to go to college. But instead of going to the college, he went to Mangal ki Baghia where he hanged himself from a tree. Farmers passing through the orchard spotted the body and alerted the police.



Vinod Kumar Rawat was under depression as his younger daughter was critically ill. He, along with his wife, used to go to the mazaar to pray for their daughter. He shot himself in the mazaar compound when his wife went out to bring eatables

The body was identified by locals who passed on the information to deceased's father, who had no idea as to why Pankaj ended his life. Pankaj was a student of local college while his father is a technician at a dental clinic.

Elsewhere, in Pragati Vihar locality under Para police station, 55-year-old Savitri Devi, wife of Sukh Nandan, hanged herself. She was all alone in the house when she took the extreme step. Her husband was in Kanpur for some work. Milk vendor saw her body hanging from the ceiling and he informed her husband about the incident. No suicide note was recovered from the house. Her husband reached there and told the police that there was nothing wrong with her and he was surprised as to why she took the extreme step.

Deceased's father is a retired junior commissioned officer.

Meanwhile, a youth, identified as Prateek Tiwari (22), was found hanging from the ceiling of a room at Express on Ring Road under Gudamba police station. The deceased worked in a private firm and had booked the room for official work. He stayed in the room overnight after the work was over. Brother Anshuman Tiwari reached the hotel in the morning to pick up Prateek and was surprised when there was response from room even as he repeatedly knocked the door. Later, hotel manager and others broke open the door in the presence of police and found Prateek hanging. No suicide note was recovered from the place. He was resident of Awadhपुरi, Sarvodaya Colony, Indira Nagar.

Govt aims to promote higher edu

Lucknow (PNS): In order to promote higher education, the government has made a provision in the budget for setting up three new universities in Saharanpur, Azamgarh and Aligarh. Establishment of police forensic university and law university in Prayagraj is also proposed in the state. Ayush university will be built in Gorakhpur.

The Yogi government has made a provision of Rs 270 crore for the establishment of Atal residential schools in eight divisions of the state. In the coming academic session, a target has been set to distribute free textbooks and notebooks to about 1.90 crore students.

A provision of Rs 18,363 crore has been proposed for the overall education campaign for upgrading school education at primary and upper primary levels of the state. For the development of basic facilities in the field of higher education, a provision of Rs 111 crore has been made in the budget under the Rashtriya Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan.

In the budget 2020-21, proper attention has been given to the health sector. The government has made provisions to establish a diabetic retinopathy treatment centre at King George's Medical University (Lucknow), Medical College (Prayagraj) and Medical College (Meerut). Along with this, the Centre for Advanced Diabetes and Endocrine Sciences will also be set up at SGPGI.



Deputy CM Dinesh Sharma during an inspection at a college and control room while students waiting for entry into exam centres on Tuesday



Testing times for UP Board students

Lucknow (PNS): The UP Board examinations began on a peaceful note on Monday. District inspector of schools Mukesh Singh said that for the first shift in High School exams, 51,149 out of the 53,973 registered students were present. Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma carried out an inspection at Rajkiya Balika Inter College on the first day.

Addressing mediapersons after the inspection, Sharma said there should be no exami-

nations stress because they are the celebration of life and students should remain stress-free and happy while appearing for the exams. Prior to this, minister Gulab Devi appealed to the students to take exams with a positive bent of mind.

Meanwhile, the Deputy CM also visited the control room set up at the Education Directorate in Lucknow. He witnessed how the centres were being monitored and everything was clearly visible on computer screens.

सेंट्रल बैंक ऑफ इंडिया
Central Bank of India

Regional Office:
73, Hazratganj,
Lucknow

NOTICE

This is to inform the Public in general that physical Possession has been taken by authorized officer in exercising the power and right conferred under SARFAESI Act 2002 Property of Md. Riyaz Siddiqui S/o Md. Ilyas Siddiqui and Mrs. Rizwana Riyaz W/o Md. Riyaz Siddiqui situated at flat no. 9, 2nd floor at Mirza Tower Love Lane Hazratganj Lucknow, Bounded by East-4 ft. Wide passage and open Ducting, West- Wall of Building, North-Flat no. 10, South- 6 ft. Corridor, Stair case, henceforth Mr. Riyaz Siddiqui S/o Md. Ilyas Siddiqui and Mrs. Rizwana Riyaz W/o Md. Riyaz Siddiqui are hereby informed to take their belongings as per inventory prepared on 12.02.2020 at the time of physical possession within 7 days from the publication of this notice by visiting the office of Undersigned at 73 Hazratganj Lucknow else bank will dispose of the items as per inventory by exercising the power as per rule and Bank will not be responsible for the same.

Date : 19.02.2020 Place : Lucknow Authorized Officer: Central Bank of India

6 killed in mishap on Lko-Agra e-way

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Within 24 hours of seven van occupants being charred to death in a mishap on Taj Expressway, six more were killed and several others injured when their SUV was hit by a Bihar government bus on Lucknow-Agra Expressway in the wee hours of Tuesday.

As per reports, the SUV heading to Agra from Lucknow was knocked by a Bihar-bound bus which jumped the divider coming from the opposite direction in Bilhaur police station area in Bangarmanu. The police said that the bus driver lost control of the vehicle. The bus carrying 40 passengers from Ghaziabad first hit the SUV and then hurtled down the service lane.

While all five occupants of the SUV died on the spot, the bus driver also died and around 15 bus passengers were injured. Those in the SUV were

identified as Sunni (35), Mukesh (40), Ram Shanker (45), Surjeet (33). The bus driver was yet to be identified. The SUV was registered in the name of Sunita Singh of Delhi.

The police said that the impact was such that even after air bags of the SUV opened, the occupants could not be saved. The injured were rushed to hospital by highway police.

Meanwhile, in Basti, a leading cloth merchant of Gorakhpur, his wife and another person were killed while the couple's son was injured in a mishap on Monday night.

Prem Jalan of Basharatpur in Gorakhpur was returning with his wife Vidya and son Rishabh from Lucknow in a car on Monday night. While they were crossing Baburhawa hamlet in Basti, a motorcyclist going ahead suddenly applied brakes. As a result, Prem lost control of the car which hit the

motorcyclist before ploughing into a tractor-trolley.

The injured were rushed to a hospital where Prem Jalan, his wife Vidya and the motorcyclist, identified as Ranjeet of Basti, were declared dead.

The couple were preparing for a grand birthday bash of Rishabh on February 22 and Prem Jalan had also uploaded a post on social media wishing his son in advance. Prem's elder daughter Nandani is an undergraduate student in New Delhi.

In another accident, two persons were killed while half-a-dozen others injured in Mainpuri early Tuesday morning. Rajneesh aka Amit (32) of Dhamiyapur in Mainpuri used to work in Gurugram. On Monday night, he left in a car with his kin to reach Mainpuri.

The car was being driven by Amit's cousin Abhishek (27). Around 3:30 am on

Tuesday, while they were passing through Sanjay College on Delhi-Agra highway, the car rammed into a tanker. Amit and Abhishek's wife Priyanka (25) died while Abhishek, his son Yuvraj (2), daughter Anshuka (5), kin Asha and Asha's son Anil were injured.

Meanwhile, in Sultanpur, a youth was burnt alive after coming in contact with a high-tension wire. Vinod (17) of Korradadwa hamlet of Ambedkarnagar left his house to drop his friend at an examination centre early Tuesday morning. While he was crossing Baithu hamlet of Jaisinghpur, Vinod's motorcycle came in contact with a 11000 volt high-tension wire which had snapped and lying on the road. Vinod got entangled in the wire and was burnt alive. Locals staged a demonstration demanding action against the officials of Electricity department.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at the valedictory function of Parivartan Kumbh, organised by 'Ekal Abhiyan', in Lucknow on Tuesday

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GOVERNMENT OF MADHYA PRADESH

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D-11346/20

No more PGDM, MBA courses at one go

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

from misleading claims. There are a total of 3,000 institutes offering MBA programmes through universities, or deemed to be universities or autonomous institutions and a

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

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

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

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

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

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

EC makes fresh push for electoral reforms with Law Ministry

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Earlier, in a letter to the Law Ministry, the Commission had recently proposed that provisions of the Representation of the People Act be amended to allow EC seek Aadhaar numbers of those applying to be voters and those who are already part of the electoral rolls, sources in the poll panel explained. Accepting the proposal to give it legal backing to collect Aadhaar data, the Law Ministry is learnt to have asked the poll panel to ensure that the data is protected at multiple levels. The EC recently listed out steps to protect the data from possible leaks.

After the meeting, CEC Sunil Arora mentioned that there are more than 40 different proposals of electoral reforms which are pending since

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



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

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

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

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

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

Cong slams Govt for hiding data

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

100 people quarantined in ITBP facility discharged

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

This comes a day after a batch of about 200 people were discharged from the ITBP facility, which housed a total of 406 people, including seven Malaysians. So far, 302 people out of total 406, have left the ITBP centre after being declared free of novel coronavirus by the doctors.

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

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

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

CORONAVIRUS



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

due procedures and protocols.

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

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

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

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

Government has sufficient resources and policy tools to cope with economic fluctuations following the epidemic. At the same time, he said that virus is a “borderless and a common threat to everyone in the world” and joint efforts are required to combat it.

The envoy also appreciated India for extending solidarity and expressing readiness to assist China to deal with the epidemic, but stressed that there should not be any restrictions on trade and movement of people between the two neighbours.

He said the number of confirmed coronavirus cases outside Hubei province, the epicentre of the epidemic, is coming down.

“China has full confidence that it will win the battle against coronavirus epidemic,” he told reporters.

SC comes to rescue of Indian bustard, lesser florican

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

It asked Singhvi to take

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

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

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

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

The top court said if the Rajasthan Government faces any problem, then the court can pass necessary directions. Additional Solicitor General ANS Nadkarni, appearing for MoEF said a team of the ministry and other wildlife experts have visited Jaisalmer in Rajasthan and it is evident from their findings that underground cable is the only solution.

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

BJP observers to select House leaders in Delhi, Jharkhand Assemblies

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

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

PNS

Mahadeshwara sanctuary to be tiger reserve

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Nadu on the southern side. As per the All India Tiger Estimation, 2018, this area is spread over 907 sqkm and has 15 tigers,” said a senior NTCA official.

He said that in-principle approval has been given. Now the State Government will have to notify the area that will make it official home of the big cats.

Although the number of species present may be less compared to Bandipur or

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

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

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

Severe summer in store this yr: IMD

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

As the temperature started increasing in coastal areas across the country, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday issued an advisory on heatwave, suggesting dos and don’ts. Heatwave is considered when maximum temperature of a station is 40 degree Celsius or more for plains and 30 degree

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

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

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

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

at many places in coastal areas. According to Dr Kuldeep Srivastava, scientist of IMD, a fresh Western Disturbance expected in the hills around February 19 due to which there

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

As per the advisory issued

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

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

INSHORT

FADNAVIS REQUESTS SC TO RECONSIDER HIS TRIAL

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



AMIT SHAH WILL VISIT ARUNACHAL TOMORROW

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

Shettar's meeting with upset BJP MLAs sparks speculation

PTI ■ BENGALURU

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

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

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

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

Speaking to reporters here, he said, any "such meeting as being reported" is "far from truth".

"There was no such meeting, legislators had come for

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

their work, there is no need to have any misunderstanding about it," he said, adding that he was not answerable to media reports and owes no explanation.

According to some media reports, eight-time BJP MLA Umesh Katti (Hukkeri), who had openly expressed his dis-

pleasure over not being inducted into the ministry, and Shankar Patil Munenakoppa (Navalagund) were among those who had met at Shettar's residence.

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ BENGALURU

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

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

After hearing his preliminary submission, Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri ruled that a discussion will be

held on the topic at 3 PM on Wednesday, but under a different rule.

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

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

Siddaramaiah pointed out that the Governor's address to the joint sitting of the state legislature on Monday did not mention the state-wide anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protests and the one in which two people died in Mangaluru in December.

By discussing the issue, "it is our duty to instill confi-

dence among the affected people as we have come here with their mandate, representing them", he said.

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

When acts or policies brought in despite "brute majority" can be opposed in the nation's democratic set up, the ruling BJP has booked people under acts like sedition for opposing and tried to scuttle their freedom of expression, he alleged.

Reacting to this, Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai chided Congress by pointing out it was that party which imposed the Emergency, triggering a war of words between both sides.

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

PTI ■ BENGALURU

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

While hitting out at ruling party legislators, Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Siddaramaiah said that "Bharat Mata is not the property of BJP". Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai, slamming the Congress, called them the "owners" of the "tukde tukde gang". Siddaramaiah, while making a preliminary submission seeking to move an adjournment motion on the law and order situation in the state, attacked ruling BJP both in the state and Centre for an "undeclared emergency" in the country. He also accused the BJP of undermining the Constitution and democracy, to which Minister KS

Eshwarappa referred to the Emergency declared by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and reminded the former Chief Minister that he had opposed it while in the Janata Dal. "We (BJP/RSS workers then) were put behind bars for hailing Bharat Mata and calling ourselves as her sons", Eshwarappa said. Reacting to this Siddaramaiah said, "Bharat Mata is not your property. You have not taken on lease. All 135 crore Indians are her children."

Intervening, Minister C T Ravi hit out at Congress for supporting the "Tukde Tukde Gang", resulting in heated arguments between the treasury and opposition benches.

Taking strong exception to the remark, Congress MLA Priyank Kharage questioned who were the "Tukde Tukde Gang" and why the BJP governments, both at the centre and state, were not arresting them.

Madras HC restrains Muslim body from organising Assembly siege

PTI ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

bench posted the matter to March 12 for further hearing.

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

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

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

Supreme Court.

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

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

Petitioner Varaki, a journalist, contended if the assem-

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

sembly siege was allowed and a large number of protesters permitted to gather near the Secretariat, there would be complete collapse of the normal functioning of the state government.

Referring to continuing agitations, including the latest stir in a north Chennai locality, by various organisations opposing the CAA and other measures, he alleged innocent people were being incited to join such protests and create problems by spreading rumours.

Besides, some leaders of the organisations were also delivering inciting and intimidating speeches, even going to the extent of issuing threat to the lives of the PM and the Union Home Minister, he submitted.

Mizoram Govt yet to notify new prohibition rules: Minister

PTI ■ AIZAWL

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

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

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

PTI ■ MALAPPURAM (KERALA)

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

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

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

official said.

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

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

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

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) said.

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

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

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

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

GRSE delivers 4th anti-submarine warfare corvette to Navy

PTI ■ KOLKATA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mizoram tops in HIV/AIDS cases

GOVT TAKING STEPS TO TACKLE MENACE: MIN

PTI ■ AIZAWL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ THANE

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

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

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

PTI ■ PATNA

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

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

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

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

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

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

Industrialist VL Dutt is dead

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

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

Dr Dutt was the president of the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) during 1991-92 and was a widely respected industrialist.

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

He was instrumental in bridging the gap between the

industry and the government. His memory will continue to inspire entrepreneurs in India and abroad as an outstanding entrepreneur and a corporate statesman," said Dr Sangita Reddy, President, FICCI.

Dr Dutt, a graduate from Business Institute of Management, London was Chairman of India Vietnam Joint Business Council of FICCI. The Vietnamese President had presented the prestigious Medal of Friendship to Dr Dutt for his 'positive contributions' to the development of Socio-Economy of Phu Yen Province, contributions to strengthen traditional relation and overall partnership between Vietnam and India. He was also the Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Turkey in Chennai, for the States of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and the Union Territory of Puducherry.

Bangla star, ex-TMC MP Tapas Pal dead

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

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

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

Mani is credited as the first investigative journalist in Kerala who brought to light the massive deforestation happening in the Western Ghats under political patronage.

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

A Left fellow traveller, Mani was in the forefront against the appeasement politics pursued by both the Cong and the Communists in Kerala. The editorials that appeared in Kaumudi during his tenure as editor-in-chief

are still rated as the benchmark of quality journalism.

Later, he launched his own weekly Kala Kaumudi, which instantly became a rage among the youth of the State. The weekly was the first publication in Malayalam to bring literature, politics, science and spirituality under one umbrella. The Kala Kaumudi Group is known for the niche publications on literature, films, women and social issues.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, called on the Kala Kaumudi Gardens at Thiruvananthapuram and offered floral tributes to Mani. "Kerala has lost a legendary journalist who being the best in the industry also moulded many writers and media persons through the publications of which he was the proprietor," said Vijayan.

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

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

With no let-up in the ongoing tug of war between the ruling Shiv Sena and its allies over Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's decision to let NIA investigate the Bhima Koregaon-Elgaar Parishad case, the Congress on Tuesday opened a new front by coming out openly against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), National Register of Citizens (NRC) and National Population Register (NPR). On a day when Uddhav Thackeray of the Shiv Sena came out in support of the CAA, extended conditional support to the NPR and voiced his opposition to the NRC, Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) president and party minister in the MVA Cabinet Bal Saheb Thorat formally opposed CAA, NRC and NPR. "The Congress party's stand regarding #CAA #NRC #NPR is very clear and we are opposed to it. The Congress

party is opposed to anything that causes discrimination in the society. We will convince our alliance partners on the same," he tweeted. For the first time, Uddhav spelled out the Shiv Sena's stand on CAA, NRC and NPR. "CAA and NRC are two different subjects. NPR is a third subject. There is nothing to worry about in CAA. NRC has not come and it will not be implemented. If it (NRC) is implemented, it will not affect just Muslims, but it will also affect Hindus, Adivasis and other deprived sections of the society," Uddhav tweeted. In another tweet on NPR, Uddhav said: "NPR is more of a census. But, still I will have a look at the questions in the data collection form. But, I do not see there is impediment in NPR. Because, the census takes place once in ten years". The NCP has also serious reservations about NPR. After a meeting of NCP ministers convened by party chief Sharad Pawar, the party spokesperson

and minister Nawab Malik had said on Monday: "Before devising the strategy on NPR, we - MVA partners - will jointly study the questions in the NPR and views of the non-BJP governments. Because some irrelevant and un-called for information is being sought by the Centre as part of the data collection. The NCP is opposed to the date of birth and place of birth of parents and grandparents," Malik said. Both the NCP and Congress have urged the chief minister to convene a meeting of the leaders of the parties to devise a common strategy on NPR, CAA and NRC. In a related development, the chief minister's decision to let the NIA to investigate the Elgaar Parishad case continued to be a bone of contention between the ruling Shiv Sena and its allies in the MVA government. Uddhav, who has come in for a flak from both the NCP and Congress for his ad hoc decision to let the NIA to

investigate Bhima Koregaon-Elgaar Parishad case, sought to clarify his position. "Elgar Parishad conspiracy and Bhima-Koregaon violence are two different cases. As far as the Bhima-Koregaon case is concerned, it concerns Dalits. I have not given this case to the NIA. I would like to clarify that I will not let injustice to happen to the Dalits". However, there was some ambiguity in the NCP's stand on Bhima Koregaon-Elgaar Parishad case. On one hand, like Uddhav, Pawar also said that Elgaar Parishad and Bhima-Koregaon were two different cases. "The CM has powers to hand over the case to the NIA. There was no alternative but to hand over the case to the NIA," Pawar said. However, NCP's spokesperson and minister Nawab Malik reiterated the party's stand to order an inquiry by the SIT into the Bhima Koregaon-Elgaar Parishad case.

Pawar dares Modi Govt to hold mid-term LS polls

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

As the BJP predicted the collapse of MVA Government and consequent mid-term polls in the State, NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Tuesday turned the table on the principal Opposition party in the State by saying that it was for the latter, which rules the country, to hold mid-term polls in the country. Reacting to a BJP leader's comment that the MVA Government would soon collapse and there would be mid-term polls in the state, NCP chief said: "The mid-term polls are normally held in the country. It is in the hands of the BJP to hold mid-term polls in the country. Let the Union Cabinet and decide on holding the mid-term polls in the country".

Former Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnis had on Sunday dared the Shiv Sena to hold mid-term polls in the state. He had predicted that if the mid-term polls were held in the state, the BJP would defeat the Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress squarely and return to power in the state. Meanwhile, on Tuesday, former chief minister Narayan Rane predicted that since chief minister Uddhav Thackeray was not capable of running the government. "There would be mid-term polls in the state. I need not tell you that there is already considerable resentment within the Shiv Sena. Uddhav Thackeray will not continue in his post for long," Rane said.

Infrastructure is a catalyst for development: Guv

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Governor Jagdish A Mukhi on Tuesday asserted that infrastructure is a catalyst for development. He said the government is committed to the development of the state by strengthening infrastructure. The Centre is very liberal in investing in infrastructure to eliminate service backlogs of northeast with special emphasis on rural areas, Mukhi said at the inaugural session of North East Infrastructure Development Conclave, organised by the CII-North East, here. A well-planned infrastructure enables established businesses to expand their production levels and encourage small businesses to enter the market and as such, both Central and state governments are making concerted efforts to put in place a robust infrastructure for physical connectivity in the areas of air, water, internet and land transport, he said. He said the Union Budget has allocated funds for laying new tracks and doubling of railway lines in the northeast region, the governor said. Electrification of railway lines under the Northeast Frontier Railway was also going on and by 2022 the three states of Mizoram, Manipur and Sikkim will be connected by railways, he added. The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has also conceived of extensive national highway projects to give a boost to the region's physical connectivity. The governor also highlighted the measures being undertaken in northeast for bringing the region closer to the rest of the country with 12 airports in the region being operative and the Guwahati Airport being revamped with a new state of the art terminus. Moreover, a seamless digital connectivity has been in use in the region by liberalising its cyber space with India and Bangladesh signing an agreement for using unspent bandwidth available at Bangladesh's Cox Bazar in Chittagong to bring in a revolution not only in the northeast but also in some mainland states, he said. Assam is nurtured by two great rivers--the Brahmaputra and Barak and both along with their many tributaries have huge potential for river transport, tourism and industry. He also said that inland waterways in Assam received a

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

boost during the last five years. There was an urgent need for strengthening the physical infrastructure of Assam as it was the largest among the eight northeastern states, with a population of 33 million and area of 78 thousand square kilometre, the governor said. In the face of growing urban population and rising urban infrastructural needs, solutions like planning newer modes of transportation systems especially for congested areas has become the need of the hour, he added.

AAP MLA to hold Sunder Kaand recital every month

Programme to be organised on first Tuesday, says MLA Saurabh Bhardwaj

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Am Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA from Greater Kailash Saurabh Bhardwaj has said recitation of "Sunder Kaand" (a chapter in Tulsidas' Ramcharitmanas, which talks about Lord Hanuman's visit to Lanka) will be held on the first Tuesday of every month in different areas of his constituency to seek the blessings of Lord Hanuman and Lord Ram. Bhardwaj said advance bookings have been made and sponsors are ready for the scheduled programmes. Speaking to PTI on the issue, Bhardwaj said he has the freedom to practise his religion. "I am a Hindu. Arvind Kejriwal is a Hindu. Nobody can deny this fact. I have reli-



gious freedom. If I am getting Sunder Kaand recital done, it does not make me less progressive. Being progressive does not mean you are an atheist," he said. The AAP leader said he was "just following his faith" and has been doing it for long. "Today there is no election so it should not be seen as a

political thing. The controversy was started after the BJP questioned the Chief Minister's visit to Hanuman mandir, although the temple priest came on record to say he (Kejriwal) has been visiting the temple for years," he said. Also, Bhardwaj targeted the BJP and Congress leaders, saying they may be fuming but should be happy to be a part of "Sunder Kaand Paath" irrespective of their religion. Meanwhile, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor hit out at the AAP, saying its attachment towards Lord Hanuman was not a matter of religious faith, but a "political melodrama". "We expect that the Aam Aadmi Party which used to play politics in favour of a particular religious community will now work for all the religious communities of the society during the next five years," said another BJP spokesperson Ashok Goel Dehra. Former Delhi Government media adviser Nagendar Sharma also termed Bhardwaj's announcement as "disappointing". "Disappointed to see a competent legislator with progressive outlook fall into the fallacious trap of trying to outdo BJP in its game," he tweeted. Sharma, however, later deleted the tweet, saying it

was leading to rumours and "unnecessary interpretations". "My tweet was a suggestion in good faith to my very close friend @Saurabh_MLAgk, whom I consider as my younger brother, but since it was leading to rumours and unnecessary interpretation, I have deleted it," he said on Twitter. Party national convener Kejriwal's frequent visit to Hanuman Temple during his election campaign was trolled by the BJP leaders and its social media team. Kejriwal had also recited 'Hanuman Chalisa' during a TV programme earlier this month. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had said during a poll rally, "Now Kejriwal has started reciting the 'Hanuman Chalisa'. In coming days, you will see Owaisi reciting the same. This will certainly happen". Delhi BJP unit president Manoj Tiwari had called Kejriwal a "nakli bhakt" (fake worshipper).

Sharjeel Imam chargesheeted as instigator of Jamia violence

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi court on Tuesday sent Sharjeel Imam, named as an "instigator" by the Delhi Police in its chargesheet for violent protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) at New Friends' Colony here last year, to judicial custody till March 3. It stated that it had attached CCTV footage, call detail records and statements of over 100 witnesses as evidence in the chargesheet. Imam was arrested on sedition charges last month in a separate case. Earlier on Monday, the court had sent Imam to one-day custody of the Delhi Police in the case as it wanted to quiz him because an accused - Furkan - in the December 15, 2019 violence case has alleged in his disclosure that he was provoked by Imam's speeches. The police had earlier told the court that Furkan was arrested on the basis of a CCTV footage which showed him carrying a container allegedly containing petrol. Four people were arrested in the case on December 16 and sent to judicial custody. Furkan was arrested later.

ISDA renamed after Manohar Parrikar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Government has renamed Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (ISDA), a Government think tank, as Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses in order to "honour the commitment and legacy" of the late Defence Minister. The ISDA is a non-partisan, autonomous body dedicated to objective research and policy-relevant studies on all aspects of defence and security. Parrikar was Defence Minister from November 9, 2014 to March 14, 2017. He

died last year due to pancreatic cancer. He steered the Defence Ministry "through the tough challenges of attacks like Pathankot and Uri and responded to these with exemplary boldness," said a Government statement on Tuesday while announcing the decision to rename the ISDA. "An epitome of integrity and dedication in public life, throughout his career, late Parrikar showed a tremendous fighting spirit, taking on the odds with fearlessness," the statement noted. When Parrikar was the Defence Minister, India wit-

nessed a series of decisions that "enhanced its security capacities, boosted indigenous defence production and bettered the lives of ex-servicemen", it said. His biggest contribution was towards the implementation of long-standing One Rank One Pension (OROP) demand for the Armed forces, the statement said. The renaming of the ISDA will align the vision and aspiration of the premier defence institute with the contribution of the former Raksha Mantri, said the statement. Goa Chief Minister



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

Parrikar's son Utpal termed the renaming of the ISDA after his late father as a "proud moment." He said naming of such a prestigious and important institute (ISDA) of the country after a Goan is a "proud moment for every one of us." He also said only avid followers of Indian defence will get a hint about the magnitude of the Central Government's accomplishment in the field of defence adding, "I am happy that my father played a significant role in this in his short stint as the raksha mantri (Union Defence Minister)".

FROM PAGE 1

EDUCATION, INFRASTRUCTURE FOCUS OF UP BUDGET

The government sanctioned ₹ 270 crore for Atal Residential Schools being set up at all divisional headquarters. For roads, the government sanctioned ₹ 2,305 crore for construction and its widening while another ₹ 3,524 crore was set aside for repairs of roads. The government proposed ₹ 400 crore for the construction of courts, ₹ 150 crore for construction of a new building in Lucknow bench of Allahabad High Court. In religious tourism sector, a total of ₹ 85 crore was allotted for tourist facilities across the state, ₹ 10 crore for Tulsi Smarak Bhawan in Ayodhya, ₹ 180 crore for setting up a cultural centre in Varanasi and ₹ 200 crore for Kashi Vishwanath corridor. For minority welfare, the government sanctioned ₹ 783 crore for development of basic infrastructure and another Rs 479 crore for education facilities. Through the budget, the government claimed that it was estimating revenue saving of ₹ 27,450.88 crores. Fiscal deficit of the state during 2020-21 was estimated at around ₹ 53,195.46 crore which is 2.97 per cent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) while the state's debt liability is estimated to be of 28.8 per cent of GSDP.

UP ON PATH TO BE \$1 TRILLION ECONOMY: YOGI

efforts will be made to lay the foundation of Ganga Expressway by the end of this year. Yogi said that the budget focuses on higher education to make UP as the focal point of education, and thus the government is setting up new universities in Saharanpur, Azamgarh, and Aligarh besides setting up Atal Medical University in Lucknow. Budgetary provisions have been made for National Law University and Ayush University. The Chief Minister said that keeping in view the

UK MP'S VISA REVOKED FOR ANTI-INDIA ACTIVITIES

farmers of the state, provisions have been made for sharecroppers in the budget and Kisan Insurance will also be provided to them. He said that the government's priority is to address the problem of potable water in Bundelkhand and Vindhya regions. Besides, a provision has also been made for maintenance of cow sheds for stray cattle and to set up new cow shelters. UK MP's visa revoked for anti-India activities. A source said. The Labour Party MP had said despite having a valid visa she was denied entry into India after she landed at the airport here about 8.50 am from Dubai. She was among a group of British MPs who issued formal letters expressing concerns over the revocation of Jammu & Kashmir's special status under Article 370 in August last year. "We are gravely concerned at the announcement by Indian Home Minister, Amit Shah, that Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which grants special status to Jammu & Kashmir, has been removed by Presidential Order," the Opposition MP had noted in her letter to UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab. Abrahams reacted on Twitter, "Very disappointing that a friend can't respectfully criticise another friend." Isn't this the sign of a healthy democracy?" She also posted a shot of her visa in a bid to prove that it was valid till October. She also said in a statement, "I presented myself at the immigration desk with my documents including my e-visa, had my photograph taken and then 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

RECORD RICE, WHEAT OUTPUT LIKELY DESPITE FLOOD

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 politician said she rang a relative she was to stay with, and he called the British High Commission. "I'm prepared to let the fact that I've been treated like a criminal, and I hope they will let me visit my family and friends," Ms Abrahams had said. Meanwhile, Congress leader Singhvi backed the Government's deportation of British lawmaker Debbie Abrahams, saying she is not just an MP but a "Pakistan proxy". record 117.47 million tonnes. It is higher by 9.67 million tonnes than the five years' average production of 107.80 million tonnes. Production of wheat during 2019-20 is estimated at record 106.21 million tonnes. It is higher by 2.61 million tonnes as compared to wheat production during 2018-19 and is higher by 11.60 million tonnes than the average wheat production of 94.61 million tonnes. Total Pulses production during 2019-20 is estimated at 23.02 million tonnes which is higher by 2.76 million tonnes than the five years' average production of 20.26 million tonnes. Production of nutri/coarse cereals estimated at 45.24 million tonnes, which is higher by 2.18 million tonnes than the production of 43.06 million tonnes achieved during 2018-19. Further, it is also higher by 2.16 million tonnes than the average production. Total production of Sugarcane in the country during 2019-20 is estimated at 353.85 million tonnes. The production of sugarcane during 2019-20 is higher by 4.07 million tonnes than the average sugarcane production of 349.78 million tonnes. Production of cotton is estimated at 34.89 million bales (of 170 kg each) is higher by 6.85 million bales than the production of 28.04 million bales during 2018-19. Production of jute and mesta is estimated at 9.81 million bales (of 180 kg each).

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

Walk-In-Interview

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

Sr.Dy. Secretary for Secretary

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Possession Notice (As per Rule 8(2) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Reliance Home Finance Ltd. under the Securitization, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued Demand Notices upon the Borrowers/Co-borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower/Co-borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Co-borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The Borrower/Co-borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Reliance Home Finance Ltd.

Name of Borrower/Co-borrower	Description of Property	Date of Demand Notices	Date of Possession	Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)
1.) Rafiq Hussain 2.) Yasmin Rafiq 3.) M B K Eating Point	All that piece and parcel of the property bearing Mortgage over following properties: Comm. Prop. Hall/ Office Space No. 5 On 2 nd Floor, Bhukhand, Khasra No -275 SA, Batha Sabhoul, Ward - Lala Lajpat Rai, Lucknow -226001	25 th September-2019	14 th February-2020	Rs.2,26,32,980/- (Rupees Two Crore Twenty Six Lakhs Thirty Two Thousands Nine Hundred and Eighty only) plus interest and incidental cost thereon against loan account No. RHLPLKN000062707. And Rs.17,05,817/- (Rupees Seventeen Lakhs Five Thousand Eight hundred Seventeen only) plus interest and incidental cost thereon against loan account No. RHLPLKN000063636. And Rs.58,68,368/- (Rupees Fifty Eight Lakhs Sixty Eight thousand Three Hundred and Sixty Eight only) plus interest and incidental cost thereon against loan account No. RHLPLKN000067704.
1.) Waseem M 2.) Mohammad Sufiyan 3.) King Ready made And Hosiyar	All that piece and parcel of the property bearing Mortgage over following properties: Commercial Property Shop No 18 & 19 - Property No 18/23 & 19/24 (New Market) Paper Mill Scheme Nishatnani, Lucknow - 226007	25th October-2019	14 th February-2020	Rs.28,36,162/- (Rupees Twenty Eight Lakhs Thirty Six Thousands One Hundred and Sixty Two only) plus interest and incidental cost thereon against loan account No. RHLPLKN000063633.

The Borrower/Co-borrowers/Mortgagor(s) attention is invited to the provision of Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Sd/-
Authorized Officer,
Reliance Home Finance Limited

PLACE : Lucknow
DATE : 19, February, 2020

Message of Shaheen Bagh

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



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

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

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

Too little to charge

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



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

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

Now, a green fund

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



VK BAHUGUNA

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(The writer is a retired civil servant)

SOUNDBITE

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



Political strategist —Prashant Kishor

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



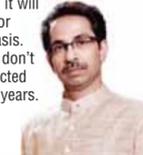
Actor —Vicky Kaushal

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



Indian Envoy —Syed Akbaruddin

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



Maharashtra CM —Udhav Thackeray

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Together, we can

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

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

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

Wall to hide misdeeds and guilt

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

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



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

G David Milton Maruthancode

mon agenda too: To challenge a rising and aggressive China and create a new rules-based order in East Asia. Challenges faced by both are entirely different in nature and it's difficult to find common ground. Yet, both nations must unite and plan the

way forward strategically. A "mini trade" deal may not help iron out differences but is of utmost importance for India, given its economy is in the midst of a slowdown at the moment.

Ganapathi Bhat Akola

Better late than never

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

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

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

Bal Govind Noida

Shameful incident

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

Shashi Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

What lies ahead for social sector

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



URVASHI PRASAD



SARAH IYPE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE CONGRESS PARTY ALWAYS CHOOSES TO STAND WITH THOSE WHO ARE INIMICAL TO THE COUNTRY AND RILE UP SECURITY FORCES.
 —BJP SPOKESPERSON
 GVL NARASIMHA RAO

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



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

Use AI to fight pandemics

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



ABHINAV VERMA



YUKTI SHARMA

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

at present these discussions are nascent.

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

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

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

emergence altogether.

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

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

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

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

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

Don't write the Congress off yet

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



KALYANI SHANKAR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FOREIGN EYE



INVEST IN POOR NATIONS

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

Birla meets Telecom Secy, looks for ways to keep company afloat

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Amid talks of the government mulling encashing of bank guarantee over default in payment of dues, Vodafone Idea Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla on Tuesday met Telecom Secretary Anshu Prakash as he looked for options to keep the company afloat. After the meeting, Birla said he "cannot say anything at the moment."

Birla, who met the telecom secretary for over an hour, was accompanied by Ravinder Takkar, MD & CEO of Vodafone Idea. He refused to respond to queries on whether or not Vodafone Idea Ltd (VIL) would default on payment of AGR dues or if the company could head towards insolvency. Vodafone Idea on Monday paid Rs 2,500 crore to DoT and promised to pay another Rs 1,000 crore before the end of the week.

But the amount paid for now is less than 5 per cent of the dues that the DoT estimates the company owes to the government following a Supreme Court ruling that asked for including non-telecom revenues of telcos in computing statutory payments such as licence fee and spectrum charges. The Supreme Court on Monday refused to stop DoT



from taking any coercive steps for recovery of dues from Vodafone Idea. In December, Birla said Vodafone Idea may have to shut if there is no relief on statutory dues. "If we are not getting anything, then I think it is the end of the story for Vodafone Idea," Birla had said. "It does not make sense to put good money after bad... We will shut shop."

After a Supreme Court rap on February 14 for missing the payment deadline, top telecom firms Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and Tata Teleservices on Monday scrambled to pay a part of the outstanding dues. While Vodafone Idea put in Rs 2,500 crore and promised another Rs 1,000 crore later this week, Airtel paid Rs 10,000 crore.

Airtel said it will clear the remaining dues before the next

date of hearing on March 17 but Vodafone Idea has so far not provided a clear deadline for making all payments. Tata Teleservices paid Rs 2,197 crore, the entire outstanding it believes to have arisen after the October ruling of the apex court for calculating dues after adding non-telecom revenues.

"Tata Teleservices and Tata Teleservices (Maharashtra) Ltd have made a payment of Rs 2,197 crore to the DoT towards licence fee and spectrum usage charges," the company said in a statement on Monday. The payment is to settle all its AGR outstanding. "TTSL and TTML have also submitted to DoT the details of calculations in support of the payment," it had said. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) — which last week drew flak for ordering no coercive action

even after telcos missed the January 23 payment deadline set by the Supreme Court — is mulling the option of encashing bank guarantees given by firms when they got telecom licences, as none of the telcos have paid the full amount.

Encashing of the bank guarantees may sound the death knell for companies such as Vodafone Idea which has been struggling to garner the dues. A financial bank guarantee is equal to two quarters of licence fee and other dues. This amount could be in the range of Rs 5,000 crore each for Airtel and Vodafone Idea.

The Supreme Court last week rejected a plea by companies such as Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea for extension in the payment schedule and asked them to deposit an estimated Rs 1.47 lakh crore in past dues for spectrum and licences. It threatened to initiate contempt proceedings against top executives of these firms for non-payment. Some telecom firms are already struggling with mounting losses and debt and the additional liability has raised concerns of them defaulting on existing loans. Of the estimated dues that include interest and penalty for late payments, Airtel and Vodafone Idea owe about 60 per cent.

PE/VC-backed startups created over 26 lakh jobs in 2019

New Delhi (PTI): Start-ups backed by private equity and venture capital investors created more than 26 lakh employment opportunities in 2019, an increase of 27 per cent from the preceding year, according to a report. Such start-ups had created 20.5 lakh direct and indirect jobs in 2018 and 16.5 lakh employment opportunities in 2017.

"Private equity or venture capital (PE/VC) investments are not only creating direct and indirect jobs, but also bubbling up new fast-growing job segments such as professional services, freelancers, delivery and driver partners," the report noted. The report was prepared by Indian Private Equity and Venture Capital Association (IPEVCA) in partnership with Zinnov, a global management and strategy consulting firm. It noted that technology-led solutions are touching the lives of Indians in the remotest corners of the country and also across income segments because alternative investment funds are focused on Indian market too.

The report was developed to understand the value created by venture capital and private equity investors through technology and technology-enabled start-ups in India.

Sensex, Nifty clock 4th successive loss

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

Intra-day, the Sensex fell over 444 points and touched the day's low of 40,610.95. The NSE barometer Nifty too staged a late recovery from the day's low and settled at 11,992.50, showing a fall of 53.30 points or 0.44 per cent.

On the Sensex chart, Bharti Airtel was the biggest loser with nearly 3 per cent drop in its share price. It was followed by IndusInd Bank, Maruti Suzuki, HeroMoto Corp and Tata Steel. The Supreme Court on Monday refused to stop the telecom department from taking any coercive steps for recovery of dues from Vodafone Idea. Shares of Vodafone Idea on Tuesday tanked more than 16 per cent in intra-day trade due to rating downgrade on AGR dues and other issues of the company.

Reliance Industries

declined nearly 1 per cent after it announced consolidation of all its media and distribution businesses under flagship 'Network18'. The three group entities namely Hathway Cable & Datacom, Den Networks and TV18 Broadcast — which would be merged into Network18 — rose by 20 per cent, 9.98 per cent and 14.7 per cent, respectively.

"Market sentiment continued to be hit by Covid-19 after the issue of warning note from a key global MNC regarding the sales impact. Global weakness is expected to hurt domestic market as high valuation and low economic growth is not supportive," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services commented.

Also, the huge government dues to be paid by telecom sector will keep banking stocks volatile impacting the market performance, Nair added. In contrast, SBI, Infosys, PowerGrid, Tech Mahindra and TCS featured among major gainers. Sectorally, BSE telecom index suffered the most by shedding over 4 per cent. Other top laggards included metal, auto and realty indices. In the broader market, BSE midcap and smallcap indices underperformed the benchmark, dropping by 0.6 per cent and 0.45 per cent, respectively.

India Inc to dole out average 9.1% salary hike this year: Report

New Delhi (PTI): Companies in India are projected to dole out an average salary hike of 9.1 per cent this year, the highest level in the Asia-Pacific region, as they look for key talent and niche skills, says a report. However, the quantum is lower than 9.3 per cent increase seen in 2019 and also the lowest in a decade. Leading HR consultancy Aon's annual salary hike survey released on Tuesday also showed that around 39 per cent of the companies surveyed are expected to give as much as 10 per cent increase in pay. The results are based on responses from over 1,000 organisations spread across more than 20 industries.

In the Asia-Pacific region, India is expected to dole out the highest salary hike at 9.1 per cent, followed by China at 6.3 per cent this year. For India, the previous lowest quantum of hike was 6.6 per cent in 2009, as per Aon. As per the survey, Philippines is anticipated to see a salary rise of 5.8 per cent, followed by Malaysia (5.3 per cent), Singapore (3.8 per cent) and Australia (3.1 per cent) in 2020. "Despite economic challenges in 2019, organisations in India are taking a positive view. Pay increases in India continue to be the highest in the region," Tzeitel Fernandes, Partner (Rewards Solutions) at Aon told reporters here.

NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	12028.25	12030.75	11908.05	11992.50	-53.30
COALINDIA	168.10	173.95	165.00	172.75	4.90
ZEE	240.00	247.55	238.65	245.70	6.50
BPC	461.00	472.50	456.00	472.30	10.65
GAIL	118.00	119.75	116.75	119.75	1.75
ADANIPOR	362.50	368.45	358.35	368.00	5.20
SBI	430.00	437.20	429.40	430.05	3.85
CIPLA	433.00	441.65	430.00	437.00	5.10
EICHERMOT	18500.00	18791.95	18339.60	18751.25	215.35
INFY	785.00	799.05	783.65	798.50	9.05
POWERGRID	182.60	186.35	180.85	185.20	1.60
IOC	111.90	115.10	110.45	112.70	0.90
TECHM	825.35	840.00	825.35	838.55	5.30
ITC	1281.50	1289.80	1266.45	1288.00	7.80
LTS	2199.95	2221.00	2186.05	2215.00	11.75
ULTRACEMCO	4433.60	4488.20	4370.10	4470.70	20.85
BAJAJ-AUTO	3064.70	3090.55	3033.50	3086.00	10.40
BAJAJFINSV	9527.00	9564.95	9416.00	9550.00	21.15
KOTAKBANK	1682.50	1699.80	1678.30	1692.95	1.85
M&M	520.50	524.90	514.10	523.20	0.45
WIPRO	243.75	244.85	241.25	244.00	0.20
NTPC	106.60	110.90	103.80	110.30	0.00
HDFCBANK	121.90	121.80	120.50	121.05	-0.10
ICICIBANK	541.00	544.40	536.00	540.90	-0.70
BAFINANCE	471.40	471.95	470.60	470.00	-0.65
BRITANNIA	3080.00	3080.00	3020.00	3075.00	-9.10
TCS	2045.00	2040.00	2005.00	2045.00	-0.75
TITAN	1314.00	1318.90	1301.25	1311.00	-5.05
AXISBANK	737.75	737.75	724.70	735.50	-2.90
ONGC	99.95	100.25	96.55	99.50	-0.45
HINDUNILVR	2252.60	2262.95	2222.10	2241.50	-11.10
SUNPHARMA	470.00	410.85	399.05	406.10	-2.30
HCLTECH	613.95	615.80	605.15	609.80	-3.65
ASIANPAINT	1879.90	1879.90	1861.00	1869.25	-12.15
RELIANCE	1475.90	1475.90	1457.40	1466.90	-11.35
TATASTEEL	434.00	435.15	421.30	432.65	-4.20
VEDL	141.75	141.75	137.50	140.70	-1.40
NESTLEIND	1659.90	1659.90	1638.05	16417.50	-170.95
SWSTEEEL	289.00	289.15	281.10	285.00	-3.15
HDFC	234.00	234.00	230.04	232.05	-26.20
DREDDYD	3288.00	3288.00	3223.35	3253.00	-42.55
HEROMOTOCO	2283.20	2283.20	2225.00	2249.95	-33.40
MARUTI	6925.00	6930.00	6735.80	6795.00	-111.75
UPL	59.00	59.00	57.40	58.85	-10.15
GRASIM	737.35	741.20	715.55	723.55	-13.85
BHARTIARTL	563.55	568.85	537.30	549.00	-15.85
HINDALCO	189.15	189.45	181.75	184.80	-5.45
INDUSINDBNK	1172.70	1172.70	1108.45	1138.15	-34.80
TATAMOTORS	168.00	168.00	158.60	162.55	-6.55
YESBANK	37.35	37.35	33.65	34.80	-2.35
INFRAEL	235.40	235.40	200.70	208.35	-26.65

NIFTY NEXT 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	28116.45	28116.45	27750.75	28060.35	-109.25
MCOWELL-N	699.95	729.90	690.00	727.00	26.60
AUROPHARMA	490.00	503.35	482.30	502.55	8.95
PAGEIND	22500.00	22970.00	2221.50	22850.00	358.65
PETRONET	255.60	260.80	254.00	259.80	4.00
PEC	126.05	128.25	123.15	126.00	1.55
INDIGO	1447.40	1478.80	1426.75	1473.65	17.85
MARICO	298.00	301.00	292.15	300.00	3.40
DMART	2334.95	2384.60	2305.05	2365.50	26.05
SIEMENS	1379.65	1398.00	1362.10	1397.80	15.05
DABUR	499.00	502.20	496.00	506.00	5.05
PNB	51.90	52.40	49.90	52.45	0.50
DIVISLAB	2154.85	2180.20	2142.50	2170.00	15.15
CADILAC	266.60	269.50	261.10	267.80	1.45
MOTHERSUNI	121.85	124.45	119.60	123.30	1.40
SBLIFE	915.00	921.15	907.10	916.00	1.60
PIDILITIND	1605.00	1605.00	1567.50	1580.00	1.60
BERGEPAINT	578.55	580.45	570.20	580.00	-0.15
ICICIGI	1339.00	1345.00	1326.05	1338.00	-0.65
PEL	1526.95	1535.70	1473.05	1530.00	-1.65
HAVELLS	602.50	603.45	589.00	602.00	-0.75
ACC	1425.00	1428.95	1402.60	1421.10	-2.85
DLF	217.20	219.35	216.55	218.95	-0.45
ICICIPRULI	470.10	473.90	466.00	472.90	-1.50
GOLPAL	1332.35	1334.00	1306.60	1326.70	-5.65
COORP	626.00	626.00	613.00	623.05	-2.70
SHREECEM	24000.00	24000.00	23900.75	23912.85	-115.20
BIOCEN	303.10	304.40	295.05	301.60	-1.55
HDFCAMC	3245.00	3246.00	3182.00	3225.00	-19.30
BAJAJHLDNG	3718.25	3729.00	3680.30	3695.60	-22.65
OFSS	2885.80	2899.55	2855.00	2860.00	-18.35
NHPC	22.00	22.15	21.10	21.85	-0.15
HDFCLIFE	564.80	565.35	556.00	562.00	-3.90
UBL	1276.90	1276.90	1256.00	1264.55	-9.05
SRTRANSFIN	1277.00	1281.75	1245.35	1262.20	-14.00
ASHOKLEY	81.00	81.50	79.15	80.50	-1.05
PGH	11400.00	11400.00	11210.00	11259.80	-152.15
LUPIN	710.80	710.95	699.00	703.10	-9.45
NMDC	99.90	100.85	96.90	99.65	-1.35
AMBUJACEM	203.25	203.60	197.95	201.00	-2.80
L&T	123.55	123.60	119.90	122.30	-1.75
BANKBARODA	82.25	82.40	78.20	81.00	-1.30
BOSCHLTD	14870.60	14899.00	14435.00	14600.00	-270.50
NIACL	133.60	133.60	127.55	130.00	-2.85
HINDZINC	190.00	190.00	184.10	185.00	-4.15
IBULHSGFN	307.95	307.95	293.30	300.90	-6.85
HINDPETRO	228.70	230.20	222.25	224.55	-5.55
GICRE	211.30	212.90	205.60	207.45	-5.25
BANDHANBNK	434.65	437.65	420.20	423.35	-11.60
CONCOR	551.35	552.55	531.70	533.00	-17.60
IDEA	3.25	3.25	2.80	3.05	-0.35

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP	Change
INDUSINDBNK	1174.00	1174.05	1109.20	1144.15	-279.95
TATACHEM	756.00	756.55	743.20	750.00	-6.00
BHARTIARTL	564.00	568.60	537.65	547.75	-57.75
MUTHOOTFIN	872.20	898.40	848.00	869.00	-10.00
RELIANCE	1479.00	1479.00	1458.00	1466.10	-10.00
IDEA	3.28	3.28	2.83	3.03	-0.25
SBI	315.90	319.00	309.50	317.60	-0.70
HDFC	2346.00	2346.00	2304.25	2323.15	-22.85
YESBANK	37.45	37.45	33.70	35.05	-2.40
TATASTEEL	434.40	434.75	421.35	431.65	-2.75
TATAMOTORS	168.40	168.40	158.60	161.60	-6.80
DMART	2330.00	2386.00	2307.35	2365.30	-64.70
IBULHSGFN	308.00	308.70	294.45	300.00	-7.

Death toll in coronavirus in China climbs to over 1860

PTI ■ BEIJING

The death toll from China's coronavirus epidemic climbed to 1,868 on Tuesday as 98 more people died while the total number of confirmed cases jumped to 72,436, officials said.

Of the new deaths, 93 were reported from Hubei Province, the epicentre of the virus, three from Henan, and one each from Hebei and Hunan, said the National Health Commission.

Hubei reported 1,807 new confirmed cases, taking the total number of such cases to 59,989 in the province. Another 1,432 new suspected cases were reported from the rest of China.

On Monday, 1,097 patients

became seriously ill and 11,741 patients remained in severe condition, the commission said.

Of the 41,957 patients hospitalised in Hubei, 9,117 were still in severe condition and another 1,853 in critical condition, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The province also saw 1,223 patients discharged from hospital after recovery on Monday, bringing the total number of discharged patients in the province to 7,862. A total of 12,552 people had been discharged from hospital after recovery across China so far, it said.

In view of human-to-human transmission of the disease, over 1.41 lakh people who have come in contact

with the people who contracted the virus are still under medical observation, it said.

By Monday, 60 confirmed cases including one death had been reported in Hong Kong 10 confirmed cases in Macao and 22 in Taiwan including one death.

Top World Health Organisation experts, including from the US, have joined the fight against the virus, called COVID-19, in China.

China confirmed that the 12-member WHO team includes Americans, as sought by the US.

"The foreign experts on board the China-WHO Joint Mission have arrived in Beijing. They have started relevant activities. We have experts from the US in the mission,"

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told media.

NHC said China has stepped up efforts to shore up weak spots as the epidemic prevention and control have entered the most crucial stage. "Wuhan, capital of Hubei Province, remains the main battlefield," Wang Hesheng, deputy head of NHC, said. "Improving admission and survival rates and reducing infection and fatality rates are still the most urgent tasks."

Nine temporary hospitals with more than 6,960 beds have opened in Hubei.

As of February 14, a total of 217 medical teams with 25,633 medical workers had been sent to Hubei, the Xinhua report said.



Children attend ballet lessons wearing masks to protect themselves from severe acute respiratory syndrome, SARS, in Hong Kong. During the 2002-2003 outbreak of SARS, a related virus, experts discovered that more than 300 people were infected through a defective sewage system in a Hong Kong housing estate. AP

Pak posts two officials in coronavirus-hit Wuhan to reassure jittery students: FO

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has posted two officials from its embassy in Beijing to Wuhan, the epicentre of the deadly coronavirus outbreak, to meet students in different universities and get an update on their well-being, the Foreign Office said on Tuesday.

China accepted a request by Pakistan to allow the two-member special task force from the embassy in Beijing to go to Wuhan, the capital of central Hubei province, the Foreign Office said in a statement.

"On Pakistan's request, China allowed a two-member special Task Force from the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing to go to Wuhan city to meet our students and coordinate all

assistance to them," FO Spokesperson Aisha Farooqi tweeted on Tuesday.

"The officers will return to Beijing once the lockdown in Wuhan is lifted, and situation is stabilised," the tweet read.

According to the Foreign Office, more than 28,000 Pakistani students, including 500 in Wuhan, are studying in China.

Some of them, have through social media had been persistently asking Pakistan government to help them come back.

The task force, which will remain in coordination with the Chinese authorities, will be in Wuhan and "will return to Beijing once the lockdown in Wuhan is lifted in its entirety and on-ground situation is

completely stabilised", the statement added.

Wuhan has been under lockdown since January 23 because the city with a population of 11-million is the origin point of the deadly coronavirus outbreak. The COVID-19 virus, as it is now known, has so far infected at least 70,000 people and killed 1,868.

The majority of those cases are in the Hubei province. China has quarantined more than 50 million people throughout the province and all transportation in and out of Wuhan has been halted.

The Foreign Office staffers visited Pakistani students in four universities and also met administrative staff in each university "to get first-hand information on the health and

safety needs of the students".

"In the coming days, the officers will visit students in three other universities as well as the administrative staff in those universities to ensure the welfare of Pakistani students in Wuhan," it said.

It added that all Pakistani students in the universities that the officers have thus far visited were "safe, healthy, and well-looked after".

"Under the supervision of Ambassador of Pakistan, an 11-member core group was constituted to daily monitor the evolving situation and respond to queries/requests of Pakistani students."

The embassy has also setup two hotlines for facilitation of the students in China, the statement said.

Hospital director at China virus epicentre dies

AFP ■ BEIJING

A hospital director at the epicentre of China's virus epidemic died Tuesday, state media said, the latest medical worker to fall victim to the new coronavirus spreading across the country.

The COVID-19 virus, which is believed to have originated in Wuhan late last year, has infected more than 72,000 people and killed nearly 1,900.

Liu Zhiming, the director of Wuchang Hospital in Wuhan, died Tuesday morning after "all-out rescue efforts failed," state broadcaster CCTV reported.

China said last week that six medical workers had died from the virus, while 1,716 have been infected.

Liu's death was initially reported by Chinese media and bloggers shortly after midnight on Tuesday — but the stories were later deleted and replaced with reports that doctors were still trying to save him.

After initial reports of his death were denied, the hospital told AFP on Tuesday morning that doctors were giving him life-saving treatment.

Liu's death has echoes of that of Wuhan ophthalmologist Li Wenliang, who had been punished by authorities for sounding the alarm about the virus in late December.

Li's death prompted a national outpouring of grief as well as anger against the authorities, who were accused of mishandling the crisis.

People took to social media to mourn Liu on Tuesday, with many users on the Twitter-like Weibo platform drawing critical comparisons between Liu's death and Li's.

In both cases their deaths were initially reported in state media posts — later deleted — and their deaths denied, before being finally confirmed again.

"Has everyone forgotten what happened to Li Wenliang? They forcefully attempted resuscitation after he died," one Weibo commenter wrote. Another commenter said, Liu "already died last night, (but) some people are addicted to torturing corpses".

A hashtag about Liu's death had 29 million views by Tuesday afternoon.

Doctors in Wuhan face shortages of masks and protective bodysuits, with some even wearing makeshift hazmat suits and continuing to work despite showing respiratory symptoms, health workers have told AFP.

Hubei province and its capital Wuhan have been the hardest hit by the virus, accounting for nearly 1,800 of the deaths from the virus so far.

Chinatowns feel brunt of virus panic

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Normally bustling century-old Chinatowns from Melbourne to San Francisco have fallen quiet and businesses are struggling to survive as fears over the deadly novel coronavirus outbreak ripple around the world.

"Scaremongering is rampant" complains Max Huang, owner of the Juicy Bao restaurant in Melbourne's historic Chinese district.

"Customers won't come in if they can avoid it." Huang's eatery sits among dozens of restaurants making up Australia's oldest Chinatown enclave, dating back to the influx of fortune-seekers during an 1850s gold rush.

Although the epicentre of the COVID-19 epidemic is more than a ten-hour-flight way, and Australia has seen just a handful of cases, the stigma of a disease that has claimed more than 1,500 lives is pervasive.

Streets are notably quieter, face-masks are a commonplace and even a Lunar New Year dragon dance failed to bring in the usual crowds.

Businesses report their earnings have dropped by more than half and they have been forced to cut staff hours dramatically, a situation echoed in Chinatowns across the world.

At the usually buzzing Empire Seafood Restaurant in Vancouver's Richmond suburb, getting a table is now a breeze.

"Usually we'd have a large line-up time of approximately five-ten tables, but today there is no line up at all," assistant general manager Ivan Yeung said.

"Some people have already cancelled their parties and banquets. Many restaurants are seeing the same thing. Hopefully, this gets back to normal really soon."

A ban on travellers from China has hit many neighbourhoods particularly hard.

"Usually we have Chinese tourists coming at this time, but now it's like zero," said Tony Siu, manager of the popular Cantonese restaurant R&G Lounge in San Francisco.

"They often get the sea bass or the

salt and pepper crab, that are our famous dishes."

In Australia, the travel ban has been compounded by almost 100,000 Chinese students being unable to fly Down Under to start the academic year.

"Our main customers are from China... (so) it's very difficult," said Su Yin, whose pancake store sits downstairs from a Melbourne college with a large Chinese student base.

Hoping to reassure would-be customers, some businesses have tacked up notices saying they disinfect their interiors regularly to prevent disease.

Others have gone a step further installing hand sanitiser for guests and giving staff face masks and rubber gloves.

But such measures appear to have had limited success.

Rebecca Lyu, a Chinese student living in London, has a hard time convincing friends to join her to eat or shop.

"Some of my friends refused to go eat at restaurants in Chinatown because they are worried about the virus," she said.

Many believe xenophobia has worsened the situation further.

Fred Lo's souvenir store in San Francisco is usually frequented by tourists from Europe and South America.

But "for the past two weeks, there's been a lot less people, at least 50 percent less, even though nobody is sick or has even been to China," he said, adding business is as bad as it has been since he began working there in 1975.

"It's unfair that a lot of people are scared of Chinese people," said Eddie Lau, president of Melbourne's Chinese Chamber of Commerce. "We tell people, 'we are fine, don't be scared.'"

In London, David Tang said he had clearly noticed others avoiding him in recent weeks, but understood why people were afraid and had tried to take it in his stride.

"I travel by train every morning. One day last week, all the people were standing, and I've got an empty seat next to me," he said. "I laughed about it."

China to waive tariffs on US medical imports amid virus outbreak

AFP ■ BEIJING

China will waive trade-war tariffs on imports of selected US medical equipment from March 2, the government said Tuesday, as the country battles to contain the new coronavirus epidemic.

The move comes as doctors and nurses treating virus patients in China's overstretched hospitals struggle to deal with the health crisis amid a shortage of basic medical items.

More than 72,000 people have been infected by the outbreak of the new COVID-19 strain in China, which has claimed the lives of over 1,800 people.

Patient monitors, blood transfusion equipment and instruments to measure blood

pressure are among the products that qualify for the exemptions, according to a list released by the Tariff Commission of the State Council.

They are among 696 US products that now qualify for waivers, including key agricultural and energy items such as frozen pork and beef, soybeans and liquified natural gas.

Other products include some types of wheat, corn and sorghum, certain metals such as copper and lead ore, as well as diesel and other fuel oils.

The commission said the latest move was "to better meet the growing needs of Chinese consumers" and that it would accept applications for exemptions from firms in China.

The tariff waivers will apply for a designated period, supporting firms that want to import from the US based on "business considerations," said authorities.

China's latest waivers are among the most substantial in the trade war.

In early December, Beijing announced tariff waivers on some US soybean and pork imports.

Later in the month, it exempted more goods, including US chemicals such as industrial glue and adhesives, industrial polymers and types of paraffin, which can be found in cosmetics and food.

Apart from the current virus crisis, China has seen a spike in pork prices over the past year due to African Swine Fever, which ravaged pig

herds across the country — with authorities working to ease the strain.

US-China trade tensions have been dialling down, with both countries signing a partial trade deal in mid-January. Beijing committed to boost purchases of US goods and services by \$200 billion.

More than a week ago, it announced it would halve tariffs on \$75 billion worth of US imports as part of its trade truce with the US.

China has also made other moves to ease the supply of resources in the country amid the virus fight, and said earlier this month that US imports which can be used in its fight against the deadly virus will be exempted from retaliatory tariffs imposed in the trade war.

Using peacekeeping operations' funds for other purposes bad faith: India

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

India, which is among the largest troop contributors to the UN peacekeeping force, has voiced concern over the delay and non-payment of funds to contributor countries and closed missions, terming it as "bad faith" if the reserves are used for other purposes.

India has been among the few countries to have fully paid its dues to the UN on time. The UN, however, owed India USD 38 million, which is among the highest it has to pay to any country, for peacekeeping operations as of March 2019.

Highlighting India's priority issues for deliberations in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, Permanent Representative Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin said the financial situation of the UN Peacekeeping, particularly the non-payment or delayed payment of arrears to the Troop/Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) remains a cause of concern.

While some "ameliorative measures", introduced last year,

did provide a temporary reprieve, he said the "dismal practice" of delaying payments to T/PCCs seems to be making a come back.

He also highlighted the "festering" matter of payments for so called "closed" peacekeeping missions, saying non-payment of peacekeeping dues, for years after the end of peacekeeping missions, ensures that there is no closure to this matter.

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

The Indian envoy also called for an "institutionalization of an approach," saying it is essential that all key actors are associated in a consistent and predictable manner in the decision-making matrix.

He voiced concern that in practice, "we have not moved beyond perfunctory efforts. We need to agree on practical measures to institutionalize engagement and cooperation

between the TCCs/PCCs, the Security Council and the Secretariat."

He also asserted that there can be no substitute for professional competence of those engaged in all aspects of UN peacekeeping. The performance of peacekeeping operations should be measured in relation to political and operational realities, priorities set for implementing mandate, adequacy and appropriateness of resources.

"The phenomenon that exist today of mandates following budgets is not sustainable. Budgets should follow mandates," he said.

India called for assessment of instances of reported under-performance, saying such assessment needs to examine whether there were units available at higher levels in the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS) that were overlooked during selection.

It also needs to be examined whether caveats have impacted performance; whether poor performance is due to lack of resources, includ-

ing equipment; or whether the mandate, including guidelines, were not clear, resulting in unsatisfactory implementation.

"Honest assessment and feedback is essential to have an effective accountability system. Assessing performance without determining accountability will leave us open to repeating errors," Akbaruddin said.

He voiced criticism that established mechanisms for discussion and agreement seem to be hollowing out, noting that there is a visible reluctance to revise the reimbursement parameters, even after following the agreed revision procedures.

During the recent discussions at the Contingent Owned Equipment (COE) Working Group, there was no consensus among key partners to increase the COE reimbursement rates, while the available National Cost Data estimates clearly suggested an upward revision of the scales.

Akbaruddin said the triennial COE Working Group has met seven times so far during nearly 20 years.

AFP ■ SHYAMNAGAR (B'DESH)

Abandoned by her sons, shunned by her neighbours and branded a witch.

Mosammat Rashida's crime? Her husband was killed by a Bengal tiger.

Women like her are ostracised in many rural villages in Bangladesh, where they are viewed as the cause of their partner's misfortune.

"My sons have told me that I am an unlucky witch," she told AFP in her flimsy plank home, in the honey-hunters' village of Gabura at the edge of the Sundarbans — a 10,000-square-kilometre (3,860-square-mile) mangrove forest that straddles Bangladesh and India. Her husband died while out collecting honey in the jungles there.

"Honey-hunters prefer to collect honey mostly in the southwestern Sundarbans, where most of the man-eaters (tigers) live," leading Bengal tiger expert at Jahangirnagar University, Monirul Khan, told AFP.

Tigers are an endangered species but climate change and human development is reducing their wild habitat, often forcing

them towards villages in search of food. Wildlife charities estimate there are some 100 tigers in the Bangladesh side of the Sundarbans.

At least 519 men died from tiger attacks in 50 villages in one district — home to half a million people — between 2001 and 2011, according to Ledars Bangladesh, a charity helping widows reintegrate back in the villages.

Their deaths are a double blow for the women left behind. Already grieving the loss of their partner, overnight they become 'tiger widows' — pariahs in their homes and villages at a time when they most need support.

They are often left with little means to support themselves or their families.

Rashida is heartbroken but unsurprised that her adult sons, aged 24 and 27, abandoned her and their too young siblings.

"They are part of this society after all," the 45-year-old said, as she wiped tears from her eyes.

Her tiny shack has no roof — it was blown off by a deadly cyclone — but there have been no

offers of help from neighbours or officials, who she claims helped others in the village but shunned her.

Instead she uses an old tarpaulin to keep the elements out.

Next door, Mohammad Hossain was fixing his broken tin roof, and confessed he had been instructed by his wife not to talk to Rashida.

"It would mar my family's well-being and could bring bad luck," the 31-year-old honey-hunter said.

Officials denied omitting Rashida from the help they provided after the cyclone.

But the head of Ledars Bangladesh, Mohon Kumar Mondal, said the mistreatment of "tiger widows" was widespread in highly conservative communities, which often held "centuries old" prejudices. "They (charities) are working to restore the widows' dignities. The main challenge is to change people's beliefs," he explained.

"The change is very slow. Still, I'd say there has been progress," he added, noting that younger, more educated villagers were less fearful of the widows.

Rijja Khatun, who said she

has learnt to cope with being ostracised by her fellow villagers after her honey-hunter husband's death 15 years ago, has been secretly supported by her nephew and his family.

"My sons were young. But nobody helped me. I felt bad at first as they kept blaming me for my husband's death. I didn't know what was my fault," she recalled, adding: "But now I've learnt to live with this adversity." Her nephew Yaad Ali, who has witnessed several attacks including his uncle's, explained that while he wanted to help, he could not do so publicly.

"We had to do it (help Khatun) with confidentiality or else the village society would have ostracised us as well," he confessed. Honey hunting has traditionally been seen as a more accessible vocation for villagers who can't afford the equipment or boats needed to undertake the region's other main profession — fishing.

Guterres closely following US, Taliban talks

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

UN chief Antonio Guterres has been closely following talks between the US and the Taliban about a "significant reduction" of violence in Afghanistan aimed at opening the way for intra-Afghan peace negotiations, his spokesman said.

According to a statement on Monday attributable to the spokesman for the UN

Secretary-General, during his visit to Islamabad, Guterres expressed his sincere wishes that such talks are successful and lead to an Afghan-led peace process.

"The Secretary-General has been following closely the talks between the US and the Taliban about a significant reduction of violence in Afghanistan aimed at opening the way for intra-Afghan peace negotiations," the statement

said. In November last year, US President Donald Trump announced resumption of peace talks with the Taliban.

After nine rounds of negotiations with the Taliban, Trump abruptly cancelled peace talks in September after a US soldier was killed in a suicide attack in Afghanistan's capital, Kabul.

Guterres reiterated the UN's readiness to provide any assistance that the parties may

require.

The UN chief, during an international conference on Afghan refugees on Monday in Islamabad, called the global community to step up efforts to help bring peace in war-torn Afghanistan, saying the Afghan people need and deserve peace, prosperity and full respect of their human rights.

Noting that the Afghan refugee crisis is the world's largest protracted refugee situ-

ation in recorded history, Guterres said there is deep impact on the Afghani people due to the protracted nature of conflict, poverty and forced displacement.

Last week, Trump's national security adviser Robert O'Brien said he was cautiously optimistic that there could be a US agreement with the Taliban over the next days or weeks, but a withdrawal of American forces was not immi-

nent. "I think that we're making significant progress," O'Brien said at an event hosted by the Atlantic Council in Washington.

"It's something we're keeping the president apprised of on a very regular basis. You hate to make predictions when it comes to Afghanistan ... but I'll say that we're cautiously optimistic that some good news could be forthcoming on that front," he said.

China arrests activist who criticised Xi

AFP ■ BEIJING

Police in China have arrested a prominent activist who had been a fugitive for weeks and criticised President Xi Jinping's handling of the coronavirus epidemic while in hiding, a rights group said Tuesday.

Anti-corruption activist Xu Zhiyong was arrested on Saturday after being on the run since December, according to Amnesty International.

China's ruling Communist Party has severely curtailed civil liberties since Xi took power in 2012, rounding up rights lawyers, labour activists and even Marxist students.

The death this month of a whistleblowing doctor who was reprimanded by police for raising the alarm about the deadly new virus before dying of it himself triggered rare calls for political reform and freedom of speech.

The "Chinese government's battle against the coronavirus has in no way diverted it from its ongoing general campaign to crush all dissenting voices," said Patrick Poon, China researcher at Amnesty International, in an emailed statement.

Another source, who spoke to AFP on the condition of anonymity, said Xu had been arrested in the southern city of Guangzhou.

Guangzhou police did not

respond to requests for comment.

Xu went into hiding after authorities broke up a December gathering of intellectuals discussing political reform in the eastern coastal city of Xiamen in Fujian province, prior to the coronavirus crisis.

Over a dozen lawyers and activists were detained or disappeared after the Xiamen gathering, according to rights groups — and Xu's detention appears linked to his presence at the meeting, explained Poon.

But while on the run, Xu continued to post information on Twitter about rights issues.

On February 4 Xu released an article calling on Xi to step down and criticised his leadership across a range of issues including the US-China trade war, Hong Kong's pro-democracy protests and the coronavirus epidemic, which has now killed nearly 1,900 people.

"Medical supplies are tight, hospitals are filled with patients, and a large number of infected people have no way to be diagnosed," he wrote.

"It's a mess." "The coronavirus outbreak shows just how important values like freedom of expression and transparency are — the exact values that Xu has long advocated," Yaqiu Wang, China researcher at Human Rights Watch, told AFP.

UN chief visits Kartarpur Sahib

PTI ■ LAHORE

UN chief Antonio Guterres on Tuesday visited the revered Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, the final resting place of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak Dev, in Pakistan's Narowal town.

The Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbhandhik Committee and Evacuee Trust Property Board officials received the UN Secretary General at Kartarpur Sahib, some 125kms from Lahore. A Sikh boy presented him a bouquet.

Guterres was also briefed about the Kartarpur Corridor pact between Pakistan and India. He was told that Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan had taken this initiative to facilitate the Sikh community of India and elsewhere to visit the shrine.

Wearing an orange scarf, Guterres visited different parts of the Gurdwara. He was served with traditional food in lunch along with Sikhs and Pakistani officials.

Strict security measures were taken during the visit. Indian Sikhs in good num-

ber were also present at Kartarpur Sahib.

Khan inaugurated the Kartarpur Corridor on November 9, 2019 in connection with the 550th anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the corridor from the Indian side on the same day by flagging off the first batch of over 500 Indian pilgrims, including former premier Manmohan Singh and Union minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal.

Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan is located across the

river Ravi. It was established by the Sikh Guru in 1522. The first Gurdwara, Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib, was built here, where Guru Nanak Dev is said to have died.

Earlier in the day, Guterres addressed students at the Lahore University of Management Sciences and urged them to focus on new technologies. He termed climate change as the major issue the world is facing today. He also inaugurated a polio campaign. Pakistan is one of the three countries where polio is still endemic.



A health worker gives a polio vaccine to a child in Peshawar on Tuesday. Pakistan government launched an anti-polio vaccination campaign in an effort to eradicate the crippling disease. AP

Weinstein jury to begin deliberations in scandal

AFP ■ NEW YORK

Jurors will begin deliberating the fate of ex-Hollywood titan Harvey Weinstein on Tuesday in his high-profile sex crimes trial that marked a watershed moment in the #MeToo movement.

The disgraced movie mogul, 67, faces life in prison if the jury of seven men and five women convict him of predatory sexual assault charges in New York.

More than 80 women have accused Weinstein of sexual misconduct since allegations against him ignited the #MeToo global reckoning against men abusing positions of power in October 2017.

But the jury is considering charges related to just two: ex-actress Jessica Mann and former production assistant Mimi Haley, with many claims too old to prosecute.

Mann, 34, says Weinstein raped her in March 2013, while Haley alleges he forcibly performed oral sex on her in July 2006.

The proceedings, which began hearing testimony on January 22, threw up compli-

cated issues surrounding consent and abuse of power for the jury. Under cross-examination, both Mann and Haley acknowledged at least one consensual sexual encounter with Weinstein after the alleged assaults.

Defense lawyers presented dozens of emails and text messages in court that appeared to show both Mann and Haley on friendly terms with Weinstein years after the alleged attacks.

His team said the relationships were consensual and transactional, arguing that the accusers used sex with the defendant to advance their own careers.

Prosecutors said he was a career sexual predator who took advantage of his powerful position in the American film industry to prey on aspiring young actresses.

Weinstein, the producer of "Pulp Fiction" and "Sin City," is the first man accused of abuse in the #MeToo movement to face a criminal trial.

In closing arguments Thursday, lead attorney Donna Rotunno urged the 12 jurors to make themselves "unpopular" by acquitting Weinstein, insist-

ing he had been innocent from the start.

She stressed that prosecutors had failed to present any forensic evidence or eyewitness accounts.

The prosecution's case rests on whether the jury believes the six women, including actress Annabella Sciorra of "The Sopranos," who testified that Weinstein had sexually assaulted them.

Judge James Burke will begin instructing jurors at 9:30 am (1430 GMT), before they retire to consider their verdict.

He will remind them that to convict, they must be sure of the defendant's guilt beyond all reasonable doubt.

Weinstein faces five counts including predatory sexual assault, rape and a criminal sexual act. The jury must reach unanimous verdicts on each count. If they cannot, the judge may be forced to declare a mistrial. A split verdict is possible where Weinstein is convicted of some charges and cleared of others. Weinstein is facing a separate sex crimes investigation in Los Angeles and is also the subject of several civil complaints.

Niger stampede kills 20 at handout for refugees

AFP ■ NIAMEY

Fifteen women and five children were trampled to death in a stampede for food and money for refugees in southeast Niger, a regional governor said.

The accident occurred at a youth and culture centre in Diffa, the main town of a region of the same name that hosts more than a quarter of a million refugees and internally displaced people, on Monday.

"Unfortunately, fifteen women and five children died... in this regrettable drama," Issa Lemine, the regional governor of Diffa, said on television after visiting the injured in hospital.

Aid workers confirmed the death toll and said about 10 people had been injured. The region which abuts Nigeria and Chad has been repeatedly hit by attacks by Nigeria's Boko Haram jihadist group since 2015.

It hosts 119,000 Nigerian refugees, 109,000 internally displaced people and 30,000 Nigeriens who have come home from Nigeria because

of the instability in its north-east, according to UN figures released in October.

The aid being distributed had been given by Babagana Umara Zulum, the governor of Borno state in northeast Nigeria, a Nigerian official told AFP.

He had come to the region to visit camps for refugees and the displaced, and had already left the town when the stampede occurred.

A large amount of food, cooking oil and clothing, as well as money, was due to be distributed, a Diffa municipal worker told AFP.

"Thousands of people were in the courtyard of the MJC (Culture and Youth Centre) and nearby," he said.

"As soon as the first people received their rations, the compressed crowd started to get excited, the organisers were swiftly overwhelmed and then it all kicked off — women, children and the fit ones started to push," the employee said.

"The weakest people fell to the ground. Some were injured and others were crushed to death." A local res-

ident told AFP that aid workers were distributing 5,000 naira (\$13.75, 12.7 euros), referring to Nigeria's national currency.

Diffa governor Lemine said a successful distribution had taken place on Sunday.

"Thousands of people, most of them refugees, heard about the handout and left the camps, sometimes travelling up to 100 kilometres (60 miles) to get to Diffa," the source said.

A local official said he was astonished at the situation: "Normally, people who are entitled to the handouts send a representative to Diffa to pick it up. But this time, the refugees themselves decided to come and get it, travelling dozens of kilometres (miles)." Another resident said: "Even ordinary inhabitants of Diffa rushed there in the hope of getting the handout."

A local journalist said the emergency services arrived swiftly, taking wounded people to local treatment centres, while bodies were taken to the morgue of the nearby Diffa hospital.

'Trump's India visit can usher in new era of bilateral ties'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The maiden visit of President Donald Trump to India later this month has the potential to usher in a new era of bilateral ties, a top American business advocacy group has said.

President Trump will pay a state visit to India on February 24 and 25 at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He will be accompanied by First Lady Melania Trump.

"I believe President Trump's upcoming visit to India has the potential to usher in a new era of our bilateral ties," Mukesh Aghi, President of the US India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF) said in a statement on Monday.

On the sidelines of the visit, the USISPF, in collaboration with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), has announced to organise a program entitled "US-India Forum: Partners for Growth".

The full-day discussion will focus on the key pillars defining India and the US' strategic, economic, and cul-

tural partnership over the next decade.

"We have an opportunity before us to make real progress on multiple aspects of the relationship — whether it is upholding peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region; building upon an already strong energy partnership; developing co-production and co-development opportunities in the defence space; or strengthening bilateral trade," Aghi said. "We look forward to an extremely successful visit and some concrete outcomes from the visit," he said.

The day-long programme on February 25 in New Delhi, will bring together over 500 senior business executives, members of the US-India think tank community and leading figures of the Indian diaspora to set the agenda for this strategic partnership.

Discussions during the day will touch upon areas, including the Indo-Pacific Strategy and Maritime Security; the US-India Defence Partnership; the US-India Energy Partnership; Elevating US-India Trade and Investment and Role of the Indian Diaspora in US-India Relations.

Bezos launches fund to combat climate change

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

This company is often criticized for its environmental record, but Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon and the world's richest man, said he was committing USD 10 billion to a new fund to tackle climate change.

In a post to his 1.4 million followers on Instagram on Monday, the e-commerce tycoon said the Bezos Earth Fund would "fund scientists, activists, NGOs — any effort that offers a real possibility to help preserve and protect the natural world."

"Climate change is the biggest threat to our planet," said Bezos, whose net worth is estimated to be around USD 130 billion.

Hundreds of Amazon employees last month signed a blog criticizing the online retail giant's climate policies and demanding it do more to tackle climate change.

Amazon has been accused of creating vast amounts of waste from the packaging it uses for doorstep deliveries, as well as for the greenhouse gas emissions from huge fleets of vehicles.

The company, which in December said its workforce had hit 750,000, has also been denounced over its carbon footprint because of the high energy consumption of its server farms for its lucrative cloud computing activities.

"I want to work alongside others both to amplify known

ways and to explore new ways of fighting the devastating impact of climate change on this planet we all share," Bezos said in his announcement on Monday.

Bezos, who maintained his status as the world's richest person despite an expensive divorce last year, said his new foundation would begin issuing grants later this year.

Last September, he said Amazon would pledge to become carbon neutral by 2040 and vowed that the company would order 100,000 electric delivery trucks.

Rather than make investments that the business guru might profit from, the fund would allocate grant money to projects, The New York Times said, quoting unnamed sources familiar with the initiative.

Bezos divulged few details on his social media post, which attracted overwhelmingly positive responses from his followers.

Bezos has often clashed with US President Donald Trump, who regularly attacks climate change activists, recently calling them "perennial prophets of doom." The fund was described as Bezos's biggest philanthropic commitment.

Fellow billionaire Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft, now devotes much of his time to his charity foundation and a venture fund that makes investments aimed at helping curb emissions and reverse climate change.

Mysterious toxic gas kills 11 in Karachi

PTI ■ KARACHI

A mysterious toxic gas has killed at least 11 people and sickened several others in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi, police said on Tuesday.

Authorities were alerted to the incident when the residents of Karachi's Keamari area began rushing to nearby hospitals with severe breathing problems on Sunday night.

The source of a toxic gas leak remained unclear on Tuesday. Officials said 11 people have been killed so far, Dawn newspaper reported.

Ziauddin Hospital spokesperson Amir Shehzad told the newspaper that nine deaths took place at the hospital's Keamari Campus over the course of the past two days.

According to the police, two other deaths were report-

ed at the Kutiyana Hospital. Dozens of others have been hospitalised in various medical facilities across the city.

"We are still clueless about the possible cause of the incident," Karachi police chief Ghulam Nabi Memon said.

He, however, said that senior police officers in coordination with the doctors are trying to determine the exact nature of the incident.

Meanwhile, Karachi Commissioner Iftikhar Shallwani said that a ship that was offloading soybean or a similar substance could be the probable cause of the toxic gas.

"When offloading from this ship is halted, the smell too diminishes," he reasoned. Maritime Affairs Minister Ali Zaidi rubbished report that it was caused by a soybean ship as the crew and the vessel were fine.

Apple to miss revenue forecast as iPhone supply hit

AFP ■ SAN FRANCISCO

Apple is to miss its revenue forecast for the March quarter due to the coronavirus epidemic, the US tech giant said Monday, warning that iPhone supplies worldwide would also be impacted, underlining the economic cost of the health crisis.

The COVID-19 virus death toll now exceeds 1,800 in China, where it has infected more than 72,000 after emerging in the central province of Hubei in December.

The virus has sparked global economic jitters, travel bans and the cancellation of high-profile sporting and cultural events.

"We are experiencing a slower return to normal conditions than we had anticipated," Apple said in a statement.

"As a result, we do not expect to meet the revenue guidance we provided for the March quarter." Apple had forecast revenue of \$63 billion to \$67 billion for the second quarter to March.

It said that worldwide

iPhone supply would be "temporarily constrained" as its manufacturing partners in China were only slowly ramping up work after being closed due to the virus.

Consumer demand in the crucial Chinese market has also been dampened after all Apple stores were shut.

"Stores that are (now) open have been operating at reduced hours and with very low customer traffic," the company said.

"We are gradually reopening our retail stores and will

continue to do so as steadily and safely as we can."

International Monetary Fund chief Kristalina Georgieva has said there could be a cut of around 0.1-0.2 percentage points to global growth, but stressed there was much uncertainty about the virus's economic impact.

Outside of hardest-hit Hubei, which has been effectively locked down to try to contain the virus, the number of new cases has been slowing and China's national health authority has said the out-

break was under control.

However, World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that the trend "must be interpreted very cautiously." The travel industry has been most directly affected by China's decision to quarantine dozens of cities and cancel all overseas tour groups.

Some countries have told nationals to avoid travel to China and banned arrivals from there.

Supply chains of global firms such as Apple supplier

Foxconn and auto giant Toyota have been disrupted as key production facilities in China were temporarily closed, and some major airlines have halted services.

Sportswear giants Nike and Adidas shuttered hundreds of stores in the country earlier this month and warned of a negative impact on their earnings.

State media said China may postpone its annual parliamentary session, which has been held in March for the last 35 years.

Proper strategy is key

With less than two months left for JEE Mains exam, FIITJEE expert RAMESH BATLISH shares tips for last-minute prep



The first phase for admissions to BE/BTech (Paper-I) and BArch/BPlanning (Paper-II) was held between January 6-9, 2020 and the second phase will be held between April 5-11, April 2020. Students have the option to appear in one or both phases. The result will however consider the students' performance in the best of the two phases.

Clearing JEE (Main) is not difficult. Systematic approach towards its preparation will help. The JEE (Main) consists of CBSE syllabus of Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics and some common topics from Classes XI and XII of State Boards. About 25% questions in the exam are easy, 50% are average and 25% are difficult. The cut-off for JEE (Main) is generally around 65%.

TIPS FOR PHYSICS

- ◆ Mechanics is one topic that is considered less scoring by most experts. However, this is also the topic that forms the major portion. This topic can't be neglected.
- ◆ One must try to concentrate on other scoring topics to ensure a better performance, for example Optics, Electricity

and Magnetism.

- ◆ Kinematics and particle dynamics are important topics of Mechanics that make regular appearances.

- ◆ Refer to past years' papers, and sample test papers to understand what to expect when you have started solving advanced level problems.

- ◆ According to the general trends, Mechanics and Electricity and Magnetism are the most important topics in terms of the number of questions asked in JEE of previous years. Vector is one concept that students commonly encounter in dealing with any of these topics, so effort must be taken to understand it properly.

- ◆ In the decreasing order of the marks they carry are listed different topics of Physics according to their appearance in previous year's papers.

- ◆ Thermodynamics is important from the terms of Physics and Chemistry so concentrate on that as well.

TIPS FOR MATH

- ◆ Previous JEE papers suggest that in more attention should be paid to Chapters like Vectors and 3-D than Probability or Indefinite integration as

Vectors and 3-D offers very less scope to examiner, as far as variety in questions is concerned. One more chapter is Complex Number, from which every year 2-3 problems are asked. Hence mastering complex numbers, vectors, 3-D and Definite integral must be on top priority.

- ◆ Keeping in mind the trend of last years' paper all topics had been covered with more importance given to topics of Algebra, Calculus and Co-ordinate Geometry.

- ◆ To tackle questions from Co-ordinate Geometry all aspects and the results of Algebraic Calculations of properties of conics must be known.

- ◆ In chapters of Calculus like Functions, Application of derivatives one can fetch easy marks if graphical approach is adopted.

- ◆ Trigonometry though having less weightage must not be ignored as it is scoring. One must grasp all important formulae in Trigonometry. This is a scoring topic in Mathematics.

- ◆ Chapters like Mathematical Reasoning / Determinants/ Statistics/ Mathematical Induction must also be covered to fetch some quick marks as the questions from this chap-

ter are relatively simple.

- ◆ Refer to past years' JEE Main papers, and sample test papers to get familiar.

TIPS FOR CHEMISTRY

- ◆ Conceptual clarity, application skills and awareness to the prescribed syllabus should be the focus.

- ◆ Practice the most relevant questions daily to develop speed. Pay special attention to topics like Mole concept, Chemical Equilibrium and Electrochemistry.

- ◆ Take a careful and patient approach for Organic Chemistry giving attention to the topics like Stereochemistry, GOC (General Organic Chemistry) and Functional Group Analysis.

- ◆ In Inorganic chemistry most of the questions which are asked are conceptual, concerned with structures, processes and applications. Special attention is a must to the topics like Chemical Bonding and Coordination Chemistry.

- ◆ Special attention should be given to the topics like Biomolecules, Chemistry in everyday life and Environmental chemistry.

- ◆ Special attention to NCERT should be given as JEE Main is completely NCERT

based in Chemistry.

- ◆ Special attention should be given to the topic Drinking Water. One should try to learn the Threshold Limits for the various ions in drinking water.

- ◆ Attempt theoretical questions first and then questions which require calculation. It is advisable to avoid numerical questions in the first 10 or 15 minutes of the exam.

DOS

- ◆ Attempt easy questions first.
- ◆ Choose sections that have less risk and more gain.

- ◆ Carefully scroll through the entire question paper in the first five minutes.

- ◆ Keep a check on time while attempting the paper
- ◆ Attempt all numerical based type questions as there is no negative marking.

DON'TS

- ◆ Start from question you don't know.
- ◆ Get upset if any section is tough. You can score in other sections.

- ◆ Guess if you have no idea about the concept involved in a question.

- ◆ Be nervous if you find the paper tough, since it is the relative performance that counts.

'New learning space with digital education

There is room for improvement in data-driven decision-making across campuses, says DR KULNEET SURI

Data and big data have been buzzwords for the last several years. Universities are making great progress when it comes to using data to help with retention and student success. However, there is still much room for improvement to take advantage of data-driven decision-making across the entire campus.

For instance, data can be used to determine if classrooms are being utilised optimally before new construction projects are kicked off. It can and should be used to determine if aging computer labs should be renewed or transformed into something that is more useful to the university. Efforts like these can not only streamline campus operations, but also ensure that we are making most of the resources we have in the service of teaching and learning.

Another area where data can be used more is Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data. Historically, GIS data has primarily been used in sciences. But that same data could be analysed in practically any class on a college campus. Think history, political science, criminal justice, urban planning — there is so much data out there, and we can all do a better job of using it.

The future of any innovation in teaching and learning is almost always a combination of all of the following: Academic discipline, pedagogy, learning environment, data and educational technology. And data-informed research and formative evaluation is the key to avoiding just chasing shiny new objects on the one hand and just staying with what we've always done on the other. The foundational blocks for making any headway in analytics, particularly learning analytics, are:

- Institutional (rather than vendor) ownership of data generated by teaching and learning activity.
- Transparency of data models created through our data (rather than being proprietary).
- Data and integration standards.

YouTube began in February 2005, and 12 years later, Wikipedia reports a billion hours of content watched on the platform each day. The sheer volume of educational video creates challenges for faculty in creating new content, as well as finding and reusing content. During the busy academic semesters, faculty do not have time to watch, curate and clip videos! The cognitive overload of video use can be significant, leading us to look for specialised collections like Ted Talks and Khan Academy. Harvard's DART initiative is one



Dr Kulneet Suri
Senior Director at Institute of Management Studies, Noida

recent effort to try to help faculty and instructional designers make full use of open access assets created for edX MOOCs.

As we increase dependence on instructional videos, we also need to focus on issues of accessibility for people with a range of needs. Digital education is generating new learning opportunities as students engage in online, digital environments and as faculty change educational practices through the use of hybrid courses, personalised instruction, new collaboration models and a wide array of innovative, engaging learning strategies. A 21st Century view of learner success requires students to not only be thoughtful consumers of digital content, but effective and collaborative creators of digital media, demonstrating competencies and communicating ideas through dynamic storytelling, data visualisation and content curation.

As instructors create assignments and develop rubrics for assessing new forms of student work across academic disciplines, faculty and students would benefit from access to new collaborative spaces with the technology and consulting expertise to successfully complete media-rich assignments and projects. One example at Oregon State is in general biology courses, where senior instructors Lesley Blair and Mark Lavery infuse their own lectures with media-rich components and have their students include their own media elements in assignments and social media postings.

One are the days of authoritative and impolite bossism of 70s and 90s. In 21st Century if you want to be accepted and appreciated by your employees you need to put extra effort. No one likes a rude boss or leader or one who doesn't care and listen to. Your team would be attracted to you if you show a little kindness.

Respect: The most important is giving respect. The trade of respect is well defined by nature. You will get respect only, when you give it. Respect people for what they do. Doesn't matter what level they are, they are doing their best in their abilities to perform for whatever job is assigned to them. By showing a little respect to all you deal with, you command

unfathomable power, which makes you the real leader.

Lead: Everything rises and falls on leadership so if you're going to create that atmosphere of kindness in your company, your acts of kindness should be seen and not just heard. Try to avoid jokes you know people would get sensitive to, jokes about things like gender, religion and politics would offend a section of the team, you don't want to burn your bridges before you're even midway.

Accept criticism: You may not be right all the time, it's possible that while handling management and other responsibilities in your work you may miss it at some point. So

MINDIT

you should welcome criticism.

To be a favourite boss and leader it is important to understand the importance of other people's thoughts and adopt the ability to shift our preconceived notions to the side so we can offer acceptance in response to their thoughts even if they are against us. It is an imperative step in the direction of becoming a leader

Encourage learning: Make it clear that you understand that very few people get it right on their first day or week or month and that you're ready to work with them so they

can improve. Try to avoid fatal mistakes by delegating key tasks to proven employees but also get others going for the low hanging fruits so they can build on their confidence.

Promote workplace friendships: If you're that boss that's improving relationships in the office, people would love you. But workplace friendships can get toxic without control, so you shouldn't get it wrong at the beginning.

Pair people with overlapping skills. So if you need work done on your website, don't pair two people with huge egos. Treat every

member of your team equally, so these partnerships should be a way to help those lacking in specific skills. And again don't force it, if it's not working, try reshuffling, it's okay to tweak things until you get it right.

Don't put them in the spot: Try to avoid public criticism as much as you can. Work with employees that are not taking the right decisions, help them improve delivery at work. Putting any of your employees on the spot can force them into trying to prove you wrong. And sometimes they try too hard and make more mistakes.

Don't force it: Everyone hates forced friendships because most of them don't just work out. Yes, you should be kind to your

employees but if it doesn't flow naturally, it'll be rebuffed. Being professional and exhibiting leadership should be your stance in the early days of this relationship building. Remember it's not your job to be the cool boss but a good relationship with your staff rubs off on your company

Be honest and humble: Don't make promises you can't keep. Employees may have different views on the path they think the company should do but it's up to you to ensure you don't raise their hopes unnecessarily. If there are answers you need to think about, do that, you should be in a composed state when chatting.

The writer is Achal Sharma, International Life Coach & Social Scientist

Scholarship

The Newcastle University, UK, has announced a new round of scholarship support for outstanding applicants from India.

Value of award: 50% or 100% of tuition fees.

Eligibility: To be considered for the 100% scholarships applicants must: Be a national of one of India; Be assessed as international for fee purposes; Hold an offer for an eligible undergraduate or postgraduate degree programme at the university's city-centre campus for the 2020/21 academic year. Eligible candidates will be assessed according to evidence of academic ability, commitment to studies and quality of application.

Application duration: September 2020 for the full duration of the degree programme.

Application form: Candidates can apply for this scholarship online separately to their course. They must already hold an offer to study at the University to apply and will need to provide details of qualifications, a personal statement and a reference.

To know more visit: <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/country/india/#feesand-funding>

How to apply: Online at <https://app.geckoform.com/public/#/modern/FOEU01c3pA40abrE>

Application deadline: March 27 2020 and May 29, 2020.

The Vancouver Island University invites applications for its VIU World-Wide Entrance Scholarships for the incoming first-year high-potential overseas aspirants. The program is open for international students who will commence in the undergraduate degree coursework at the VIU in Canada.

Eligibility: The awards are available for new long-term academic undergraduate student applicants. Must attach Attach certified copies of all educational documents and copy of passport. **Admission requirements:** Applicants must have graduated from high school or equivalent. **Language requirement:** Claimants are required to fulfil the English language requirements of the university.

How to apply: For grasping the opportunity, you have to enrol in the UG degree coursework online or offline and submitted it to International Admissions Vancouver Island University 900 Fifth Street Nanaimo, B.C. V9R 5S5 Canada. No application is necessary.

Application deadline: The last date to apply is March 31, 2020.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AT MOBISHAALA

Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹10,000-₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/2911182
Application deadline: February 22, 2020

GRAPHIC DESIGN AT DEBATE MARKETERS

Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹10,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/2911183
Application deadline: February 22 2020

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AT INTELLIFY

Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹5,000-₹7,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/2911184
Application deadline: February 23, 2020

SALES AND MARKETING AT SSS WEB ARCHITECTS

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/2911185
Application deadline: February 25, 2020

MARKETING AT SKMTECHNOSOLZ

Location: Bengaluru
Stipend: ₹10,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/2911181
Application deadline: February 22, 2020

GRAPHIC DESIGN AT IRA PARENTING

Location: Bengaluru
Stipend: ₹15,000-₹18,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/2911180
Application deadline: February 25, 2020

OPERATIONS AT ETHNIC FASHIONISTA

Location: Bengaluru
Stipend: ₹6,000-₹8,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/2911179
Application deadline: February 22, 2020

STUDY ABROAD

'One can rely on scholarships and grants for funds'

There is always a way to ease financial burden while studying abroad, says ROHIT SETHI

Pursuing education abroad can be a costly affair for many. It is not just the tuition fees but also the living expenses that need to be taken care of. With the fall in the value of rupee every year, it is only adding up to the burden.

Managing funds in a foreign country can be relatively challenging. If unable to manage expenses of their three-year graduate programme, students are compelled to seek part-time employment, which is good but sometimes end up becoming a priority.

Relying on scholarships and grants for funding options: Expenses vary in every country considering the currency exchange value, the university and the course. Students can look out for managing their tuition fees and scholarships and grants are the best possible financial aid in this case. There are merit-based scholarships offered by the Federal and State Government, large corporations, local businesses, professional organisations or universities.

Students can also opt for programme-based scholarships and specific allowances provided on the basis of factors like gender, race, religion, disabilities, or sexual orientation. For instance, scholarship programs like Benjamin A Gilman Scholarship or Diversity Abroad Scholarships can be beneficial for diverse students searching for financial aid. Finally, there are grants, mostly need-based that doesn't require to be repaid. They are mostly given on the basis of financial circumstances but may also consider other factors like physical or mental disabilities. The Department of Education in the US offers several federal grants to students who attend four-year colleges or universities and community colleges. Germany, too, awards numerous merit-based grants. For example: The University of Hamburg offers a merit grant of 720 – 1,000 EUR/month for two semesters (12 months).

Some external agencies and trusts also provide scholarships. However, bagging a scholarship is not an easy process as thousands of students target for the same. Students are required to go through a number of exams to determine their eligibility.

The writer is Director, ESS Global

IN BRIEF

CONTENT IN HINGLISH TO MAKE LEARNING EASIER

The Lido Learning announced the launch of live tutorials in Hinglish to facilitate easier adoption of concepts and simplify e-learning across India.

The emergence of ed-tech in Tier II and Tier III cities in India is largely due to the availability of educational content in vernacular languages. Despite children going to English medium schools, research shows that many students struggle with English as a language. Students especially struggle when studying and trying to grasp complex

concepts in other subjects like Math and Science that are taught in English.

Sahil Sheth, founder-CEO, said: "Students and their well-being is at the center of everything that we do. Subjects like Math and Science can be complex and mind-numbing for many, learning the curriculum in a language they are comfortable can keep them more engaged. The launch of Hinglish content was prompted by our core belief that a student must be in a comfortable space while learning and have accessibility to educational content in diverse languages."

AIFF INTRODUCES FOOTBALL MASTERS COURSE

All India Football Federation (AIFF) officially launched its Football Management Programme with the signing of an MOU with Spanish La LigaSmartBankco-leaders Cadiz CF. This will enable students to study in three cities — Delhi, Mumbai and Cadiz (Spain).

The programme will provide students with hands-on experiential training on every aspect of football in India and abroad. This programme

will provide exemplary football managers to meet the needs of Indian football.

Prafal Patel, President, AIFF said: "We felt that such a programme was much needed to help students understand the nuances and global practices involved in managing football. With the curriculum combining theoretical and practical knowledge, there will be a paradigm shift in football management in the

country." **Key features:** Inculcates exclusive and rare learning insights in to the operations of Cadiz CF — by giving students the opportunity to live and work in the club for a month.

A common admission test ensures that interested candidate has an equal opportunity to enroll in the limited seats on offer each year.

Strong line-up of global faculty to share their knowledge.

TOPPR FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

Toppr conducted the city-level round of Toppr Fellowship Programme in Delhi.

This year, over 200 schools from the city participated in the programme.

The programme, which comprises of test, seminar and counselling, is designed to help students of Classes V to XII understand their strengths and weaknesses, and show

them a new engaging way to learn. Curated by top teachers of India, it is a 30-minute test that identifies students' conceptual understanding, numerical abilities and problem-solving skills.



NUMBERS MATTER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The writer is CEO & Founder of Analytics Vidhya

QUOTE OF THE DAY

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

— Will Rogers

COMPUTER SC & TECH

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

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

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

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

Admissions OPEN

for admissions to its Comprehensive Make-up Artistry course.

Eligibility: Class XII pass (all streams)

Last date to apply: February 23, 2020

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

UG-PG PROGRAMMES

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

Admission process: IIAD entrance test

Exam date: April 26, 2020

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

MAKE-UP ARTISTRY

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

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

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

Last date to apply: July, 2020

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

For a holistic future

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

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

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

So, in a world that is heavily relying on the right personnel to execute the right orders, what does a degree in management teach?

What you may discover in a business degree covers an expansive scope of subjects, for

example, financial aspects, accounting and innovative strategies that prepare individuals for a plethora of situations. A business degree may begin with learning the pertinent ideas in these fields, to guarantee there will be no critical holes when beginning a vocation. In later years, obligatory modules can be clubbed with specific territories of study, for instance, organisation law or buyer conduct.

It is important that managerial aspirants learn from their own firsthand experience, and hence emphasis on experiential learning as an integral part of curriculum is important.

The course also rather offers one the chance to expand one's innovative edges. Aside from the theoretical knowledge on subjects, which are pivotal, one will likewise be prepared for unexpected situations that might arise in a business. Even if one has to consider turning an idea into a startup, the educational programme has been designed in a way that every



perspective can be checked out.

The best management education cultivates citizenship through a broad-based education that also covers humanities and social sciences.

The potential outcomes for a business graduate are practically innumerable. Positions as an investment banker or a financial regulator might be engaging, however, individuals must be aware of the high-pressure nature of such jobs. Individuals can also work in retail management where major FMCG companies can open doors for individuals with a degree in business management.

The more enterprising students can find success by building their own business without any degree of study. But the lofty expectation to know everything, find funding, and the knowledge to fight the ever-changing business landscape can happen only through a degree in business management.

People who pursue Business Management are also offered a tremendous pay package right from their placements. The degree also additionally allows one to work in

various administrative situations in different associations. In this way, with the steady interest of the board, one can develop themselves in their profession significantly.

Management programmes are designed to help in improving one's holistic abilities. Under this programme, students are made to take a shot at different situations, understand different scenarios and compose projects so that they can confront realistic business scenarios. At the point where every job requires one to be a pioneer, these qualities will be especially significant.

Having a range of abilities relating to business management can help anyone with a rewarding vocation. Getting admission to business management, one can start right after they finish Class XII, as an undergrad programme, or after graduation. There are numerous specialisations that one can decide on, in the center of their profession.

The writer is from Symbiosis Centre for Management Studies, Pune

It's all in the name

IT COUNTS

Name number is the most important and significant number among the three — name number, psychic number, destiny number. The name number is important for each and every person because the influence of one's name number, unlike one's psychic and destiny numbers, continues even after one leaves one's body.

Your name is the first gift you receive after birth, and it was chosen specifically for you. Your full name is an element in your numerology chart that is explored in depth by finding the various arithmetic factors within it and utilising them as elements of their own.

The name number plays a key role in one's social life and marriage. This is the reason it was popular to add the family name to the maiden name after marriage. Adding the family name to the maiden name creates harmony with the husband in the family name. It is generally believed but may not be 100 per cent true.

One should always remember that for integration of a new pattern, it takes minimum two-six months (it will take three-



DR ADYA SHARMA

months, if the age of person is between 22-42, it will take two months, if the age is below 21 and five-six months if the age of the person is above 42). The results will be better and faster, if the person is called by a new name more frequently, so as to get its best effects.

If any change is made in the spelling of a name of a person, though the pattern of sound waves in the water in the body remaining the same, then it will take minimum six months to integrate with the body. In such cases whatever the spelling of new name is changed, its integration with

the body and subconscious mind will depend upon how frequently the spelling of the name are written or communicated with the people and in the social media.

More and more we start writing the new name with the new spelling, faster the effect will be. If you just change the spelling and remain silent and do not use it frequently, it will never give any effect. The effect is directly proportionate to the frequency with which the new name or its spellings are used. Once after the change you start observing the change in your behaviour, peace of mind then you should think that this new name is vibrating positively with you and the new planet, which is formed start vibrating with your date of birth and results will become positive.

You should go on writing your name with the new addition of alphabet, at least twenty to thirty thousand times on a piece of paper for about ten minutes every day. This will improve vibration of name and the person can perform better.

The writer is a renowned entrepreneur, motivational speaker and numerologist

Students' connect programme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Legrand India, a part of the Legrand Group conducted a Students' Connect Programme for the winners of the UGAM — Legrand's Scholarship programme on February 17, 2020.

This is an initiation to build a lasting relationship with the students and is an orientation about the industry, know-how from SMEs and gaining mentoring support from Legrand leadership team/employees.

The group entered the education sector in 2018 with an objective to help girl students to pursue their higher education. This scholarship intends to assist the deserving girl students for pursuing engi-

neering and architecture courses from recognised Indian universities.

Under this programme, it is supporting academically promising girl students with a scholarship aid of 60 per cent of course fee or up to ₹60,000 per annum. The winners are selected basis their merit and socio-economic background.

Tony Berland, CEO, Legrand India, said: "The UGAM scholarship for girls aims to empower them through quality professional education and build forth future women leaders. The programme goes a step further in ensuring that the group is with the students not just as a scholarship sponsor but a mentor and a guide to a successful career journey ahead."

Inauguration of Anugoonj at IP varsity

The renowned film producer Anil Sharma, who produced the superhit film *Gadar*, inaugurated the 21th Annual Cultural Festival of IP University 'Anugoonj 2020' at the Dwarka campus of the University here on February 17, 2020. Delving down the nostalgia, he said such type of functions remind me of my childhood. He called upon the students participating in this cultural festival to go ahead to achieve their goals in life.

Presiding over the function the Vice Chancellor of the university Prof Mahesh Verma said: "We learn a lot of things outside the class



room. Festivals are fun but it involves a lot of good things to learn like healthy competition, leadership, confidence, esteem etc. the education combined with culture is essential for life."

Prof Manpreet Kaur Kang,

Director — Students Welfare of the University informed on the occasion that apart from University schools, all the affiliated colleges are actively participating in the festival.

Dr Anjali Shaukeen, Associate Director — Students Welfare of the University presented Annual Report of the Directorate of Students Welfare.

This three days cultural conclave of the University is loaded with a number of star performances like band performance by Sankraman Band and star night by play back singer Benny Dayal on the concluding day of the event.

Quintessence 2020

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Lady Irwin College's annual festival is an event packed with a perfect balance of constructive creativity, fun and frolic. The fest spans over two days, starting today, consisting of numerous competitions and activities, organised by various societies of the College.

These include a fashion show, jam session, street dance, film making, group dance competition, environment hunt and stage play competition among other activities.



Each fest day will end with a live performance; tonight will be a DJ Night, where DJ Carnivore will be dropping popping beats; the second evening will be graced by Mohit Chauhan who has sung songs like *Dooriyan, Rabba* and *Bezubaan*.

Sunil opens India's Gold account

Competing in 87kg category wrestler rewrites history and becomes third Indian to win yellow metal in Greco-Roman

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Wrestler Sunil Kumar won India's first Gold medal in the opening day of Asian Wrestling Championship 2020 here at KD Jadhav stadium on Tuesday after beating Kyrgyzstan opponent Azat Salidinov 5-0 in the final match of 87kg Greco-Roman category.

Last edition Silver medalist dominated the entire game and didn't allowed his counterpart to gain any sort of breathing space and in process put a full stop to country's 27-year drought for the yellow metal. Sunil now becomes only the third Indian ever to achieve this feat after Pappu Yadav.

Sunil with his comprehensive defence was able to keep Salidinov at bay for most of the bout. Salidinov didn't have an answer to the strategy of Sunil and finally went down pretty easily.

Earlier, Sunil on his way to the final made an impressive comeback in the semi-final bout. He came back from 1-8 down to win the bout 12-8. This was an improvement for



India's Sunil Kumar celebrates after his win against Salidinov Azat (KAZ) in the final of 87kg category wrestling match during the Asian Wrestling Championship 2020

Sunil from his 2019 performance in the same tournament where he won a Silver Medal.

Speaking after the win he said, "I am feeling happy to have earned India's first Gold Medal today (Tuesday). I have worked really hard on my ground techniques and it feels good to have done better than my last year's performance."

Before Sunil's historic Gold medal win, Arjun Halakurki (55kg) won his Bronze Medal bout defeating Donghyeok Won of Korea. Arjun started the bout slowly and was down by 1-4 in the first period. But, Arjun didn't give up and came back strongly snatching six straight points with a combination of good defence and attack. The final score at the end of the bout was 7-4 in favour of Arjun.

Though, India's third medal hope Mehar Singh (130 kg) suffered a setback as he lost his bout against Roman Kim of Kyrgyzstan by a narrow scoreline of 2-3. Mehar was majorly suffering the aftereffects of his wrist injury which he suffered in his semi-final bout earlier.

Asian Wrestling Championship
Live from 11:00am IST
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

SINGLES

BAVUMA OUT OF FIRST T20

JOHANNESBURG: Batsman Temba Bavuma has been ruled out of the first Twenty20 international against Australia at the Wanderers Stadium on Friday because of a hamstring strain. He was injured while fielding in the third match against England. He will stay with the South African squad in the hope that he will be fit for the second and third matches against Australia in Port Elizabeth on Sunday and Cape Town on Wednesday.

AMAAN INCLUDED IN IND SQUAD

NEW DELHI: The Basketball Federation of India on Monday announced the senior men's squad that will be part of the 2021 FIBA Asia Cup Qualifiers. Singh, who recently led Punjab to gold in the U-21 category in the 2020 Khelo India Youth Games, has been at the NBA Global Academy in Canberra, Australia for over a year. Also part of the squad is 17-year-old Amaan Sandhu. Sandhu, a student-athlete at the NBA Academy India, was also part of the gold-medal-winning Punjab squad. He was one of three Indians (the only boy) selected to the Basketball Without Border Global Camp at the 2020 All-Star Weekend in Chicago.

MOEEN TO CAPTAIN BIRMINGHAM

LONDON: Moeen Ali will captain Birmingham Phoenix in English cricket's new Hundred competition, it was announced Tuesday. The England all-rounder, who grew up near Edgbaston, the venue for the Phoenix' home matches, will lead a side that includes fellow World Cup winner Chris Woakes as well as Kane Williamson, the captain of the New Zealand side beaten in last year's thrilling global 50-over final. A dashing left-handed batsman and off-spin bowler, Moeen rose through the ranks at Edgbaston with Warwickshire before establishing himself in county cricket with Midlands rivals Worcestershire. "Every time that I come to Edgbaston it takes me back to some great first memories of coming here at a very young age," said Moeen in a statement.

VIETNAM F1 GRAND PRIX GETS GO-AHEAD

HANOI: Vietnam's inaugural Formula One Grand Prix will take place in Hanoi in April as planned, organisers told AFP Tuesday, avoiding the fate of the Chinese Grand Prix which was postponed over the deadly coronavirus. The race will be held as "scheduled" on April 5. Le Ngoc Chi, CEO of Vietnam Grand Prix told AFP. The virus, which has killed more than 1,800 people in China, has trashed Asia's sporting calendar, forcing the postponement of top events including the Shanghai grand prix and the Hong Kong Sevens rugby. But Vietnamese authorities said the country's inaugural Formula One race would go ahead on schedule.

SANIA AND GARCIA SAIL INTO QUARTERS

DUBAI: Indian tennis ace Sania Mirza and Caroline Garcia registered a hard-fought win over Russia's Alla Kudryavtseva and Slovenia's Katarina Srebotnik to advance to the women's doubles pre-quarterfinals at the Dubai Open here on Tuesday. The Indo-French pair beat their Russian opponents 6-4, 4-6, 10-8 in the first round match. The Sania-Garcia combine will now meet the fifth seeded duo of Saisai Zheng of China and Barbora Krejickova of Czech Republic in the round of 16.

MANPREET TO LEAD IND IN FIH PRO LEAGUE

NEW DELHI: Manpreet Singh will lead India in the upcoming FIH Pro League matches against world no.2 Australia, a 24-member team for which was announced by Hockey India on Tuesday. Harmanpreet Singh will shoulder the duties of the vice captain in the matches, scheduled to take place on February 21 and 22 at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar. Indian Team: Sreejesh Parattu Raveendran, Krishan Pathak, Amit Rohidas, Surender Kumar, Birendra Lakra, Harmanpreet Singh, Varun Kumar, Gurinder Singh, Rupinder Pal Singh, Manpreet Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Hardik Singh, Chinglensana Singh, Raj Kumar Pal, Akashdeep Singh, Sumit, Lalit Upadhyay, Gursahibjit Singh, Dilpreet Singh, SV Sunil, Jarnanpreet Singh, Simranjeet Singh, Nilakanta Sharma, Ramandeep Singh. AGENCIES

Five Indian cities to host FIFA U-17 Women's WC matches

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a first, five Indian cities - Guwahati, Kolkata, Navi Mumbai, Bhubaneswar and Ahmedabad on Tuesday have been confirmed as the host cities for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup scheduled to take place in India from November 2 to November 21 this year.

To set the stage for the future of women's football, FIFA and Local Organising Committee (LOC) also announced the match schedule alongside the Official Slogan - Kick off the dream for the tournament here in presence of Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs Kiren Rijiju, Sarai Bareman, FIFA Chief Women's Football Officer, Roberto Grassi, FIFA Head of Youth Tournaments and AIFF president Praful Patel, who is also LOC



Praful Patel, Kiren Rijiju, Sarai Bareman and Roberto Grassi during the announcement and launch of official slogan for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup

Chairman and FIFA Council member.

Sixteen teams featuring the rising stars of women's football will compete across 32 matches to lift the

coveted trophy in Navi Mumbai on November 21.

The group-stage matches will be played in four host cities (Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar,

Guwahati and Kolkata), with the knockout stages also taking place in four cities (Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata and Navi Mumbai). The winners will lift the trophy at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai on November 21.

Following the launch of the Official Emblem in November 2019, the unveiling of the five host cities and the match schedule marks a major milestone for the tournament as fans in the host cities and across India prepare to welcome the future stars and heroes of women's football.

The key dates for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2020 include: Opening match - November 2. Quarter-finals - November 12 and 13. Semi-finals - November 17 and 18. 3rd/4th-place playoff & final - November 21.



Jose Mourinho applauds during the last minutes of the English FA Cup

Spurs holding on for dear life after Son's injury: Mourinho

AFP ■ LONDON

Tottenham Hotspur's hopes of obtaining something from the season have been equated to someone hanging on for dear life from a balcony in a typically colourful analogy by their manager Jose Mourinho.

The 57-year-old Portuguese made the comparison after he said he believed Korean star Son Heung-min's season could well be over due to a fractured right arm.

Mourinho is already without star striker Harry Kane — side-lined since January with a torn hamstring — as the club enters a crucial period. Midfielder Moussa Sissoko is another long-term casualty.

Spurs host German side RB Leipzig in a Champions League Last 16 first leg match on Wednesday and play Chelsea in a match that could prove pivotal in the dog-fight for the fourth and final Champions League spot.

"You know I like analogies," said Mourinho, who took over after Mauricio Pochettino was sacked in late November last year.

"Sometimes I do good ones and sometimes silly ones. This time I do this."

"When we arrived we were in minus 12 floor, we got on the stairs and we started climbing."

"But immediately the stairs broke and trouble."

"We were trying to find a way."

"Lots of effort but we were going and going."

"Then 11th floor and when we arrived on the fourth floor, where we wanted to arrive, someone took the stairs away so we are now in trouble."

"We are holding by our arms on the balcony."

Mourinho said the club were at a crossroads in their season.

"Now we have two options," he said.

"To fall and die because it's the fourth floor."

"The other is to climb. We will be on that balcony fighting with everything we have."

'WE MISS HIM'

Son's absence comes as a cruel blow to the player and the team as he had been in a rich vein of form scoring in the last five matches after filling in for Kane up front.

The 27-year-old South Korean international forward suffered the injury in the 3-2 Premier League victory over Aston Villa — in which he scored twice including the late winner — on Sunday.

Son suffered the injury in a robust first-minute challenge from Villa's Ezri Konsa. The club did not specify how long Son would be out — he is due to undergo surgery this week — but Mourinho was pessimistic.

"I'm not going to count on him again this season," Mourinho said.

The club said only after the medical operation would they be able to say how long he would be absent.

"Following surgery, our medical staff shall be reviewing management options for Son's rehabilitation with the player expected to be sidelined for a number of weeks."

Mourinho said he would have phrased the statement differently.

"The club wrote a nice statement," he said.

"If I was the one to write the statement I would write different. We miss him," added the 57-year-old Portuguese.

With both Kane and Son missing, Lucas Moura looks like having the burden placed on him as Mourinho discounted untested Irish youngster Troy Parrott.

"In some periods I was worried about not having attacking options on the bench, now it's not having attacking options on the pitch," said Mourinho.

"My thoughts are that Troy Parrott is not ready and Ryan Sessegnon is not a striker."

Utd stun Chelsea to close gap on top four

AFP ■ LONDON

Manchester United moved to within three points of fourth-placed Chelsea with a smash and grab 2-0 win at Stamford Bridge thanks to goals from Anthony Martial and Harry Maguire.

Chelsea had two goals disallowed by VAR reviews and were furious Maguire was not sent-off early on for an off-the-ball kick out at Michy Batshuayi.

However, Blues boss Frank Lampard cut a frustrated figure as the flaws in both boxes which have seen his side win just four of their last 14 league games were exposed once more against ordinary opposition.

Victory lifts United up to seventh and within two points of Tottenham in fifth, which could be good enough to qualify for the Champions League next season pending Manchester City's appeal again a two-season ban from European competition.

Lampard made a bold call before kick-off by again dropping the most expensive goalkeeper in football history, Kepa Arrizabalaga, to the bench in favour of the 38-year-old Willy



Manchester United's Luke Shaw, left, and Chelsea's Mason Mount battle for the ball

Caballero.

Batshuayi also started with Tammy Abraham ruled out by injury and Lampard's anger at missing out on a striker in the January window was borne out by a poor night for the mis-

firing Belgium forward.

Chelsea suffered another injury blow early on when N'Golo Kante hobbled off and the France World Cup winner is now a doubt to face Bayern Munich in the Champions League next

week.

The loss of Kante did not disrupt the home side's early rhythm as Reece James and William fired just wide.

Chelsea were then furious Maguire somehow escaped without being sent-off for kicking Batshuayi after the two collided in front of the dugouts.

The former Marseille attacker then squandered the first of a host of chances by firing wide from Mason Mount's cut-back.

ONE-WAY TRAFFIC

Chelsea's sense of injustice increased when William was harshly booked for diving as he went down under a challenge from Bruno Fernandes looking for a penalty.

United had not made Caballero make a single save before going in front a minute before the break when Martial planted a brilliant header into the far corner from Aaron Wan-Bissaka's cross.

There was still time for Batshuayi to miss another chance before half-time when he skewed wide from a narrow angle.

The one-way traffic continued at

the start of the second period as Mount hit the post and a brave block from Wan-Bissaka deflected Pedro's goal-bound effort behind.

But even when Chelsea did get the ball in the net through substitute Kurt Zouma, the goal was ruled out by VAR for a push on Brandon Williams by Cesar Azpilicueta.

Fernandes was unable to make much of an impact from open play in his second United appearance since a USD 62 million move from Sporting Lisbon.

However, the Portuguese international is a huge threat from set-pieces and nearly caught Caballero out with a free-kick that crashed back off the post.

Moments later, Fernandes provided his first assist for the Red Devils with a corner which Maguire powered home.

Lampard had seen enough from Batshuayi and handed Olivier Giroud a rare appearance off the bench for the final quarter.

The French striker thought he had given Chelsea a lifeline with a near post header, but was ruled offside after a VAR review.

AC Milan eye Euro spots after Torino win

AFP ■ MILAN

AC Milan closed in on the European places in Serie A after Ante Rebic fired them to a 1-0 win over Torino.

Rebic on Monday swept home Samu Castillejo's low pull back in the 25th minute to consign to draw Milan level on 35 points with Hellas Verona, who currently occupy the final Europa League spot on goal difference.

Rebic's winning goal was his sixth in seven games in all competitions, a run that comes after failing to score at all in the first half of the season.

The Croatian's strike helped the hosts bounce back from last week's derby disap-



Ante Rebic celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal

pointment against Inter Milan to continue a positive run under coach Stefano Pioli that also saw them unlucky not to beat Juventus in the Coppa

Italia semi-final first leg last week.

They have lost just once since the turn of the year — to title-chasing Inter — and are playing well enough to aim for European football next season.

However the Champions League will likely be beyond them thanks to the 10-point gap between them and fourth-placed Atalanta.

Torino meanwhile are inching closer to the relegation zone after their fifth straight defeat, a slump that shows little sign of ending.

They are just five points from the drop despite bringing in Moreno Longo to replace Walter Mazzarri earlier this month.

Bencic soars, then crashes in Dubai

AFP ■ DUBAI

Holder Belinda Bencic ran off the first 19 points against Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova before collapsing to a 1-6, 6-1, 6-1 loss on Tuesday at the Dubai Championships.

Another former champion, the 2017 and 2018 winner Elina Svitolina, also fell, 6-2, 6-1, to US qualifier Jennifer Brady.

Pavlyuchenkova could not have made a worse start.

"It's tennis, sometimes it happens," the

31st-ranked Russian said "You go out there and you just don't feel anything."

"I just kept on fighting, still trying to hit every ball, trying to be there."

"It doesn't matter what the score is, just play. Slowly I started to turn it around, I started to find my game."

"I honestly wasn't focusing on the score. Sometimes you can play amazing tennis and still lose 6-1. In the third set, it was a good level from both of us."

Bencic, who is Swiss was seeded four

and Svitolina third. That leaves the spotlight to tournament number one Simona Halep and second-seeded Karolina Pliskova, who begin in the second round after byes.

Weekend ATP Rotterdam winner Gael Monfils watched in pain as girlfriend Svitolina went down to Brady.

Svitolina had little to offer as the 52nd-ranked Brady gained her second victory this season over a Top 10 opponent after beating Barty in Brisbane.

The Ukrainian's usually steady game was nowhere to be found at the Aviation Club as first-round play concluded.

"It was not a bad start, but then everything just went downhill," Svitolina said.

"I wish I could regroup better. In the end, I didn't feel so good the ball. Just everything was all over the place today." At this level it's tough to pick just one thing: everybody is putting the ball over the net, and you have to play long rallies, you have to build the points.

MESSI & HAMILTON ARE WORLD'S BEST

PTI ■ BERLIN

British F1 ace Lewis Hamilton and Lionel Messi, arguably the world's greatest footballer, were on Monday declared the joint winners of the prestigious Laureus World Sportsman of the year award.

They received the same number of votes, a first in the 20-year history of the awards with the jury unable to split Hamilton and Messi.

Messi, the six-time FIFA World Player of the year, is the first team-player to bag the award. He though was not present to receive the award and sent a video message.

They pipped golfing great Tiger Woods, Kenyan marathoner Eliud Kipchoge, tennis legend Rafael Nadal and MotoGP champion Marc Marquez.

American gymnast Simone Biles who won five gold medals at the 2019 World Championships, grabbed the World Sportswoman of the year award, her third in four years after winning it in 2017 and in 2019.

She beat a strong challenge from Jamaican sprinting great Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, who

missed out on the honour for the fifth time. She was nominated 2010, 2013, 2014 and 2016 also but did not win it.

The most decorated gymnast also beat competition from American footballer Megan Rapinoe, Japanese tennis sensation Naomi Osaka, American track and field athlete Allyson Felix and skier Mikaela Shiffrin.

Snowboarding sensation Chloe Kim won the World Action Sports person honour, her second straight in the same category.

In the Sports person of the year with a disability category, Oksana Masters, born with limb impairments caused by radiation from Chernobyl and adopted by an American single parent, was recognised for an outstanding year in 2019.

She won five Gold medals and a Silver at the World Para Nordic Skiing Championships.

South Bronx United (SBU), a football programme based in New York, was honoured with the Sport for Good Award. The programme uses football to achieve educational outcomes for young people from underserved communities.

The 2019 Rugby World Cup



British reigning F1 drivers champion Lewis Hamilton poses with Worlds best sportsman of year Award during the 2020 Laureus World Sports Awards

winners South Africa won their second Laureus World Team of the Year Award, beating Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool and the US Women's Football Team, among others.

For the 2020 Laureus World Comeback of the Year, Germany's gritty F3 driver Sophia Florschütz was the winner.

Travelling at 276km per hour, she had lost control of her car at the Macau circuit, crashing through safety barriers and leaving her with a spinal fracture which required an 11-hour surgery and months of rehabilitation.

In November 2019, a year on from her accident, the 18-year-old Sophia was back in the cockpit, racing once again in the Macau Grand Prix.

Egan Bernal, who became the youngest rider to win the Tour de France at 22, grabbed the World Breakthrough of the Year award.

German basketball great Dirk Nowitzki was recognised at the Ceremony with the Laureus Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to the sport of basketball.

Spanish Basketball Federation got the Exceptional Achievement Award.

Tendulkar wins best sporting moment award

PTI ■ BERLIN

Beating great Sachin Tendulkar being carried on the shoulders of his teammates after India's World Cup triumph at home in 2011 was voted the Laureus best sporting moment in the last 20 years.

With the backing of Indian cricket fans, Tendulkar got the maximum number of votes to emerge winner on Monday.

The charged-up Indian cricketers rushed to the ground at the Wankhede Stadium and soon they lifted Tendulkar on their shoulders and made a lap of honour, a moment etched in the minds of the fans.

Former Australian skipper Steve Waugh handed the trophy to Tendulkar after tennis legend Boris Becker announced the winner at a glittering ceremony.

"It's incredible. The feeling of winning the world cup was beyond what words can express. How



many times you get an event happening where there are no mixed opinions. Very rarely the entire country celebrates," Tendulkar said after receiving the trophy. "And this is a reminder of how powerful a sport is and what magic it does to our lives. Even now when I watch that it has stayed with me."

Won't rule out playing 2023 WC: Taylor

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Veteran New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor doesn't rule out playing the 2023 ODI World Cup but says his form, fitness and motivation level at the end of next year will decide whether he actually manages a place in the squad.

The 35-year-old will become the first cricketer in the world to complete 100 games across three international formats when he steps out for the first Test against India at Basin Reserve on February 21.

"I haven't ruled it (2023 World Cup) out but I still think it's a long way away. First and foremost I want to get to next year - the Twenty20 World Cup and then the home summer - and then I'll have a good idea on how I'm placed at the end of next summer," Taylor was quoted as saying by 'stuff.Co.Nz'.

"Whether there is still a drive, whether I'm good enough, whether I'm fit enough, and whether I deserve my spot in the side. If I can tick all those, then definitely 2023

is an option."

The big-hitting batsman said despite his desire to continue, he won't out himself under too much pressure.

"You always want to do well and first and foremost the game is more important. At the same time you can put extra pressure on yourself. You've just got to go out and enjoy it and take it as another game. Hopefully I can contribute in any way I can," he said.



Kyle Jamieson after dismissing Prithvi Shaw

Black Caps/Twitter

Jamieson credits shift to Auckland for making him better cricketer

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Towering New Zealand pacer Kyle Jamieson has revealed that moving from Canterbury to Auckland helped him get rid of a detrimental aggressive streak and become a cricketer worthy of national duty.

The 6'8" tall pacer, who made his ODI debut against India in the recent series, was handed a place in the Test squad for the upcoming two-match rubber beginning at Basin Reserves here on February 21.

"I'm a pretty fiery character on the field. On the field I'm pretty aggressive. I think it came out in ways I necessarily didn't like. I would sort of do it and then post-game be like, 'What did I do that for?'" he was quoted as saying by 'stuff.Co.Nz'.

Jamieson shifted to Auckland, where he was born, prior to this season after making his T20 debut for Canterbury in 2016 in the Super Smash.

He said there was a lot of

negativity around him in Canterbury, where he grew up, and it affected his behaviour.

"There was a bit of negativity surrounding myself and that environment and that was coming out in my behaviour on the field," he said.

The 25-year-old said returning to Auckland made a massive difference to his game.

"I'm really enjoying my cricket, which is probably something I couldn't say a couple of years ago," said Jamieson, who scored 25 and took 2 for 42 on debut during the second ODI against India at Eden Park.

"I was going through a bit of stuff off the field. Just the chance to come in with this group and turn up and learn everyday - try and better myself as a cricketer - was something that was too hard to turn down, so look, it's been massive for my game. "...It was just a shift that I needed to make. Most importantly, I needed to be happy and I needed to enjoy my cricket. Wherever that may take me, then it will," he added.

Can't wait to get Virat out: Boult

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

There are no half measures for fit-again New Zealand pace spearhead Trent Boult who is ready to challenge India captain Virat Kohli on his return to international cricket during the two-Test series starting here on Friday.

Boult was out of action for the past six weeks due to a fracture on his right hand sustained during the Boxing Day Test against Australia and missed out on the limited-overs leg of the India series.

Back for the traditional format, the left-arm fast bowler made his priorities clear ahead of the first Test.

"That's personally why I play the game, to get guys like that (Kohli) out and test myself against them, so I can't wait to get stuck in. But he's an exceptional player. Everyone knows how great he is," Boult said, sending out a warning after landing in the capital city for the opening Test.

The Basin Reserve track will have a lot for the seamers and in conditions conducive to seam bowling, a wily customer like Boult might prove to be a handful.

"I'm preparing for a solid wicket. It generally is very good here and goes the full distance (five days). I do enjoy playing here, the history that's involved, and it's going to be an exciting week building up. I can't wait to get out there," said the 30-year-old who has taken 256 wickets from 65 Tests.



New Zealand seamer Trent Boult celebrates after taking wicket

ICC/Twitter

It was frustrating for him to watch his side get walloped 0-5 in the T20 series but exhilarating to when it got its mojo back in the subsequent one-dayers. The Black Caps won 3-

0 in the 50-over format. "I think it is what it is. I have just got to put the last six or so weeks behind me and just back myself to get out there and do my thing," said Boult,

"That's personally why I play the game, to get guys like that (Kohli) out and test myself against them, so I can't wait to get stuck in. But he's an exceptional player. Everyone knows how great he is,"

who warmed up by playing a club game at the picturesque Taupo ground.

"I was pushing in off the long run. I think a couple of the clubbies from Taupo really enjoyed that. It was a good afternoon," added the pacer, who sent down eight overs in a friendly game for his club Cadets.

Professionally, Boult had to lie low due to injury, but it was also a good break as he and wife Lana welcomed their second child.

"Having some time away from the game and having my second son a couple of weeks ago came at quite a good time," said Boult.

Fighting fit, all he wants now is to get hold of a red kookaburra and get a few to tail into Kohli and company.

"I am hungry to be here and can't wait to get back in the white and get the red ball moving around," he said.



Indian wvs team celebrates after winning the warm-up match against West Indies BCCI

Poonam's three wickets help Ind edge out WI

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Spinner Poonam Yadav claimed three wickets as India geared up for the ICC women's T20 World Cup with a thrilling two-run win over the West Indies in a low-scoring warm-up match here on Tuesday.

Electing to bat, India posted a lowly 107 for eight in their stipulated 20 overs before returning to restrict West Indies to 105 for seven.

Chasing 108 to win, West Indies were comfortably placed at 57 for one in 13 overs when Deepti Sharma struck, cleaning up opener Lee-Ann Kirby (42) to trigger a collapse.

Soon skipper Stafanie Taylor (16), Chedean Nation (0) and Deandra Dottin (1) were back in the hut as West Indies slipped to 67 for five in the 17th over.

Hayley Matthews (25) and Chinelle Henry (17) blasted three fours and a six in the 19th over to leave them with 11 to get off the last six balls.

Henry blasted Poonam for a four but the Indian dismissed

Matthews in the fourth ball. West Indies needed three runs off the last ball but Henry was caught by Veda Krishnamurthy.

Earlier, India's top-three failed to fire as they were reduced to 17 for three in 3.1 overs. Opener Smriti Mandhana (4) lasted just six balls, while Jemimah Rodrigues (0) failed to open her account. Young Shafali Verma blasted a couple of fours before being caught by Britney Cooper off Shamila Connell (2/20).

Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (11), too, didn't stay long, while Krishnamurthy was cleaned up by Afy Fletcher (1/26), as India slumped to 52 for five in 11.2 overs.

Deepti Sharma made a 32-ball 21 before becoming a victim of Anisa Mohammad (2/16), while Pooja Vastrakar (13) was removed by Aaliyah Alleyne (1/9). Stafanie Taylor then got rid of Taniya Bhatia for 10.

Shikha Pandey finally smashed a 16-ball 24 to give some respectability to the total.

'NZ's conservative approach against Bumrah will soon be adopted by others'

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

New Zealand's conservative approach against Jasprit Bumrah could become a template for other teams as they look to tackle the Indian pace ace who recently endured a rare wicket-less outing in an ODI series, reckons former fast bowler Shane Bond.

The premier bowler copped criticism for his lean run during the three ODIs against New Zealand and Bond put that down to expectations.

"That's the nature of expectations when you get a bowler of Jasprit's quality," Bond, the fastest New Zealand bowler during his time, told PTI in an exclusive interview.

"I thought New Zealand played him well and identified him as a risk. They have played him conservatively and obviously there was some inexperience around (Navdeep Saini and Shardul Thakur)," he said.

"All teams will now identify him as a risk and attack others. So that's where the bowling group and what they do (as a group) is massive. It is not an easy place to bowl as wickets are flat."

But Bond felt Bumrah's bowling wasn't all that bad during the series, which India lost 0-3.

"At the end of the day, all you can do is try and bowl well. He bowled reasonably well but sometimes you don't get wickets," Bond said.

Bond, who has spent considerable amount of time with Bumrah as the Mumbai Indians bowling coach in the IPL, nonetheless expects India's premier strike bowler to have a "massive impact" on the two-Test series starting Friday.

"When you come back from a lay-off, it's always hard to get into the groove. Just that he hadn't had a lot of game before the series and conditions are a bit foreign," said Bond.

"Although New Zealand played him well in limited overs, Jasprit will have a massive impact on the Test series. I have no doubt about that,"



'Hope Pandya gets to play some cricket before IPL'

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Mumbai Indians bowling coach Shane Bond wants all-rounder Hardik Pandya, who is recovering from a back surgery, to play a few matches before the Indian Premier League, beginning March 29.

"I only hope he gets to play some cricket before the IPL and always believe it's better to spend a little bit longer for coming back rather than rushing it," Bond said.

"There's no doubt he can come back. I am just pleased that they are taking an orthodox approach with Hardik's rehabilitation and T20s, especially IPL will be nice for him to comeback as he will not be over-bowled."

Pandya underwent a productive net session at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru recently.

He was seen facing throwdown in the nets and mainly played with a straight bat. It is not yet clear if he will make a comeback in the South Africa ODIs next month or the IPL.

Earlier this month, Pandya was ruled out of the Test series against New Zealand after failing to regain full match fitness.

added the bowler, whose promising career was cut short by numerous injuries.

"It always takes time to get back to top form because there is no substitute of game time. So it's good for Jasprit that he is leading into Test matches with some short form cricket," said Bond, who played 18 Tests, 82 ODIs and 20 T20 Internationals.

Limited DRS use was always planned for Ranji semifinals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The limited use of Decision Review System was always planned for the Ranji Trophy semifinals and not from the knockout stages, clarified BCCI's general manager of cricket Saba Karim on Tuesday.

The move to introduce limited DRS comes after the umpires committed some howlers in some knockout games of the previous season.

However, the quarterfinals starting on Thursday will not see the use of DRS. "We are introducing from the semifinals. This the first time we have initiated this program, we wanted to bring in semifinals and we have done that. It was never meant for the quarterfinals," Karim, also a former India wicketkeeper, told PTI.

"The whole idea is that we wanted to bring in the DRS wherein we can have uniformity for both the games and that will be in the semifinals. All the four teams have been pitted equally and that would not have been possible before (in quarters)," he said.

The restricted technology for Ranji semis will not have Hawk Eye and Ultra Edge, two key components of the DRS used in international games.

"We will be using the technology which is available to us. We are looking at a very limited use of the DRS. We don't have snickometer and ball tracking. We have red zone and we have spin vision and we will try and give whatever is available to umpires for them to decide," added Karim.