

OPINION 8
NEW DAWN FOR
THE MILITARY

WORLD 12
DEATH TOLL FROM CHINA
VIRUS SURGES PAST 2,000

SPORT 15
DORTMUND BEAT
PSG IN UCL

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HAD TO FACE
MY FEAR IN
BHOOT: VICKY
14 VIVACITY

Shaheen Bagh sticks to its guns

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

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Responding to the concerns raised by the women,

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

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

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

She scotched the allegations that they are not letting

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

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

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

"We are being called traitors. When we pushed Britishers out of the country, who is Narendra Modi and Amit Shah? You remove NRC and CAA, we will clear the site in no time," she added.

Another woman described their ongoing protest as mental trauma. She said they jump up even at the slightest noise at night, fearing police action.

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

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

Mahant Nriya Das picked as Ram Mandir trust prez



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

Modi's ex-aide Nripendra Misra heads construction committee of trust

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

mittee of the trust.

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

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

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

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

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

Trump relishes prospect of 70 L welcoming his Ahmedabad rally

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

PNS/PTI ■ NEW DELHI/ WASHINGTON

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

Explaining the contours of the high-profile visit, Foreign



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

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

Though Trump is not happy with the bilateral trade

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

"He (Modi) told me we'll have seven million people between the airport and the event. And the stadium, I understand, is sort of semi under construction, but it's going to be the largest stadium in the world. So it's going to be very exciting... I hope you all enjoy it," he told reporters in Washington on Tuesday. He was referring to a scheduled joint public rally with Modi at the newly-built Motera Stadium in Ahmedabad.

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

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

Continued on Page 7



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

Yogi defends cops over deaths during anti-CAA stir

LUCKNOW: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister on Wednesday defended police over the deaths of anti-CAA protesters, saying they were shot by other rioters and nothing can be done to save someone with a death wish.

Wrapping up the discussion in the state assembly on the Governor's address, Adityanath said the role of the police in dealing with rioters during the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act should be appreciated. In hard-hitting remarks, the chief minister said his government supported democratic protests but will maintain law and order by dealing strictly with those indulging in violence.

"Jo jis bhasha main samjhenge, usey uss bhasha main samjhayenge (We will talk to them in the language they understand)," he warned. About 20 people died of gunshot wounds during violent protests in several parts of Uttar Pradesh in December. "If someone is coming with an intention to die, how can he remain alive?" Adityanath said. See Page 2

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

Continued on Page 7

Priyanka, Scindia lined up for RS

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress may find bigwigs like Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Jyotiraditya Scindia and Randeep Surjewala into the Rajya Sabha amid reports that the Opposition strength in the Upper House could reduce further and the Congress may lose 9 or 10 seats — of its 19 seats falling vacant — in the elections slated later this year to 16 vacancies.

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



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

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

Sources in the Congress said the party is confident of

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

"The Opposition strength will fall after elections are held to fill up 68 vacancies in April, June and November, that may lead to the ruling NDA slowly inching towards the majority mark in the Rajya Sabha. While 51 seats in the Rajya Sabha are falling vacant in April, five more in June, one in July and 11 in November this year," sources in Congress explained.

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

Continued on Page 7

Fasal Bima Yojana tweaked for farmers' benefit, voluntary now

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

The Cabinet approved modification of certain parameters/provisions of ongoing PMFBY and RWBCIS



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

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

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

Continued on Page 7

CM slams oppn's patronage to anti-CAA protesters

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday slammed the opposition parties for extending political patronage to anti-CAA protesters and sympathising with anti-national forces as conspiracy of funding of the protesters by Popular Front of India was unearthed by security agencies.

He was replying to the motion of thanks to the Governor's address in the Assembly.

"Why have the opposition parties such sympathy with anti-CAA protests which are being carried out under the national tricolour and the Constitution. It's a case of terror funding and threat to national security which has support of the organisations of Congress and Samajwadi Party," Yogi charged.

Questioning the rationale for anti-CAA protests, the chief minister said that the protesters should at least spell out one objection against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. "The BJP did not make this law, it has been in existence since 1955, legislated after the Nehru-Liaquat pact was inked," he charged.

Without naming SP chief Akhlesh Yadav for sending his teenage daughter to the anti-CAA protest site in Lucknow, Yogi said, "A criminal never aspires for his progeny to fol-

C'wealth Secy Gen praises Yogi

Lucknow (PNS): Commonwealth Secretary General Patricia Scotland lauded Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's commitment towards inclusion of all sections of society in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

In a letter addressed to the chief minister, Scotland said, "I am impressed with the clarity of your vision and determination to not leave anyone behind. We in the Commonwealth Secretariat look forward to sharing your knowledge and expertise with other members of our Commonwealth family."

In the letter, the secretary-general also thanked the chief minister for his commitment



to holding a Commonwealth SDG Conference in Lucknow later this year in order to share his "knowledge, experience and expertise amongst the wider Commonwealth family."

"I look forward to working with you to deliver the SDG Conference as well as supporting UP, India and the Commonwealth to deliver the SDGs and the resultant holistic and inclusive development of our people," the secretary-general stated in the letter.

Scotland was on an official visit to India recently to attend 'Raisina Dialogue 2020' where she held a meeting with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

low in his footsteps, but political leaders are encouraging their children to take part in anti-CAA protests. They will have to decide whether they want to realise the dreams of Gandhi or Jinnah."

The chief minister also targeted those who have been protesting against the CAA across the state over the past weeks. "Azaadi (freedom) slogans are being raised. What is azaadi? Do we have to work towards Jinnah's dream or work towards Gandhi's dream? The

police should be praised for their work," he said.

"I am not against protesters but would come down heavily against those indulging in violence. Anyone hiding behind democracy to vitiate the atmosphere will be taken to task. Those who try to undermine the law would be replied in their language," he added.

Referring to Dr BR Ambedkar and Jogendra Nath Mandal (Dalit leader of Bengal who migrated to Pakistan and became law minister there),

Yogi said, "Dr Ambedkar is the most celebrated national icon with maximum number of memorials built to cherish his memory. On the other hand, Jogendra Nath Mandal fled from Pakistan to India and lived the rest of his life in oblivion as he was a traitor."

The chief minister added, "The opposition parties will have to decide whether they intend to follow the legacy of Dr Ambedkar or Jogendra Nath Mandal."

Defending the UP Police

...dismisses oppn charge on quota

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath dismissed the charge of opposition parties that quota for Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes were not being implemented by the state government in recruitment.

Yogi asserted that the BJP represented every section of society and was committed to protecting the interests of SCs and OBCs and ensuring their uplift in all spheres of life.

"Opposition parties are not willing for a logical debate based on facts and figures. In the last three years, as many as 2.5 lakh persons have been recruited in various government departments and rules of reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs have been implemented. The government has ensured that each social group get its due share. We have also implemented 10 per cent quota for economically weaker sec-

tions from upper caste," the chief minister said.

Yogi said that on January 26, the government released funds for payment of scholarships to 56 lakh students, of which 28 lakh were from the OBCs. He said that during SP and BSP regimes, SC and OBC students were the worst sufferers as the SP government denied benefit to SC students and the BSP regime did the same against the OBCs.

"It will be very embarrassing for the SP and BSP (if it comes to light) as to what was done during their regimes so I do not want to reveal all details, so do not compel us. For us, national interest is above party interests and political power is a means and not an end in itself. The BJP represents each and every section of society," he said.

Yogi further said, "Every political party had an opportunity to form government in UP. What did they do when they

were in power. We are ready for a logical debate on all issues and it should be dignified and within framework of parliamentary decorum and tradition where there is no scope for name calling."

Earlier, Speaker Hriday Narayan Dixhit rejected an adjournment notice on the issue of reservation for SCs and OBCs, moved by Samajwadi Party and supported by the BSP and Congress.

Opposing the notice, Parliamentary Affairs minister Suresh Kumar Khanna said, "Opposition is in the habit of raising issue of reservation in every session of the House and creating disturbance."

Khanna charged that the opposition as part of its malicious design, wanted to malign the BJP government that it was against reservation.

Not satisfied with the government's reply, members of opposition parties staged a walkout from the House.

Leader of opposition Ram Govind Chaudhary later told reporters that the chief minister's statement showed the government's utter disregard for civil liberties.

"This attitude is amply reflected in the behaviour of UP Police. The chief minister's statement that no deaths had taken place due to police firing was in contradiction to Bijnor district police chief's acceptance that one person was killed in police firing during the protests," Chaudhary said.

prevent the situation from worsening and kept the situation under control."

Yogi asserted that the police could not be mute spectators as public property was being destroyed and innocent people were being targeted by riotous mob.

The chief minister M said, "No one died from police bullets. All those who died had died of bullets from rioters. If someone goes to the street with the intent to shoot people, then either he dies or a cop



Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar being welcomed by party workers at party's conference in Lucknow on Wednesday

BJP MLA among seven booked for raping woman

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After waiting for more than a week, Bhadohi police on Wednesday finally registered a case against local BJP legislator Ravindra Nath Tripathi and six others for raping a woman repeatedly for a month in 2017.

The 40-year-old victim, a widow, had lodged a complaint on February 10 but a case was only registered on Wednesday.

"The woman alleged that she was first raped by Tripathi's nephew Sandeep Tiwari, who was also named in the FIR, in 2017. The woman said that she did not lodge a complaint back then as Tiwari had promised to marry her," Bhadohi's Superintendent of Police Ram Badan Singh said.

"She alleged that in the run-up

to 2017 UP Assembly polls, she was kept at a hotel for a month by Tiwari. All the seven accused would visit the hotel and repeatedly rape her. She also claimed that she got pregnant and was forced to undergo abortion," the officer said.

"A probe in this regard was handed over to ASP Ravindra Verma and on the basis of his report, an FIR was registered against the seven accused at City police station," the SP said.

Singh said that the victim's statement would be recorded before a magistrate and further action would be initiated as per law.

Earlier, BJP MLA from Bangarmanu, Kuldeep Sengar, and even former BJP Union minister, Swami Chinmayanand were accused of sexual assault.

Priyanka's Basti rally cancelled

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The 40-day 'Kisan Jan Jagran Abhiyan' started by Uttar Pradesh Congress on February 6 to brighten the party's prospect in the next Assembly polls suffered a jolt as a proposed rally in Basti to be addressed by Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on February 23 was cancelled.

Scheduled to kick-off her first big campaign in UP by highlighting farmers' problems by addressing 'Kisan Jan Jagran Abhiyan', Priyanka would be away with her mother and Congress chief Sonia Gandhi for the latter's treatment abroad.

UP Congress chief Ajay Kumar 'Lallu' confirmed the cancellation of Priyanka's rally but said that a new date would be announced soon.

On February 6, Lallu launched the 'Kisan Jan Jagran Abhiyan' in Lucknow to raise farmers' problems and put it before the government for redressal.

During the campaign, the Congress is scheduled to organise 12,000 corner meetings, 900 press conferences and more than 800 demonstrations. The party would demand the government to slash power bills of farmers by half, waive farm loans, ensure double profit and double the minimum support price as promised during 2014 poll campaign, give MSP of Rs 400 per quintal for cane, clear all dues of cane growers, raise the MSP of paddy to Rs 2,500 per quintal etc.

BSP walkout over admission of OBCs in medical courses

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party members staged a noisy walkout from the Uttar Pradesh Assembly on Wednesday over lapses in admission of students in state medical colleges under Other Backward Classes reservation.

Even as Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna said that the government was admitting the students under the reservation system in a transparent manner, the BSP members led by its leader Lalji Verma walked out of the House during the Question Hour, alleging that the government adopted a partial attitude towards backwards classes.

The issue was raised by BSP member Sushma Verma through a question. She wanted to know the number of students who were admitted to the state medical colleges under OBC reservation.

The BSP members alleged that the government was not giving the due share to OBCs and was curtailing the number of seats reserved for them.

The minister said that the state run medical colleges had provision of reservation for the students but in private medical colleges there was no such sys-



tem.

Khanna said that in 2017-18, the number of students admitted under OBC quota for the MBBS course was 403 and it was the same in 2018-19. But in 2019-20, the number rose to 537 after the number of seats were increased in the state.

Similarly, he said, in post-graduate courses of MD/MS, the number of students admitted under OBC quota was 112 in 2017-18, 111 in 2018-19 and 124 in 2019-20.

DECLARATION
This is to inform general public that we Mr. Ashish Kumar Upadhyay S/o Mr. Ramshripran Upadhyay & Mrs. Astha Upadhyay W/o Mr. Ashish Kumar Upadhyay Flr: 703, 7th Floor, Scotia tower 'OMAXE HEIGHT' Vihari Khand, Gomti Nagar Lucknow have lost Original Buyer Agreement dated 18/07/2017 executed between Omara Ltd. and Mrs. Neha Bhargava & Ankur Bhargava. This buyer agreement belongs to flat no. 703, 7th Floor, Scotia tower 'OMAXE HEIGHT' Vihari Khand, ward - Christhat, Gomti Nagar Lucknow. This Property is presently owned exclusively by me if any person have any kind of right title etc. Then please communicate the same within 3 days to Mr. Ashish Kr. Upadhyay Lucknow M.No. 829957880 otherwise the same will be considered void.

CLASSIFIEDS

सूचना

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सूचना

मैंने अपना नाम जलील अहमद सिद्दीकी से बदलकर हाफिज़ जलील अहमद सिद्दीकी रख लिया है। अब मुझे इसी नाम से जाना व पहचाना जाये। हाफिज़ जलील अहमद सिद्दीकी पुत्र स्व. गुलाम रसगीर, निवासी-666/पी-075, फूलबाग बस्ती, थाना-गुडमा कुर्सी रोड, लखनऊ-226026.

NOTICE

Be it known to all that in my daughter Somya Ahmad Christ Church College (VIII B) record my name Riyazzul Ahmad mentioned my correct name is Riyajul Ahmad as per Adhar Card this is to be corrected in records- Riyajul Ahmad S/o Hamid Ahmad R/o 304/21, Dalali Mohalla, Victoria Street, Chowk, Lucknow

NOTICE

Be it known to all that in my daughter Somya Ahmad Christ Church College (VIII B) record my name Zeba Riyazzul mentioned my correct name is Zeba Khatun as per Adhar Card this is to be corrected in records- Zeba Khatun W/o Riyajul Ahmad R/o 304/21, Dalali Mohalla, Victoria Street, Chowk, Lucknow

NHRC seeks report on malnutrition deaths in Basti

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Taking suo motu cognisance of reports of a family in Basti losing four members due to malnutrition in the last six years, the National Human Rights Commission issued notice to the chief secretary of UP and sought a report and data on effective implementation of social welfare schemes in Basti, mentioning about the family.

After losing four members due to malnutrition in the last six years, Harishchandra of Ojhaganj village in Basti urged the authorities to allow him to end his life as he was not being hired

for work by anyone for the last three months and had no income to provide for his lone daughter, who was also struggling. The NHRC observed that the content of the news report was a serious issue of human rights violation due to lack of nutritional diet, adequate medical care and proper livelihood and expressed serious concern terming the deaths as tragic.

It also sought details on the health status of Harishchandra's lone surviving child and steps taken by the state to ensure income for him.

The district administration was also asked to furnish details of relief pro-

vided to the family. The response is expected within four weeks.

The NHRC further observed that media report indicated that there could be more such hapless families due to the lack of infrastructure and negligence by authorities.

The NHRC expressed concern that such incidents were happening despite numerous flagship programmes being announced and implemented by the Union and UP governments to ensure socio-economic protection to citizens, including their right to food, health, education, housing and adequate standard of living.

'95% of saplings planted in 2019 have survived'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government announced in the Assembly on Wednesday that 95 per cent of the 22 crore saplings planted in one day last year, creating a record, have survived and arrangements have been made to ensure their proper growth.

Amused at the revelation, Bahujan Samaj Party member Vinay Shankar Tiwari, who had put forward the query during the Question Hour, reparteeed that when 95 per cent of wheat does not survive, what to talk about trees.

On August 9, 2019, UP made its entry into the Guinness Book of World Record by planting 22 crore saplings in one day. This year, the target of plantation has been fixed at 25 crore.

Replying to a couple of questions in the House, Forest Minister

Dara Singh Chauhan said the government had provided Rs 100 crore for the upkeep of these saplings while a third party checking was being done to get the real picture.

Alleging that the government was making incorrect statement, opposition members claimed that over 50 per cent of the saplings had withered and died.

But Singh refuted this by saying that the government had ensured full protection of the saplings.

In reply to another question of Mohammed Aslam Rainee (BSP), the forest minister said that around 3.83 crore saplings were planted during 2015-16 while around 5.08 crore saplings were planted in 2016-17. "Of these, around 75 per cent saplings survived," he said.

POLYTHENE BAN: Replying to

another question on the use of polythene despite the government banning its in 2018, Urban Development Minister Ashutosh Tandon said that the government had taken stern action against illegal use of polythene.

"We have seized 6.52 tons of plastic and polythene in the last two years after the ban and a fine of Rs 7.40 crore was collected from the offenders," he said.

Tandon also said that the government was making all efforts to create awareness among the masses to shun polythene and had even issued direction to 17 nagar nigams to enforce the ban strictly.

The minister further said an enforcement team had been set up in all nagar nigams under a retired army colonel to strictly deal with the illegal use of polythene and plastic.

No proposal for linking rivers pending: Min

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government informed the Assembly on Wednesday that there was no proposal pending before it over linking of rivers.

Replying to a question of BSP member Shyam Sunder Sharma, Jal Shakti Minister Dr Mahendra Singh said that the project to link Ghagra river with Sharda and linking of Ramganga with Ganga river had already been completed.

Singh said that the project to link five rivers — Ghaghara, Saryu, Rohini, Rapti and Banganga — was in the last stage and would provide irrigation facilities to nine districts of eastern UP.

When the BSP member reminded the minister about former Prime Minister late Atal Bihari Vajpayee's dream of linking Ken and Betwa rivers in Bundelkhand to end the annual feature of drought there, Singh said that the matter was with the Union government as the project was divided between UP and MP.

"The project has not yet started as there has been no agreement between UP and MP, though talks are underway," Singh stated.

When asked about a project linking Saryu and four other rivers, the minister clarified that the previous government did only 3 per cent of the work while the present government had done 85 per cent of the work on it. Singh said that the project would be completed in the 2020-21 fiscal.

Big fire in plywood factory



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A big fire broke out in a plywood factory in Bazaar Khala area on Wednesday afternoon.

While three employees of the factory were said to have sustained burns, a fourth was reportedly trapped in the fire while helping in rescue operations and was being searched.

The fire was brought under control after over two-and-half hours by nine fire-tenders which were rushed to the spot.

Three of the injured were identified as Virendra Kumar (20) and Mithlesh Kumar (22), both of Sitapur district, and Sonu (23), a native of Unnao district.

Police spokesman SB Shukla said that thick smoke was seen billowing from the factory premises around 1:15 pm. At that time, only a few employees were inside the factory as most of the others had left for lunch.

Some people waiting to catch three-wheeler at the nearby tempo taxi stand saw the smoke and raised an alarm.



(Top) Fire in plywood factory and below, a burn victim getting treatment at hospital Pioneer

The injured were rushed to KGMU Trauma Centre from where they were sent to SPM Hospital (Civil Hospital). They are admitted in the burn ward. The police spokesman said that short-circuit probably sparked the fire. He said the exact cause of fire and damage to goods would be known after a probe, which had been handed to Bazaar Khala inspector.

While three employees of the factory were said to have sustained burns, a fourth was reportedly trapped in the fire while helping in rescue operations and was being searched

One of them informed the police about the fire on Dial 112 and soon a quick response team reached the spot.

RML varsity students protest molestation bid

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Students of Ram Manohar Lohia National Law University sat on dharna on Wednesday after an attempt was allegedly made to molest a student by an outsider on Tuesday night.

University authorities said that they had strengthened the fencing near the university auditorium where the incident took place and had handed over to police the labourer who had made the indecent act.

Chief proctor Manish Singh said that the incident occurred at 11:30 pm on Tuesday night. "The girl, who



is a first year student, had come out of the library at 11:30 pm and was waiting for her friend when a man, a labourer of a caterer, jumped

the fence and tried to catch the girl. When she raised an alarm, the security guards rushed to her help. There was a programme going on in the audi-

torium and the man was from the caterers who were working there. He was in an inebriated state," he said.

A third year student taking part in the protest said that they were sitting on dharna so that the administration wakes up to women's security.

"There has been laxity on the part of the administration in providing security to females on the campus. A female student who was stalked recently had reported the incident to the authorities but they did not do anything," he added.

Police identified the labourer as Dinesh. He was booked under Section 294 of the Indian Penal Code.

Dedication Day celebrated

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Vivekananda Polyclinic and Institute of Medical Sciences (VPIMS), Lucknow, celebrated its 51st Dedication Day on Tuesday.

On this occasion free OPD and free OT services were provided.

The institute organised its 33rd Annual Continued Medical Education (CME) in the seminar hall. It was attended by more than 100 distinguished doctors and post-graduate students. There were academic sessions covering different aspects of medical education. Prof VK Paul, Chairman, Board of Governors, Medical Council of India and Member, NITI Aayog, discussed the work done by Swami Vivekananda for the uplift of the downtrodden. He also emphasised that the teachings of Swami Vivekananda were much more relevant today.

The academic session was chaired by Prof. Mandakini Pradhan, Head of Maternal & Reproductive Health department of SGP GIMS, Lucknow and Dr (Brig) T Prabhakar retired director of VPIMS, Lucknow.

City's ITMS to be handed over to Traffic Dept in Mar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Integrated Traffic Management System (ITMS) of Lucknow is likely to be handed over to the Traffic police by March 20. DCP (Traffic) Charu Nigam said she was training her staff and streamlining the process.

"I am training my staff to operate the new system which is going to be handed over to the Traffic police. We are also coordinating with the vendors who are putting the lights in order at crossing because there is a coding for every crossing, the timings are different and the sequence in which the lights change from red to green are also different. There are a lot of issues because the system needs to be tested and tried before it is implemented," she said.

The DCP (Traffic) said that all the crossings had been covered under the ITMS and some minor works remained to be done.

She said there were two aspects to the traffic under the Smart City project, one

was the traffic lights and the other the traffic engineering part.

"We are coordinating with the UMDC (Urban Mobility Development Company) as to how the cars move in a particular route through traffic engineering. For example, the rotary around which the traffic moves at the right angle. This company is designing 80-85 traffic nodes for Lucknow, phase-wise."

Nigam said the company had designed 46 traffic nodes for the city in the first phase and they would be tested before being implemented to streamline traffic flow.

The DCP added that the people would be informed in advance before any change comes into effect.

"There are always structural issues on each road and each junction whether it is a crossing, tri-crossing and even two lanes. This has to be designed as per the requirement and the needs," she added.

The Traffic police have proposed solar escalators for

foot overbridges in the city and the DCP (Traffic) has also sent a proposal in this regard. She said that she had proposed a trial run at the Polytechnic crossing and it could be used for all the foot overbridges in the city.

"The people are not using foot overbridges and hence I have sent this proposal to the Divisional Commissioner because if we have to make a city smart then the people should also make their efforts in this regard," she said.

On being asked whether traffic will see a change with this makeover because there was less discernible change even after the arrival of Metro, she said, "It is important for the people to use the Metro. The people are in such large numbers are using the tempos. Till the people do not start believing that they are living in the smart city, it is not possible" she added.

She said that gradually people will start believing that there will be some change in the traffic scene.

Buddheshwar Mahadev temple to get more tourist facilities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The UP Tourism Department has sent a Rs 2-crore proposal to the state government for providing more facilities at Buddheshwar Mahadev temple, the oldest temple of Lord Shiva on Mohaan road in Lucknow district.

Regional tourism official Anupam Srivastava said this temple belonged to the period of the Mahabharat and hence it was the oldest Shiva temple in the state capital.

"This temple attracts over two lakh visitors annually. The number is much higher as the figures of devotees visiting this temple during Sawan and Shivratri are not available. There are so many visitors at this time that it creates traffic snarls near the temple," he said.

Srivastava pointed out that they had already spent over Rs 85 lakh on the temple for developing facilities for the tourists and its beautification.

"We have restored the pond at the temple and put up solar panels and have also made the interlocking of the pathway tight. We also intend to put up a zigzag barrier to



"THIS TEMPLE ATTRACTS OVER TWO LAKH VISITORS ANNUALLY. THE NUMBER IS MUCH HIGHER AS THE FIGURES OF DEVOTEES VISITING THIS TEMPLE DURING SAWAN AND SHIVRATRI ARE NOT AVAILABLE. THERE ARE SO MANY VISITORS AT THIS TIME THAT IT CREATES TRAFFIC SNARLS NEAR THE TEMPLE"

control the crowds and construct a multipurpose hall. To complete all the works in one go instead of carrying out constructions in bits and parts, we have submitted a Rs 2-crore proposal to the government,"

he said. The official said that many people carry out ceremonies such as 'mundan' at the temple and hence the idea of constructing a multipurpose hall had been proposed.

Tenders floated for restoration of Rumi Darwaza

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Tenders have been floated for the restoration of the Rumi Darwaza.

A senior official of the Archaeological Survey of India said that they had got the nod from the ASI directorate and would begin the restoration work once the tender process was completed.

He said that once the company for the supply of the material required for the restoration work was selected, they would approach the district administration for the closure of passage below the gate.

He admitted that the restoration work was long overdue. "The repairs are required both on the upper and the lower part of the Rumi Darwaza," he added.

It may be noted that the iconic gate which forms a part of the proud heritage of the city symbolises the spirit of Lucknow and is used in all kinds of promotions for the city. Unfortunately, all attempts in the past to carry out the repairs have met with protest because the traffic diversions made to carry out the restoration work.

Rohan, Chetna in city for 'Class of 2020' promo

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Actors Rohan Mehra and Chetna Pandey were in the city on Wednesday for the promotion of their web series 'Class of 2020'.

The actors, who play the lead roles in this coming-of-age teenage drama, not only showcase the happy and carefree side of a student's life but also deal with their complexities in a very mature manner. Both the actors along with Vikas Gupta were seen spending some quality time in Lucknow and interacted with the media at a press conference organised in the city.

According to actor Rohan, "Class of 2020" as an enthralling journey of a bunch of students on their separate paths of life and explores how they define their choices, how convoluted

their life is and how they deal with it.

"It is a gamut of confusions and perplexities, love and desire, choices and dilemmas mixed with an ensemble of grey characters who perfectly depict the confused state of today's millennials.

The web series in a very short span of time has already created a huge fan base for itself. With 20 episodes currently streaming out of 30, the web series has already received 32+ million views across media platforms. Further episodes will be dropped on February 24 with fresh drama and excitement leading to the season finale.

Speaking about the series and his Lucknow visit, Rohan Mehra quipped, "Coming back to Lucknow feels so refreshing. I was here just two months back for the shoot and here I

am again. I am glad that 'Class of 2020' gave me this opportunity to give the city another visit. In the web series, the audience will see me in a completely new avatar as I am breaking my good-boy image which they know me for. I am playing the character of Ibrahim, a bad boy with a good heart. The show made us relive our school days all over again and I hope it will give you the same experience."

Excited about the launch, Chetna Pandey said, "Being born and brought up in north India, coming to Lucknow feels like a homecoming. I always loved this city for its calmness, tehzeeb and food. After working so hard for the web series for months, I think this visit came across as a treat. We all have been shooting for the 'Class of 2020' for the past six months and it has finally all

come together.

"I am playing the character of Priyanka who is a studious girl. Shooting for the web series brought back those exam horrors as I was petrified of appearing for exams and the pressure which comes with it. I hope we will be successful in entertaining the youth with our efforts and hard work."

'Class of 2020' is a transitioning young show, a spin-off of the web series 'Class of 2017'. The show also features popular actors like Nibedita Pal, Jatin Suri, Nausheen Ali Sardar, Rushad Rana, Alam Khan, Pallavi Mukherjee, Mazhar Khan, Joyeeta Chatterjee amongst others. Adding to the cast, a cameo by none other than Karan Kundrra and Anshuman Malhotra will take the web series a notch higher.






एनीमिया मुक्त भारत

प्रजनन आयुवर्ग की महिलाएं
वाहिए
स्वस्थ शरीर और
तेज दिमाग?





आई.एफ.ए.
साथ में
एक लाल गोली
हर हफ्ते



विटामिन-सी
सुवत आहार
एक गोली
साल में दो बार



एल्बेण्डाजोल
पेट के कीड़े मिटाएं
एक गोली
साल में दो बार



सुरक्षित मातृत्व



स्वस्थ शिशु



कुशल बचपन



स्मृतिवान किशोर



नियोजित परिवार



सम्मानित वृद्ध

आई.एफ.ए. व एल्बेण्डाजोल की गोली सरकारी, आँगनवाड़ी और हेल्थ एवं वेलनेस सेंटर से नि:शुल्क प्राप्त करें।

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CORONAVIRUS Outbreak to hit drug supplies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

● Much to the relief of the students who were evacuated from Coronavirus hit Wuhan in China due to the pathogen outbreak, China has decided to postpone the new semester of the universities in the neighbouring country where they had been studying

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Government commit-

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

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

The Department of Pharmaceuticals had formed a

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

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

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

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

AHEAD OF SHAH'S VISIT

Border guards prepare action plan to reduce threat along frontiers

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



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

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IN SHORT

GOVT DOES NOT ACCEPT 'SLOWDOWN': MANMOHAN

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

VICE PREZ CHAIRS MEET ON CHANGES IN RS RULES

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

SC ON LOWER JUDICIARY MEMBERS RECRUITMENT

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

51 FABULOUS SMART CITIES LEADER AWARD

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

EXHIBITION ON INDIA'S ANCIENT FOOD BEGINS

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

Cabinet approves Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

PIB

Climate change, harmful products impacting children: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

The experts have called for a new global movement driven by and for the children.

While the poorest countries need to do more to support

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

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

"Countries need to overhaul



A MANIFESTO FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION ON CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH

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

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

future," she added.

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

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

ty, or income gaps.

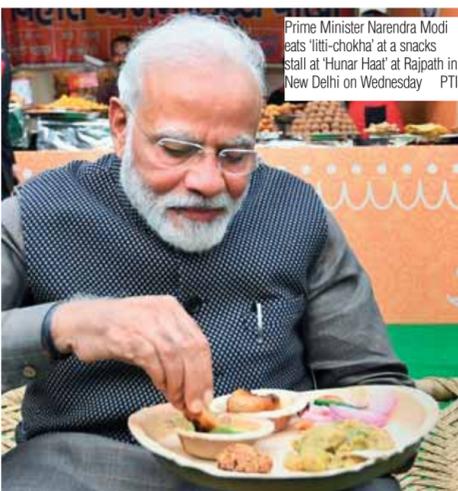
According to the report, while the poorest countries need to do more to support their children's ability to live healthy lives, excessive carbon emissions — disproportionately from wealthier countries — threaten the future of all children.

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

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

PM's surprise visit to Hunar Haat

Relished litti-chokha, kulhad tea; interacted with artisans



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

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

Jharkhand.

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

Master artisans, craftsmen and culinary experts, including more than 50 per cent women, from across the country are participating at the Haat. "Spent a wonderful afternoon at Hunar Haat on India Gate. It showcases the best of products including handicrafts, carpets, textiles and of course, delicious food! Do visit it," PM Modi tweeted. The participation of people from all across India makes 'Hunar Haat' a vibrant place, he said.

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

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

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

Modi interacted with a specially-abled painter who benefited from the government's Hunar Haat initiative.

The 'Hunar Haat', which will be open until February 23 in the national Capital, will move to Ranchi, Gurugram, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata, Dehradun, Patna, Bhopal, Goa, Kochi, Guwahati and Bhubaneswar, among other places in coming months.

Cong demands scrapping of CVC

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

The Congress said arbitrariness in top judicial institutions is fatal for democracy and alleged there is no place for transparency, accountability and constitutional processes in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'New India, which was fatal for democracy.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala charged that appointments of CVC and CIC

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

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

PNS

TAPAS PAUL'S DEATH

Didi holds Centre, CBI responsible

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamta Banerjee on Wednesday slammed Narendra Modi Government for taking out his political revenge on the Opposition parties. Speaking at the funeral of Bengali cine star and former TMC MP Tapas Paul who died in Mumbai on Tuesday suffering a severe heart attack, Mamata said that Paul was a victim of BJP's vendetta politics. "Tapas Paul was a great actor who had to pay with his life for no fault of his. He had to die untimely because of Centre's political vendetta and tormenting psychological pressure

brought on him by a Central Agency. He was put in jail for more than a year just because he worked as a Brand Ambassador of some company under investigation." The Chief Minister was apparently referring to the CBI Investigation into the multi-crore Rose Valley chit fund case.

"All the film personalities who work as Brand Ambassador's are at a risk of being framed by this Government.....Tapas was the third victim of this vendetta politics. Earlier our MP Sultan Ahmed and the wife of another MP Prasan Banerjee died a similar death" Banerjee said. Reacting to her comments, Congress leader of Lok Sabha Adhir Chowdhury and Senior CPIM leader Samik Lahiri said that Banerjee too followed similar vendetta politics in Bengal putting hundreds of Opposition workers in jail.

U.P. RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LIMITED - OBRA THERMAL POWER STATION, OBRA - SONEBHADRA

"TIME EXTENTION" TENDER ID No. 2019_RVUNL_403578_1 This office tender no. T-28/O&MMC-V/BMD/BTPS/2019-20 for the work of "Work of Boiler Pressure part during boiler breakdown maintenance of unit no. 12 & 13, 2x200 MW, BTPS, Obra" is hereby extended again as below : Last Date and Time For Submission of E-Bids (Technical and Financial) at E-procurement website: <http://etender.up.nic.in> 02.03.2020 up to 17:00 hrs., Last Date and Time for Submission of Hardcopy of: Requisite Documents in the Office of Undersigned 03.03.2020 up to 17:00 hrs., (Date and Time of Opening of e-Bids (Part-I) : 06.03.2020 At (16:00 hrs.) All other terms & conditions of the tender shall remain unchanged. SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER O&MMC-V, BTPS, Obra. No. - 48, Date - 19.02.2020, "SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF NATION"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Anti-CAA rally by Islamists pass off peacefully in Chennai

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

Though the Madras High



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Begum submitted 14 documents, including her PAN card and ration card, two bank passbooks, the NRC details of her father Javed Ali,

voter lists where the names of her grandparents, parents and her along with her husband were published and several land revenue receipts.

The Foreigners Tribunal in Baksa district had earlier issued a notice to her on the basis of a reference made by the Superintendent of Police (Border) to prove her Indian citizenship.

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

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

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

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

CAA, media freedom come under scrutiny at Difficult Dialogues

NAVIN UPADHYAY ■ DONA PAULA (GOA)

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

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

The highlight of the engagements was a panel discussion on Free speech, censorship, and the media attended by Kerala Governor Arif

Mohammad Khan. Supreme Court advocate Geeta Luthra and two retired judges.

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

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

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

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

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

for the benefit of all."

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

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

कार्यालय उप निदेशक (वि०/याँ०)
राज्य कृषि उत्पादन मण्डी परिषद, उ०प्र०,
किसान मण्डी भवन, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ।
पत्रांक : वि०/याँ०(325) / 2020-1868 दिनांक 19.02.2020

ई-निविदा सूचना

निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु वित्तीय रूप से सुदृढ़ मण्डी परिषद, में विद्युत कार्य हेतु मंजीकृत टेकेंडरों से Two Bid System i.e. (Technical Bid & Financial Bid) के माध्यम से निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। दिनांक 17.03.2020 को अपरान्ह 1.30 बजे से Technical Bid ई-टेंडरिंग के माध्यम से एवं दिनांक 18.03.2020 को अपरान्ह 1.30 से Financial Bid ई-टेंडरिंग के माध्यम से आनलाइन कार्यालय उप निदेशक (वि०/याँ०) राज्य कृषि उत्पादन मण्डी परिषद, लखनऊ में खोली जायेगी। उक्त ई-निविदाएं (Technical Bid & Financial Bid) एवं निविदा सम्बन्धित समस्त आवश्यक प्रपत्र दिनांक 16.03.2020 को अपरान्ह 5:00 बजे तक वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर ऑन लाइन भरकर अपलोड की जा सकती है।

क्रम संख्या	कार्य का नाम	निविदा शुल्क जी.एस.टी. सहित (रु० में)	कार्य की अनुमानित लागत जी.एस.टी. सहित (रु० में)	घरोहर धनराशि (लाख में)	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि	मंजीकृत श्रेणी
1	नवीन मण्डी स्थल, बांगरमऊ, इटावा, कायमगंज, फरुखाबाद, भरथरा, सीतापुर रोड, लखीमपुर, गोण्डा, बाराबंकी, सीतापुर, हरदोई एवं नौबस्ता में पूर्व से स्थापित दो-दो नग 50 टन क्षमता के कम्प्यूटराइज्ड इलेक्ट्रॉनिक वे-ट्रिजों का तीन वर्ष तक संचालन एवं कम्प्रेहेन्सिव मेन्टेनेंस का कार्य।	1180.00 (प्रति मण्डी प्रति 02 नग वे-ट्रिज)	4260000.00	4.26 (प्रति मण्डी प्रति 02 नग वे-ट्रिज)	36 माह	अनुमयी

नियम व शर्तें :

- ई-निविदा डाक्यूमेन्ट वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर दिनांक 16.03.2020 अपरान्ह 5:00 बजे तक उपलब्ध रहेगा।
- ई-निविदा के मूल्य का भुगतान RTGS/NEFT के माध्यम से उपनिदेशक (वि०/याँ०), राज्य कृषि उत्पादन मण्डी परिषद, लखनऊ के भारतीय स्टेट बैंक खाता सं०-30396156486 (IFS Code-SBIN0050643) में जमाकर बैंक से प्राप्त UTR No. की प्रतिलिपि अपलोड करना अनिवार्य है।
- घरोहर धनराशि का भुगतान RTGS/NEFT के माध्यम से उपनिदेशक (वि०/याँ०), राज्य कृषि उत्पादन मण्डी परिषद, लखनऊ के भारतीय स्टेट बैंक खाता सं० - 30396156861 (IFS Code -SBIN0050643) में जमाकर बैंक से प्राप्त UTR No. की प्रतिलिपि अपलोड करना अनिवार्य है।
- रु० 100.00 का स्टाम्प पेपर जो टेंडरिंग कार्यालय से जारी हुआ हो के साथ रु० 1.00 का रेवेन्यू टिकट लगाकर अपलोड करना अनिवार्य है।
- ई-निविदा उन्हे मूल निर्माता कम्पनियों द्वारा ही खोली जा सकती है, जिनके पास विगत दो वर्षों से प्रत्येक वर्ष में कम से कम 05 करोड़ का टर्न ओवर हो एवं सरकारी/अर्ध सरकारी क्षेत्र में कम से कम 30 वे-ट्रिज लगाने का अनुभव हो, दो वर्षों का परफार्मेंस प्रमाण-पत्र तथा उ०प्र० में कम से कम तीन वे-ट्रिज का सर्विस सेक्टर जिनके मरम्मत का लाइसेंस उ०प्र० सरकार द्वारा निर्गत किया गया हो, निदेशक विधि माप द्वारा मांडल का अनुमोदन एवं टर्न ओवर की प्रमाणिक बिलेस शीट संश्लिष्ट प्रमाण-पत्र जमा करना अनिवार्य होगा।
- समस्त टेक्स एवं श्रम विभाग के नियमों के अनुसार कटौती ठेकेदार के देयक से की जायेगी।
- ई-निविदादाता बार काउन्सिल का सदस्य नहीं होना चाहिए ऐसे निविदादाता को निविदा खोलने की अनुमति नहीं होगी जिनके संग सम्बन्धी (प्रथम लड रिसेटेंड), मण्डी परिषद में कार्यरत होगा।
- वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in से डाउनलोड किये गये फार्म में किसी भी तरह की भिन्नता की स्थिति में कार्यालय में अनुरक्षित निविदा फार्म की मूलाप्रति ही मान्य होगी।
- ई-निविदा बिना कारण बताये निरस्त करने का पूर्ण अधिकार उपनिदेशक (वि०/याँ०), राज्य कृषि उत्पादन मण्डी परिषद, लखनऊ को होगा।
- एसे राजपत्रित अभियन्ता/अधिकारी, जिनका राज्य सरकार अथवा केन्द्र सरकार की सेवा से सेवानिवृत्त हुए दो वर्ष से कम अवधि पूर्व की हो को ई-निविदा खोलने का अधिकार नहीं होगा।
- ठेकेदारों द्वारा दी गयी ई-निविदा की दरें 90 दिन तक मान्य होगी।
- जीएफएसडी० जमा करने का चालान प्रस्तुत करने पर नियमानुसार जीएफएसडी० का भुगतान अलग से किया जायेगा।
- ई-निविदा आमंत्रण तिथि को यदि सार्वजनिक अवकाश घोषित होता है तो निविदाएं अगले कार्यालय कार्य दिवस में प्रारं व खोली जायेगी।

उप निदेशक (वि०/याँ०)

U.P. RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LIMITED - OBRA THERMAL POWER STATION, OBRA - SONEBHADRA

"TIME EXTENTION" TENDER ID No. 2019_RVUNL_403974_1 This office tender no. T-29/O&MMC-V/BMD/BTPS/2019-20 for the work of "Annual running maintenance of main boiler for unit no. 12 & 13, (2x200 MW) BTPS, Obra" is hereby extended as below : Last Date and Time For Submission of E-Bids (Technical and Financial) at E-procurement website: <http://etender.up.nic.in> 02.03.2020 up to 17:00 hrs., Last Date and Time for Submission of Hardcopy of: Requisite Documents in the Office of Undersigned 03.03.2020 up to 17:00 hrs., (Date and Time of Opening of e-Bids (Part-I) : 06.03.2020 At (16:00 hrs.) All other terms & conditions of the tender shall remain unchanged. TENDER ID 2019_RVUNL_404135_1 This office tender no. T-30/O&MMC-V/BMD/BTPS/2019-20 for the work of "Cleaning of Oil Gun and Routine checking of Boiler of 2x200MW BTPS, Obra" is hereby extended again as below : Last Date and Time For Submission of E-Bids (Technical and Financial) at E-procurement website: <http://etender.up.nic.in> 02.03.2020 up to 17:00 hrs., Last Date and Time for Submission of Hardcopy of: Requisite Documents in the Office of Undersigned 03.03.2020 up to 17:00 hrs., (Date and Time of Opening of e-Bids (Part-I) : 06.03.2020 At (16:00 hrs.) All other terms & conditions of the tender shall remain unchanged. SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER O&MMC-V, BTPS, OBRA. No.-49, Date- 19.02.2020, "SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF NATION"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

"I appreciate the Chief Minister for rolling back anti-people decisions," the Fatorda MLA said. The Centre should take cue from Sawant and withdraw the anti-people laws, he added. "The Union Government and the national leadership of the BJP should learn from Sawant and roll back their anti-people policies," he said. PTI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Three HM terrorists killed in Pulwama

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

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

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

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

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

"Jahangir along with Raja Maqbool were involved in at



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Top court directs Raj Govt to stop illegal sand mining

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

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

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

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

Man gets death penalty for rape-murder of minor girl

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

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

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

On October 27, 2016, when the grandparents returned home from work, they did not find the girl at home.

After unsuccessful attempts to locate her, they filed a missing person's complaint at Sonpeth police station two days later.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Finding merit in the prosecution's arguments, the court awarded death sentence to the accused, observing that he acted in a manner "highly repugnant to the morals and committed diabolic, premeditated, brutal, pre-planned aggravated penetrative sexual assault and cold-blooded murder". "The act is more cruel than (that of) the most dreaded animal who kills for hunger or in self-defence only," Judge Inamdar said.

The court further observed that the mentality of the accused reflected that he derived "satanic pleasure" by committing the crime.

Dalit girl alleges sexual harassment by three youths

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

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

lunch for her kin.

Station House Officer SK Dube said the girl's brother has filed a complaint, alleging the three youths allegedly sexually harassed her on the way to the brick kiln. Dube said the three accused, one of whom has been identified as a 23-year-old man, have gone absconding. An investigation in the matter is underway. **PTI**

Karate instructor gets 4 years RI for sexually harassing girls

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

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

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

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

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

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

MARIA BOOK REVELATIONS ROW

Cong says BJP using book to mislead people

BJP demands reprobe into 26/11

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

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

On a day when State BJP leader and senior MLA Atul Bhatkalkar shot off a letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray demanding re-investigation into the 26/11 attacks, Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee Secretary Sachin Sawant said: "Here is a party (BJP) that has shielded accused in the terror acts like Malegaon blasts and Samjota Express blasts and put pressure on the

public prosecutors to water down the charges and seek the release of the accused from the cases. Its demand for re-investigation into the 26/11 sounds like Ulta chor kotwal ko daante."

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

Reacting to the BJP leaders' claim that the phrase 'Hindu terror' was coined post 26/11 attacks, Sawant tweeted: "The book of Rakesh Maria hypothetically discusses if Kasab was not found alive, media would have projected him a Hindu. It doesn't mention any conspiracy. #BJP can stoop to any level because of its dirty mindset".

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

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

"In view of the revelation made by Maria who investigated the 26/11 attacks that Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI attempted to depict Kasab as the Hindu terrorist, it is essential for the Maharashtra Government to order a comprehensive re-

investigation into the Mumbai terror attacks. The re-investigation is essential as it involves national security," Bhatkalkar said.

Bhatkalkar claimed that former Union home secretary in the Rajiv Gandhi Government and former chief secretary of Maharashtra, Ram Pradhan, who headed a two-member committee appointed by the then Congress-led DF Government, had in a media interview said that there was "local connection" to the 26/11 attacks and that then Union Minister and senior Congress P Chidambar had asked Pradhan not to reveal the "local connection".

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

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

In a series of tweets, Sawant said: "#BJP Govt swept many conspiracies under the carpet. Honest Investigation would have revealed it's dreadful face Swami Aseemanand links RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat to terror attacks".

"What was your conspiracy @BJP4India" with #DavinderSingh? Why did NIA take over the investigation of #DavinderSingh from J&K police that also suddenly?

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

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

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

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

The bench took note of the statement of advocate Amit Anand Tiwari, appearing for the CBI, that probe agency has followed the procedure and did not arrest the accused as that was not necessary.

He further said that as many as 55 regular cases have been registered by the CBI in the coal scam cases and it has taken steps like impounding of certain passports of people if there were apprehensions of absconding.

SC wants to hear Gadkari on electric vehicles policy

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

The top court, however, did not seek Gadkari's presence after the law officer, appearing

for the Centre, raised objections, saying there could be a "political issue" if the minister makes a court appearance.

The court, hearing a PIL seeking implementation of National E-Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP), 2020 said it would like to interact with the minister as he has been talking about the use of alternative fuels in private and public transport vehicles modes.

FROM PAGE 1

CCS OK'S \$2.6 BN DEAL FOR 24 US COPTERS

A tender for 24 MH-60 helicopters was floated again later and processed through the FMS route of the US Government.

India desperately needed the advanced helicopters to guard the strategically important Indian Ocean region where the Chinese maritime prowess is growing over the years with its submarines also posing a threat. Another deal close to conclusion is of six additional AH-64E Apache attack helicopters for the Army to cost around \$930 million. The IAF has already bought 22 Apache helicopters.

As regards the anti-missile shield, sources said, negotiations with the US are in advanced stage. The US Department of State has approved the potential sale of a \$1.867 billion Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS) to India.

The potential sale, which is being processed via the FMS route, is now before the U.S. Congress for consideration, with a 30-day window for Congress to raise any objections to the sale.

The Integrated Air Defence Weapon System, also known as the National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System (NASAMS), provides integrated air missile defence and is currently deployed around Washington. A similar shield will protect New Delhi.

The IADWS system includes radar, launchers, targeting, and guidance systems, advanced medium-range air-to-air missile (AMRAAM) and Stinger missiles, and related equipment and support.

PRIYANKA, SCINDIA LINED UP FOR RS

Vora, Selja and Digvijaya Singh may be renominated by the party, indicated the sources.

However, Raj Babbar and PL Punia are unlikely to get renomination from Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, where the ruling BJP is set to make major gains. One Rajya Sabha seat in Uttarakhand and 10 seats in Uttar Pradesh are falling vacant in November this year.

Uttar Pradesh has the maximum representation of 31 members in the Council of States, followed by 19 MPs from Maharashtra, 18 members from Tamil Nadu and 16 MPs from West Bengal.

A large number of Congress leaders are vying to get a Rajya Sabha berth from the party. Speculation is doing the rounds that the party may bring Priyanka Gandhi, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Randeep

Surjewala and RPN Singh, among others, to the Upper House.

There are six vacancies coming up in Maharashtra, including that of NCP supremo Sharad Pawar, and the same number in Tamil Nadu. Five seats each will fall vacant in West Bengal and Bihar, four each in Gujarat, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

Congress is likely to bag two of the three seats in Rajasthan, two of three in Madhya Pradesh, two in Chhattisgarh, one in Maharashtra and one in Karnataka. The party will lose seats in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Meghalaya and Assam.

FASAL BIMA YOJANA TWEAKED FOR FARMERS

Cut-off dates for invoking this provision for kharif and rabi seasons will be 31st March and 30th September of successive years, respectively.

The Cabinet also approved provisioning of at least 3 per cent of the total allocation for the scheme to be made by the Centre and implementing State Governments for administrative expenses.

For estimation of crop losses/admissible claims in the PMFBY, two-step process will be adopted based on defined deviation matrix using specific triggers like weather indicators, satellite indicators, etc, for each area along with normal ranges and deviation ranges. Only areas with deviations will be subject to crop cutting experiments (CCEs) for assessment of yield loss.

TRUMP RELISHES PROSPECT OF 70 L WELCOMING HIS AHMEDABAD RALLY

Trump, forcefully pursuing his 'America first' policy, has previously described India as a "tariff king" for imposing "tremendously high" tariffs on American products, also expressed dissatisfaction over the US-India trade ties. "Well, we can have a trade deal with India, but I'm really saving the big deal for later on," Trump told reporters at the Joint Base Andrews outside Washington on Tuesday when asked whether he expects a trade deal with India before the visit.

During his interaction with journalists, Trump once again voiced his concern over US-India trade relations. "We're not treated very well by India," the US president said. The US and India could sign a "trade package" during Trump's visit, according to media reports.

US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, the point-person for trade negotiations with India, may

not accompany Trump to India, sources said. However, officials have not ruled it out altogether.

Multiple rounds of talks have taken place between Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and Lighthizer in the past few weeks over telephone. India is demanding exemption from high duties imposed by the US on certain steel and aluminium products, resumption of export benefits to certain domestic products under their Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), greater market access for its products from sectors including agriculture, automobile, auto components and engineering.

On the other hand, the US wants greater market access for its farm and manufacturing products, dairy items and medical devices, and cut on import duties on some ICT products. The US has also raised concerns over high trade deficit with India which was USD 16.9 billion in 2018-19.

In New Delhi, sources said India and US do not want to rush in finalising a trade deal and both sides will take a decision on it considering a long-term view. They also said some defence deals may fructify during Trump's visit.

Listing out the schedule in New Delhi, Shringla said Modi will host a lunch for Trump, while President Ram Nath Kovind will host a banquet in honour of the visiting dignitary.

Underlining the importance of the visit, Shringla said this will be Trump's 5th meeting with Modi in eight months (after Osaka, Biarritz, Houston, New York) --- reflecting the renewed intensity of high-level bilateral engagement since the NDA Government returned to power.

He said relationship with the US has evolved to one of our most consequential relationships today. It is a strategic partnership based on shared values and geared towards the 21st century. Both the countries have unprecedented convergence of interests in countering terrorism or in ensuring a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

As regards defence ties, the Foreign Secretary said India has procured over US\$18 billion worth of defence items from the US, enhancing our defence preparedness significantly. "We conduct more bilateral exercises with each other than we do with any other country," he added.

The US is India's largest trading partner in goods and services combined, and the overall bilateral trade increased by over 10 per cent per annum over the past two years to reach US\$ 142 billion in 2018; it is expected to cross US\$ 150 billion for the first time this year. It is now also our 6th largest source of crude oil imports, with hydrocarbon imports rising to US\$ 7 billion in the last two years, he said.

मुख्य चिकित्सा अधिकारी, जौनपुर

पत्रांक :- एन०एच०एच०पी० / प्रकाशन / 2019-20 / 30379-82 दिनांक- 19.02.2020

**STATE MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
UTTAR PRADESH**

Notification
No: 626/SMHA/2020
Lucknow : Dated 07 February, 2020

In exercise of the powers under section 73 & 74 of the Mental Health Care Act, 2017, hereby with the permission of Hon'ble Chief Justice, Uttar Pradesh and State Government vide letter no. 56/Five-7-2020 dated 06 February, 2020, The Hon'ble District Judge of all respective 75 districts are nominated as Chairman of Mental Health Review Board.

In chairmanship of Hon'ble District Judge, following will also be the members of Mental Health Review Board in every district of Uttar Pradesh:

- Representative of the District Collector or District Magistrate or Deputy Commissioner of the districts in which the Board is to be constituted;
- Two members of whom one shall be a psychiatrist and the other shall be a medical practitioner.
- Two members who shall be persons with mental illness or care-givers or persons representing organizations of persons with mental illness or caregivers or non-governmental organizations working in the field of mental health.

**By Order,
President
State Mental Health Authority, U.P.**

Bending backwards

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



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

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

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

Gross indignity

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



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

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

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

New dawn for the military

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



PRAFULL GORADIA

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

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

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

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



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

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

Indira Gandhi retained the leadership of her party, the Congress, until her death. True, she had the advantage of being former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's daughter, which gave her an enviable start. After that, she had to rely on her own wit and resources in order to survive and succeed. The problem hitherto is that women do not get the exposure and opportunity to be

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOUNDBITE

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



Congress leader —Avinash Pande

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



Actor —Sara Ali Khan

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



UN chief —Antonio Guterres

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



Congress leader —Nawab Malik

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

More power to women

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

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

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

Act now to save our birds

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



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

Megha Via email

China leads the way

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

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

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

R Narayanan Navi Mumbai

Listen to the Mahatma

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

Ashish Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Right to liberty reaffirmed

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



MADHAVI KHANDLWAL
 SHAKEIB NARU

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—AAP MLA SAURABH BHARDWAJ

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



THE AAP'S ATTACHMENT TO LORD HANUMAN IS NOT A MATTER OF FAITH, BUT A POLITICAL MELODRAMA.
 —DELHI BJP SPOKESPERSON PRAVEEN SHANKAR KAPOOR

Sustainability is your business

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



HIMA BINDU KOTA

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The huge human cost of stress in mining sector

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



CHARUDUTTA PANIGRAHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(The writer is an author and TED speaker)

Sensex soars 429 pts; RIL, HDFC sparkle

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

Likewise, the NSE gauge Nifty shot up 133.40 points or 1.11% to close at 12,125.90. Market heavyweight Reliance Industries spurred 2.60%, accounting for the majority of the Sensex gains. Other winners included Bajaj Finance, HUL, ONGC and HDFC, rising up to 2.79%.

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

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

New Delhi (PTI): Gold prices on Wednesday jumped ₹462 to ₹42,339 per 10 grams in the national capital on positive global cues, according to HDFC Securities. Silver prices also surged ₹1,047 to ₹48,652 per kg, from ₹47,605 per kg on Tuesday.

The yellow metal had closed at ₹41,877 per 10 grams in the previous trading session. "Spot gold of 24 karat in Delhi crossed the ₹42,000 mark, gaining ₹462 with strong international prices. The strong demand from wedding season and rally in global gold prices pushed spot prices higher for the day," HDFC Securities senior analyst (commodities) Tapan Patel said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

"The demand outlook for 2020 looks better with a stronger

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

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

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

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

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

Multiple reasons led to the

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

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

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

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

NIFTY 50

Table with columns: SCRIP, OPEN, High, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists various stocks and their price movements.

NIFTY NEXT 50

Table with columns: SCRIP, OPEN, High, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists various stocks and their price movements.

BSE 500

Table with columns: SCRIP, OPEN, High, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists various stocks and their price movements.

All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers



Table with columns: SCRIP, OPEN, High, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists various stocks and their price movements.

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Passengers leave Japan virus ship as China toll tops 2,000

AFP ■ YOKOHAMA

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

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

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

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

"NEGATIVE! Me, son, husband, mom and dad! Thank you Lord for protecting us... So emotional now," tweeted passenger Yardley Wong, who has been cooped up with her six-year-old son.

Those with no symptoms and a negative test received an

official certificate saying they posed "no risk of infection of nCoV, as the said person has also presented no symptoms including fever at the time of infection." But not everyone was so lucky.

British passenger David Abel, who became a minor celebrity with his upbeat video messages in the early days of the quarantine — including a cheeky request to the captain for whisky — typified the mood shift aboard.

"It's all getting to us now and it's not just me, it's the other passengers as well. It's the not-knowing factor that is the real challenge. Mentally, it's now taking its toll. Right now, it's very hard to remain focused on anything," he said.

He later announced he and his wife Sally had tested positive.

China announced Wednesday there were 1,749 new infections, the lowest number of new cases this month. All but 56 new cases were in the epicentre of Hubei province.

Michael Ryan, head of WHO's health emergencies programme, said the outbreak was "very serious" and could grow, but stressed that outside Hubei, it was "affecting a very, very tiny, tiny proportion of people."

There have been 900 cases around the world, with five deaths in France, Japan, the Philippines, Taiwan and Hong

Kong. But in Japan, some have raised concerns about allowing people from the cruise ship to board flights home or spread out into the notoriously crowded Japanese capital.

Kentaro Iwata, a professor at the infectious diseases division of Kobe University, blasted the on-ship quarantine as a "major failure, a mistake".

"It is highly likely secondary infections occurred," Iwata told AFP, saying scepticism from abroad of the quarantine was "only natural".

He later said in a video published online that he was self-quarantining after a brief visit to the ship where he raised major concerns about the procedures on board.

"It was completely chaotic," he said.

Several countries appear to have lost patience with the on-board quarantine and have prepared chartered planes to bring back their citizens.

In the first such evacuation Monday, more than 300 Americans flew home even though 14 of the passengers had tested positive.

Early Wednesday, South Korea flew six of its nationals plus a Japanese spouse to Seoul. They will be placed in isolation for 14 days, the Yonhap news agency reported.

Britain, Hong Kong and Australia are among other countries that have vowed to repatriate people from the ship

but will insist on a further 14-day quarantine on home soil.

Nathalie MacDermott, a medical expert at King's College London, stressed the importance of continued quarantine even after leaving the ship.

"Given the circumstances on board the Diamond Princess, those passengers leaving the boat should be managed in a similar manner to those individuals departing a highly affected city or region," said MacDermott.

She recommended "further 14-day self isolation or quarantine period would be advisable even in the absence of symptoms." - Disembarkation is expected to take around three days as more test results become available.

Anyone who has had contact with an infected passenger will have to undergo 14 more days in quarantine.

In addition, the crew will begin a new quarantine when the last passenger has disembarked.

But people in Yokohama appeared supportive of the decision to allow the passengers out despite the virus fears.

"I am sure those people on board must be really worried. I hope they can go back to their normal life soon," said 51-year-old Isamu Habiro.

"As a Yokohama resident, I don't want them to be treated unfairly. I want to cheer for them," Habiro told AFP.



A bus carrying passengers leave the port after passengers disembarked from the quarantined Diamond Princess cruise ship on Wednesday, in Yokohama, near Tokyo. Passengers tested negative for COVID-19 started disembarking Wednesday.

Completely chaotic: Japan expert blasts handling of virus cruise ship

AFP ■ TOKYO

A Japanese infectious diseases expert has made waves with videos slamming the government's handling of a quarantined cruise ship, racking up hundreds of thousands of views as passengers start to leave the boat.

The situation on the Diamond Princess was "completely chaotic" and violated quarantine procedures, said Kentaro Iwata, a professor at Kobe University, in unvarnished criticism rarely seen in Japanese officialdom or academia.

"The cruise ship was completely inadequate in terms of infection control," said Iwata in videos in English and Japanese posted late Tuesday.

He said he was so con-

cerned at what he saw on the ship during a brief visit on Tuesday that he has placed himself in a 14-day quarantine to avoid infecting his family.

"There was no distinction between the green zone, which is free of infection, and the red zone, which is potentially contaminated by the virus," he added.

"I was in Africa dealing with the Ebola outbreak. I was in other countries dealing with the cholera outbreak. I was in China in 2003 to deal with SARS... I never had fear of getting infection myself," he said in the English video.

"But inside Diamond Princess, I was so scared... because there was no way to tell where the virus is."

More than 540 people on board have tested positive for

the virus since the vessel arrived off Japan's coast on February 3.

The ship was placed into quarantine two days later, with passengers confined to cabins except for brief trips on deck wearing masks and gloves, when they were told to keep their distance from other passengers.

Japanese officials say infections on board mostly predate the quarantine, which they insist has been effective. And on Wednesday, hundreds of passengers who tested negative began leaving the ship.

Government officials rejected Iwata's criticisms.

"Since February 5, we have taken thorough measures to prevent the spread of infection, including wearing masks, washing hands and using hand

sanitiser," government spokesman Yoshihide Suga told reporters on Wednesday.

"What is true is that we are doing our best to take action to prevent infections," he said.

Japan's Health Minister Katsunobu Kato also defended the government's approach.

"Expert doctors who are members of an infection prevention team are supervising inside the ship," he said in response to questions from opposition lawmakers.

"If symptoms develop, of course not only that person but also those who had close contact with the person are told to refrain from serving, and workers follow rules such as wearing masks and putting on gloves," he added.

"According to experts, the infection is under control."

Hong Kong reports second coronavirus fatality

AFP ■ HONG KONG

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

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

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

In mainland China, where the virus first emerged, more than 2,000 people have been killed and 74,000 infected.

Hong Kong has confirmed the virus in 62 patients, two of whom have died. The first infections were largely found within people who had travelled to the epicentre in China's central Hubei province.

But in recent weeks local infections have increased among residents with no history of travel to China.

Hong Kong is on edge over the virus partly because of its own tragic history of expe-



A woman wearing masks, stretches her arms in Hong Kong on Wednesday.

riencing a deadly disease.

In 2003, 299 Hong Kongers were killed by an outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) — 40 percent of the global total fatalities.

The outbreak left deep psychological scars on the tightly packed city and a lasting lega-

cy of distrust towards China's communist leadership who initially covered up the outbreak.

In the last fortnight, the international business hub has been hit by a wave of panic-buying, with supermarket shelves emptied of staple goods such as toilet paper, hand sanitiser and rice.

Authorities say the supply of goods remains stable and says panic buying is itself causing shortages.

Face masks, however, remain in short supply with queues cropping up across the city whenever a local pharmacy or store announces a new delivery.

China turns to internet for food supplies amid virus fears

AP ■ BEIJING

Wang Feng, house-bound by China's virus outbreak, counts on the parka-clad delivery drivers of e-commerce giant JD.com to keep her kitchen stocked.

Demand for online food vendors has surged since China's government told the public to stay home as part of the most sweeping anti-disease controls ever imposed.

On Tuesday, Wang's phone buzzed with a text message that a delivery had arrived. The retiree bundled up against the winter cold, put on a face mask and emerged from her apartment complex to collect walnut milk and other goods from shelves on the sidewalk — an anti-virus measure to limit contact with drivers who normally go door to door.

"They work really hard, and it's dangerous," said Wang. "Without their services, we would not be able to survive at all." JD.com Inc. and rivals including Pinduoduo, Missfresh Inc. and Alibaba Group's Hema are scrambling to fill a boom in orders while

trying to protect their employees. E-commerce is one of the few industries to thrive after anti-virus controls starting in late January closed factories, restaurants, cinemas, offices and shops nationwide and extinguished auto and real estate sales.

The government is trying to revive economic activity but has told anyone who can work from home to stay there. Some cities have imposed controls that allow only one member of a family out each day. That creates a ready market for online entertainment and shopping.

"I can't go out and can't go to work," said one of Wang's neighbours, Chen Guang, who was picking up a box of vegetables from the sidewalk shelves under a sign that said, "Contactless Distribution Point."

Chen, who wore an entry pass for his apartment complex around his neck, said he shops online two to three times a week to replenish kitchen supplies.

JD says over the past month, its drivers delivered 71,500 tons of rice, flour and

other grains — 20 times more than the same period last year, — 27 million liters of cooking oil and 50,000 tons of meat, eggs, vegetables and other fresh products.

Pinduoduo said orders for apples, strawberries and other fresh fruit from its 586,000 sellers of agricultural products were up 120% in January.

Disease fears in other Asian markets also have propelled e-commerce demand for food and hygiene supplies. The Korea Economic Daily said online mask sales in South Korea rose 37,000% in January over a year earlier.

Chinese e-commerce companies emerged in a market that lacked credit cards, reliable delivery and other features their counterparts in the United States and Europe take for granted.

That required JD, Alibaba and some other competitors to create their own online payments systems or networks of warehouses and delivery drivers.

JD has a 180,000-strong workforce of drivers and warehouse workers and says it is hir-

ing 20,000 more to meet demand. The company said Dada Group, a delivery service in which JD is an investor, is adding 15,000 to its workforce.

At a JD distribution center on Beijing's southeast side, employees in red parkas, masks and gloves sorted packages and sprayed them with disinfectant.

Goods from oranges and toilet paper to 32-packs of beer and cat litter came off trucks on one side of the building and passed down a conveyor belt to be sorted for individual drivers. Padded blue boxes held fresh fruit and vegetables. On the other side of the building, drivers loaded battery-powered three-wheeled delivery vans emblazoned with JD's logo, a cartoon dog called Joy.

The average driver delivers 150 to 190 packages a day, according to Sun Lansong, the facility's manager.

"Customers used to buy a lot of electronics," Sun said. "Now they are buying rice, noodles, grain, oil, disinfectant, masks and so on."

China slams US for tightening rules for its state media

AP ■ BEIJING

China on Wednesday termed as "unjustified and unacceptable" the US decision to designate five Chinese state media outlets as "foreign missions" and threatened to take countermeasures.

The US State Department told five outlets including the state-run Xinhua news agency and the China Global Television Network that they will need to seek approval to buy any property in America.

They will also be required to submit lists of all employees, including the growing number of US citizens on their staffs, the State Department said.

The new designation requires them to comply with rules governing foreign embassies and consulates.

"We deplore and reject the wrong decision of the US," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told an online media briefing when asked about US State Department designating five media house run by China.

China revokes three WSJ Press cards

AFP ■ BEIJING

China on Wednesday said it has revoked the press cards of three Wall Street Journal reporters in Beijing, decrying an editorial headline published earlier this month by the US newspaper as racist. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said the op-ed — which was titled "China is the Real Sick Man of Asia" — had a "racially discriminatory" and "sensational" headline and slammed the WSJ for not issuing an official apology.

"As such, China has decided that from today, the press cards of three Wall Street Journal reporters in Beijing will be revoked," Geng said in a press briefing.

spokesman said on Tuesday that the five US-based entities are not independent news organisations — they are effectively controlled by the (Chinese) government. It is unclear if the registration requirements would also apply to employees who are US citizens.

"We reserve the right to take further measures in response," Geng said. "The media plays an

important role like a bridge or bond facilitating communication and the understanding between people of different countries," he said, adding that the Chinese media's resident offices in the US have long been covering news following the principles of objectivity, impartiality, truth and accuracy.

"They have helped promote mutual understanding, communication and cultural exchange between our two

countries," he said. "The US takes great pride in its press freedom. However, it is wantonly restricting and thwarting Chinese media outlets' normal operation there," he said.

"This is unjustified and unacceptable. We urge the US to discard its ideological prejudice and Cold War zero-sum game mentality, and stop ill-advised measures that undermine bilateral trust and cooperation," he said.

Asked whether China would take any retaliatory measures after the US tightened rules on Chinese state media organisations, Geng said, "We urge the US to immediately stop ill-advised measures. We reserve the right to take further measures in response."

CNN reported that the change in designation means these companies will now need US government approval to buy or lease office space and will have to register personnel changes, including new hires and staff departures, with the State Department, just as foreign diplomatic missions do.

Trump says trade deal with India unlikely during New Delhi visit

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

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

Trump, forcefully pursuing his 'America first' policy, has previously described India as a "tariff king" for imposing "tremendously high" tariffs on American products, also expressed dissatisfaction over the US-India trade ties.

"Well, we can have a trade deal with India, but I'm really saving the big deal for later on," Trump, who is scheduled to visit India on February 24 and

25, told reporters at the Joint Base Andrews outside Washington on Tuesday when asked whether he expects a trade deal with India before the visit. "We're doing a very big trade deal with India. We'll have it. I don't know if it'll be done before the election, but we'll have a very big deal with India," he said.

During his interaction with journalists, Trump once again voiced his concern over US-India trade relations.

"We're not treated very well by India," the US president said. The US and India could sign a "trade package" during Trump's visit, according to media reports.

US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, the point-person for trade negotiations with India, may not accompa-

ny Trump to India, sources said. However, officials have not ruled it out altogether.

Multiple rounds of talks have taken place between Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and Lighthizer in the past few weeks over telephone.

India is demanding exemption from high duties imposed by the US on certain steel and aluminium products, resumption of export benefits to certain domestic products under their Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), greater market access for its products from sectors including agriculture, automobile, auto components and engineering.

On the other hand, the US wants greater market access for its farm and manufacturing products, dairy items and medical devices, and cut on import

duties on some ICT products. The US has also raised concerns over high trade deficit with India which was USD 16.9 billion in 2018-19.

Though President Trump is not happy with the bilateral trade ties, he praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said he is looking forward to his visit to India. "I happen to like Prime Minister Modi a lot," Trump said.

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

Trump was referring to a scheduled joint public rally

with Modi at the newly-built Motera Stadium in Ahmedabad, capital of Gujarat.

Meanwhile, the US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF) in a report said the latest quarterly data depict continuation of overall positive bilateral trade trends. The third quarter data reflects some downside in growth rates. "It may be due to several reasons, including the unexpected economic slowdown in India's economic growth, impact of US-China trade war, GSP withdrawal from the US side and retaliatory tariffs on US specific US goods from the Indian side," it said.

According to the report, the data available for the first three quarters of 2019 (January-September) pulled the overall growth rate in

cumulative bilateral trade down to 4.5 per cent from 8.4 per cent registered for the first two quarters. Goods and services trade performance in third quarter was dismal at -2.3 per cent, in contrast with the impressive 9.6 per cent growth witnessed for the first two quarters of the year; while trade in services was up two per cent goods trade dropped five per cent, the report said.

The cumulative US-India trade in goods and services (USD 110.9 billion) for the first three quarters of 2019 increased 4.5 per cent with US exports and imports growing at four per cent and five per cent respectively.

The US exported USD 45.3 billion worth of goods and services to India in the first three quarters 2019, up 4 per

cent from the corresponding period in the previous year; and the US imported USD 65.6 billion worth of goods and services from India, up five per cent from the previous year's USD 62.5 billion level for the same period, it said.

The USISPF has projected that the total bilateral trade can touch USD 238 billion by 2025 if the current 7.5 per cent average annual rate of growth sustains; however, higher growth rates can result in bilateral trade in the range of USD 283 billion and USD 327 billion.

The US remains the top trading partner for India in terms of trade in goods and services, followed by China. While the bilateral trade between US and India is approximately 62 per cent in

goods and 38 per cent in services, the bilateral trade between India and China is dominated by goods.

India's trade with China grew 13 per cent in 2018, while India's goods trade with the US increased 18 per cent.

China had a huge trade surplus of USD 58 billion with India, indicating Beijing's strength in the Indian market, especially in sectors like electronics, machinery, organic chemicals and medical devices.

The US goods exports to India, in comparison, were mainly concentrated in mineral fuels, precious stones, and aircraft. The US faces tough competition with China in the Indian market in areas such as electronics, machinery, organic chemicals and medical devices.

Priti Patel launches UK's 'historic' points-based visa system

PTI ■ LONDON

Home Secretary Priti Patel on Wednesday announced the launch of the UK's new points-based visa system, aimed at attracting the "brightest and the best" from the world, including from India, and cutting down numbers of cheap, low-skilled workers coming to the country.

The new system will come into force from January 1 2021 at the end of the transition period after the UK's exit from the European Union (EU) last month, which will formally end free movement of people within the economic bloc for the UK as a non-member.

The new post-Brexit system, which will apply equally to the EU and non-EU countries like India, is based on assigning points for specific skills, qualifications, salaries and professions, with visas only awarded to those who gain enough points.

"Today is a historic moment for the whole country. We're ending free movement,

taking back control of our borders and delivering on the people's priorities by introducing a new UK points-based immigration system, which will bring overall migration numbers down," said Patel, the senior-most Indian-origin Cabinet minister.

"We will attract the brightest and the best from around the globe, boosting the economy and our communities, and unleash this country's full potential," Patel, in charge of the UK's visa and immigration system, said.

The UK Home Office said the new system is a direct response to the 2016 referendum in favour of Brexit, which was seen as a vote to end the country's reliance on cheap migrant labour and reduce overall levels of migration with tighter security.

"The new single global system will treat the EU and non-EU citizens equally. It will give top priority to those with the highest skills and the greatest talents, including scientists, engineers and academics,"

the Home Office said.

The Global Talent Scheme, a fast-track visa to be in operation from Friday, will also apply to the EU citizens from next year to allow highly-skilled scientists and researchers to come to the UK without a job offer.

Professor Alice Gast, President of Imperial College London, said: "British science is global. The new post-study work and Global Talent visas will help us to attract the world's brightest students and researchers, wherever they come from."

"From the race to develop a coronavirus vaccine to clean energy, British science's international collaborations drive innovation and excellence."

The government said the points threshold for the new system will be carefully set to attract the talent the UK needs. Skilled workers will need to meet a number of relevant criteria, including specific skills and the ability to speak English, to be able to work in the UK. All applicants will be required

to have a job offer and, in line with the Migration Advisory Committee's (MAC) recommendations, the minimum salary threshold will be set at 25,600 pounds - lower than the previous 30,000 pounds level for Tier 2 work visas.

The new points-based system will also expand the skills threshold for skilled workers.

Those looking to live and work in the UK will need to be qualified up to A-level or equivalent, rather than degree-level under the current system. This will provide greater flexibility and ensure UK business has access to a wide pool of skilled workers, the Home Office said.

In line with the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's manifesto commitment in the December 2019 General Election, there will be no specific route for low-skilled workers. "It is estimated 70 per cent of the existing EU workforce would not meet the requirements of the skilled worker route, which will help to bring overall numbers down in future," the Home Office said.

China drives and shapes US-India relations, says scholar

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

China is one of the prime drivers of relationship between India and the United States - the two largest democracies of the world - not only in the last two decades but since India's independence, a top Indian-American scholar has said in her latest book.

"Today, it is almost a truth almost universally acknowledged that China drives and shapes US-India relations. Indeed, broad convergence on China has been a key driver of US-India relations for the last two decades across US administrations and across Indian governments," Tanvi Madan, a senior fellow at Foreign Policy and the director of India Project at the Brookings Institute told a Washington audience.

In her latest book "Fateful Triangle: How China Shaped US-India Relations During the Cold War", she argues that China's influence on the US-India relationship is neither a recent nor a momentary phenomenon.

Drawing on archival documents from India and the US, Madan traces how American and Indian perceptions of, and policy toward, China significantly shaped US-India relations during the Cold War.

"China's role in shaping the US-India relationship was not just a recent phenomenon restricted to kind of the last few decades. Indeed, what I found and this book lays out was that China's influence went back the early years of Indian independence," Madan said during a discussion on her new book.

Through extensive archival research in India and in the US, Madan disentangles how American and Indian perceptions of and policy toward China shaped the US-India relationship throughout the Cold War, said Suzanne Maloney, interim vice president and director, Foreign Policy, Brookings Institute.

The book that starts post-independence refers to the first US visit by India's first Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru in 1949. "When he came in 1949, he received a warm welcome

on his arrival. President Truman, indeed, went to the airport to receive him taking along three cabinet members and an honor guard. You had the US Congress host Nehru for a speech. Why all this fanfare behind the visit of this Indian leader," she asked.

"A major was what had happened just before Nehru's visit to Washington. What American policymakers saw as the loss of China to communism. And this had happened just a few days before on October 1, 1949 when Mao Zedong establishes the People's Republic of China. The establishment in the US now saw in that context a democratic India as the hope of Asia and believed it could serve as a counterbalance and contrast to Soviet backed communist China," Madan said.

"But during the course of this kind of visit that Nehru takes with much fanfare, it became quite clear that India did not share the same view of or the same approach to China as the US did. And so, instead of convergence in China push-

ing the US and India together, over the next few years what you really see in the US-India partnership and between the two countries is divergence on the subject of China," she added.

"They've disagreed about a number of different things. Whether to recognize the People's Republic of China or not. What to do about the Chinese takeover of Tibet. China's role in the Korean War and the reasons for its intervention in that war. China's role in Southeast Asia. They also disagreed about the approach to take to China," she said.

According to Madan, China has adverse impact on US-India relations. "Now just in the Truman and Eisenhower administrations but also on Capitol Hill where these differences on China negatively affected decisions to aid India which needed aid at that time. And this, in turn, caused resentment in India that thought the US was holding back because of these differences on China," she said.

Malaysia suspected MH370 downed in murder-suicide: Aussie ex-PM

AFF ■ SYDNEY

Former Australian prime minister Tony Abbott has claimed "very top" level Malaysian officials believed vanished Flight MH370 was deliberately downed by the captain in a mass murder-suicide.

The Malaysia Airlines jet vanished on March 8, 2014 carrying 239 people - mostly from China - en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

No sign of the plane was found in a 120,000-square kilometre (46,000-square mile) Indian Ocean search zone and the Australian-led search, the largest in aviation history, was suspended in January 2017.

A US exploration firm launched a private hunt in 2018 but it ended after several months of scouring the seabed without success.

The disappearance of the plane has long been the subject of a host of theories - ranging from the credible to outlandish - including that veteran pilot Zaharie Ahmad Shah had gone

rogue. In an excerpt from a Sky News documentary airing Wednesday, Abbott claims he was told within a week of it vanishing that Malaysia believed the captain had intentionally downed the jet.

"My very clear understanding from the very top levels of the Malaysian government is that from very, very early on here, they thought it was murder-suicide by the pilot," he said.

"I'm not going to say who said what to whom but let me reiterate, I want to be absolutely crystal clear, it was understood at the highest levels that this was almost certainly murder-suicide by the pilot - mass murder-suicide by the pilot," Zaharie's family and friends have long strongly rejected such claims as baseless.

Azharuddin Abdul Rahman, the former head of Malaysia's civil aviation regulator, criticised Abbott's remarks and said there was not sufficient proof to support the idea.

"It is only a theory," Azharuddin, who led the regulator when Flight MH370 disappeared, told AFP.

"You do this speculation and it will hurt the next of kin. The family of the pilot will also feel very bad because you are making an accusation without any proof."

In 2016, Malaysian officials revealed the pilot had plotted a path over the Indian Ocean on a home flight simulator but stressed this did not prove he deliberately crashed the plane.

A final report into the tragedy released in 2018 pointed to failings by air traffic control and said the course of the plane was changed manually. But they failed to come up with any firm conclusions, leaving relatives angry and disappointed.

Six passengers were Australian, including four from Queensland state, where Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk this week suggested authorities may pursue an inquest into their deaths.

Former S Korean president jailed after losing appeal

AFF ■ SEOUL

Former South Korean president Lee Myung-bak was taken to prison Wednesday to begin a 17-year term for bribery and embezzlement after losing an appeal against a lighter sentence.

Lee, in office from 2008 to 2013, was briefly jailed in 2018 after being sentenced to 15 years and fined 13 billion won (\$11 million), but was granted bail while he appealed.

He was found guilty of creating slush funds of tens of millions of dollars and accepting bribes from Samsung Electronics in return for a presidential pardon for its chairman, Lee Kun-hee, who was jailed for tax evasion.

At a hearing on Wednesday, Seoul's Central District Court ordered a heavier sentence, saying Lee "did not show a sign of remorse or sense of responsibility" for his wrongdoings. He instead blamed civil servants he worked with and Samsung employees, the court said.

11 Indian univs in top 100 for emerging economies

PTI ■ LONDON

Indian universities had a good performance year within the emerging economies of the world as a record 11 made it to the top 100 Times Higher Education's (THE) Emerging Economies University Rankings 2020.

Only China has more universities than India in the top 100 at 30 from a total of 47 countries and territories included in the analysis released in London on Tuesday evening. A total of 56 Indian universities appear in the full ranking of a total of 533 universities across emerging economies of the world.

The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), ranked 16th, is India's top-ranked institution followed by the Indian Institute of Technologies (IITs).

"There has long been a debate about the success of Indian universities in world rankings, and for too long they have been seen as underper-

forming on the global stage," notes Phil Baty, Chief Knowledge Officer for the THE.

"The Emerging Economies University Rankings 2020 suggests that real progress is being made by a number of institutions in a number of metrics across our robust methodology, and could mark an exciting turning point for Indian higher education, enabled in part by the Institutes of Eminence scheme," he said.

The Indian government's Institutes of Eminence scheme was established in 2017 and one of its participating universities, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, has entered the top 100 for the first time, moving up a huge 51 places from joint 141st in 2019.

Amrita declared improvements in almost all the ranking metrics compared to 2019, THE notes.

The other universities included in the Institutes of Eminence scheme that appear

in the top 100 mark the biggest improvers in the ranking with IIT Kharagpur moving up 23 places to 32nd, IIT Delhi improving by 28 places to joint 38th and IIT Madras climbing 12 places to joint 63rd.

Indian Institute of Technology Ropar and Institute of Chemical Technology are entering the ranking for the first time, and both debut in the top 100.

The Institutes of Eminence scheme provides participating universities with government funding and greater autonomy with the aim of moving them into the top 100 of the world university rankings, including Times Higher Education's World University Ranking, over time.

The expectation is that this will be achieved through a number of changes including an increase in foreign students and staff, offering online courses and encouraging academic collaboration with other top universities around the world.

Pak sentences 3 terrorists for Wagah border bombing in '14

PTI ■ LAHORE

A Pakistani anti-terrorism court on Wednesday handed down death sentence and 300 years imprisonment to three terrorists of the banned Jamaat-ul-Ahrar for their involvement in the 2014 Wagah border bombing that killed over 60 people.

Wagah is a village located in Lahore, Pakistan's Punjab province and Attari in India's Punjab state along the Indo-Pak border.

Over 60 people, including women and children, were killed in the horrific suicide attack on November 2, 2014 at the Wagah border on the Pakistani side.

The responsibility for the attack was claimed separately by the outlawed Jundullah and Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan's splinter group Jamaat-ul-Ahrar.

The court acquitted three other suspects giving them the benefit of doubt.

Huawei loses legal challenge of US federal purchase ban

AFF ■ HOUSTON

Washington has the right to block US federal agencies from buying products by Huawei on cybersecurity grounds, a judge ruled Tuesday, dismissing the Chinese telecom giant's legal challenge to a purchase ban.

Huawei filed the suit last year and claimed Congress had failed to provide evidence to support a law that stopped government agencies from buying its equipment, services, or working with third parties that are Huawei customers.

But the court ruled there was no constitutionally guaranteed right to a contract with the federal government.

The ban was justified in the

context of a congressional investigation "into a potential threat against the nation's cybersecurity," wrote US District Judge Amos Mazzant.

Huawei said in a statement it was disappointed with the ruling and would "continue to consider further legal options." Washington has long considered Huawei a possible security danger due to the background of founder Ren Zhengfei, a former Chinese army engineer.

It has warned that the company's systems could be manipulated by Beijing to spy on other countries and disrupt critical communications, and is urging nations to shun the firm.

Concerns have intensified with Huawei's rise to become a

world leader in telecom networking equipment and one of the top smartphone manufacturers alongside Samsung and Apple.

But the firm is expected to play a major role in the rollout of ultra-fast 5G networks that will allow wide adoption of next-generation technologies such as artificial intelligence.

Huawei equipment has been seen as considerably more advanced than 5G competitors such as Sweden's Ericsson or Finland's Nokia, while no US company is considered a serious rival.

Last week the US also slapped the company with criminal charges for an alleged "decades-long" effort to steal trade secrets from American companies.

Devices found in missiles, Yemen drones link Iran to attacks

AP ■ DUBAI

A small instrument inside the drones that targeted the heart of Saudi Arabia's oil industry and those in the arsenal of Yemen's Houthi rebels match components recovered in downed Iranian drones in Afghanistan and Iraq, two reports say.

These gyroscopes have only been found inside drones manufactured by Iran, Conflict Armament Research said in a report released on Wednesday.

That follows a recently released report from the United Nations, saying its experts saw a similar gyroscope from an Iranian drone obtained by the US military in Afghanistan, as well as in a shipment of cruise missiles seized in the Arabian Sea bound for Yemen.

The discovery further ties Iran to an attack that briefly halved Saudi Arabia's oil output

and saw energy prices spike by a level unseen since the 1991 Gulf War. It also ties Iran to the arming of the rebel Houthis in Yemen's long civil war.

Iran denies it had a hand in that assault but has increasingly promoted its influence over the Houthis and launched a ballistic missile attack on American troops in Iraq after a US drone strike killed a top Iranian general in Baghdad last month.

"This gyroscope ... we've seen it now enough times in Iranian-manufactured material to be able to confidently say that the presence of it in a Houthi-produced item suggests that the material was supplied from Iran," Jonah Leff of Conflict Armament Research told The Associated Press.

Iran's mission to the UN declined to immediately respond to queries from the AP.

Media officials from the rebel Houthi, who hold Yemen's capital, Sanaa, and have been battling a Saudi-led coalition since March 2015, declined an interview request. A U.N. Security Council resolution prohibits arms transfers to the Houthis.

A gyroscope is a device that helps orient and guide a drone or missile to its target. The gyroscopes in question bear no manufacturer's name and come in at least two versions labeled as V9 and V10, according to the reports. Their four-digit serial numbers also appear sequential, suggesting the same manufacturer had built all of those found.

The Houthi's Qasef-1 drone carries the V10 gyroscope, which is "identical" to one found in an Iranian-made Ababil-3 drone, which Islamic State group fighters reportedly recovered in Iraq, Conflict

Armament Research said.

Weapons experts found the V9 version of the gyroscope in drones, or unmanned aerial vehicles, used in the September attack on Abqaiq, home of a crucial oil processing facility for Saudi Arabia, the UN report said.

"According to UAV experts familiar with this technology, such vertical gyroscopes have not been observed in any UAVs other than those manufactured by Iran," Conflict Armament Research said in its report, which was funded by the European Union and the governments of Germany and the United Arab Emirates.

The U.N. report simply said that "the manufacturer of the gyroscope remains unknown." However, it noted finding similar V10 gyroscopes "among the debris of both Samad and Qasef UAVs, which have been used by the Houthi

forces." The UN also said its experts saw a V9 gyroscope on display in Washington at a military display showing an Iranian Shahed-123 that American officials say they recovered in Afghanistan in October 2016, after it crash-landed.

Images of the gyroscopes match those in the Conflict Armament Research report.

A similar gyroscope could be seen inside a cruise missile seized by the US Navy in a November raid on a traditional dhow shipping boat in the Arabian Sea. A computer terminal also seized with the missiles, likely used with the weapons, bore Farsi characters on its keyboard.

The US and the Saudi-led coalition have long said that Iran supplies weapons to the Houthi, ranging from assault rifles to the ballistic missiles fired into the kingdom.

JAIPUR TO HOST 48TH DAIRY



Rahul Saxena, Secretary General, 48th DIC and Secretary, RSC

The 48th Dairy Industry Conference is being organised by Indian Dairy Association (North Zone) in association with Indian Dairy Association (Rajasthan State Chapter) during February 20 to 22 at Birla Auditorium, Jaipur.

The conference will include dairy experts from the country and abroad, who will share cutting edge technology and experience in the field of dairy development.

The theme for this year's conference is *Dairying for Health and Wealth*. In addition to dairy experts, professionals associated with dairy industry, central and state government officials, representatives of private and cooperative dairies, researchers, entrepreneurs, milk producers and more than five thousand participants including students.



Director of the 48th Dairy Industry Conference, Dr Himmat Singh, said that a grand exhibition will also be organised in the Birla auditorium, which will have stalls of prestigious brands like Amul, Mother Dairy and REEL and IDMC will also display their products.

The Pink city was founded in 1727 by Maharaj Jai Singh II, who ruled from 1699 to 1744. Initially, his capital was Amber, which lies at a distance of 11 km from Jaipur. He felt the need of shifting his capital city with the increase in population and growing scarcity of water. Jaipur is the first planned city of India and the king took great interest while designing this city of victory. He consulted several books on architecture and architects before making the layout of the city.

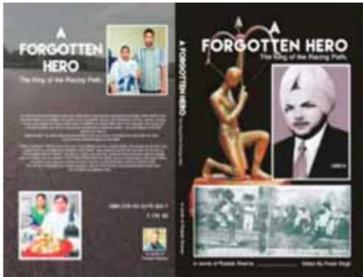
It holds a distinct position among popular tourist places in India due to the immortal royal vibes that are an inseparable part of its existence. The major highlights of the city are: Amber Fort, Nahargarh Fort and Jaigarh Fort. Hawa Mahal or The Wind Palace is another major attraction that impresses spectators with its wonderful architecture and forces them to click pictures. Many other must-visit places in Jaipur are, Albert Hall Museum, Jal Mahal and Jantar Mantar. They are special spots as every bit of them reflects the presence of royalty in this city.

IN SHORT



NHPC Limited has been conferred the CBIP Award 2020 for Outstanding performing utility in hydro power sector. Ratish Kumar, CMD, NHPC along with MK Mittal, Director (Finance), NHPC and Janardan Choudhary, Director (Technical), NHPC received the award from Rattan Lal Kataria, Minister of State, Ministry of Jal Shakti at a function held on Wednesday. It has been conferred this award for their contribution by use of latest technologies and smart solutions for efficient operation of hydro power plants in the country, giving importance to environmental, social and economic aspects besides contribution for development of hydro power in the neighbouring countries.

The Ghaziabad Development Authority will once again give notice to the bank branches and ask them to move from residential areas to commercial areas. In this regard, the authority administration is preparing to give notice to banks on a large scale. This information was given by GDA officer Sanjay Kumar on Tuesday. He informed that notices are being issued to ten bank branches operating in residential areas near Rajnagar extension. After this, banks operating in other residential areas of the metropolis will also be brought under eviction. Kumar informed that banks have opened their branches in various apartments of Rajnagar extension which are against RBI norms. The privacy of the local residents is affected due to the crowd coming in the banks. The traffic is also being disrupted due to the congestion. This action is being taken on the complaints of the residents of colonies and apartments.



Makhan Singh's journey on silver

At a time when Bollywood has been flooded with biopics, the initiative of producer, K Ranjan along with Prateek Sharma is commendable. The athlete who holds the reputation of defeating the legendary Milkha Singh brought a lot of accolades for his country.

It is a sheer irony that the sportsman, Makhan Singh, who brought honours to his nation lived a life in poverty. The heart-rending fact that his wife was compelled to sell the prestigious Arjuna Award. When the avid writer and entrepreneur, Sharma, got a chance to meet Singh's family, his

heart got a thorough setback. He decided to bring the story of this star athlete in front of the world.

Ranjan has been working in the B-Town from more than three decades. Apart from producing films, he has also produced soap operas, more than 25 almost.



Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla and Union Minority Affairs Minister Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi visiting Hunar Haat, India Gate Lawns, Rajpath on Tuesday.

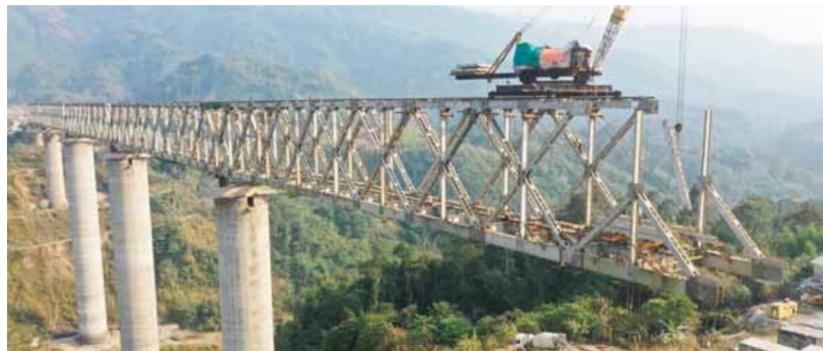
Any mission is incomplete without citizens' participation: Dinesh Chandra

Without public participation, no challenging mission can ever be completed. Inspired by the citizens of Ghaziabad in making the city beautiful and clean, the Municipal Corporation will carry many challenging tasks.



Talking about the completion of one year tenure in the Municipal Corporation, Dinesh Chandra, Municipal Commissioner said that the work of cleanliness and development will be taken forward continuously. The works will also be completed within the time limit. He informed that the citizens have sent their complaints about monkeys and dogs in urban areas, which they will resolve soon. Stray dogs and monkeys are being released from Ghaziabad border from Delhi side. A letter in this regard is also being sent to MCD of Delhi.

Chandra added that a task force has been constituted to deal with the occupiers on government lands. Its charge has been handed over to retired Colonel Deepak Sirohi. On the question asked on the issue of cleanliness survey, he said that Ghaziabad will now be identified with a clean toilet.



First ever 100m pier bridge built

NF Railway Construction Organisation has recently achieved a major advancement in constructing first ever 100 metre tall pier bridge coming up across river Makru in Tamenglong District of Manipur, in Indian Railways.

The bridge is a part of Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal new

BG line project (111 Km). There are total 47 tunnels in the project. The longest tunnel, Tunnel No 12 with a length of 10.280 Km. will be the longest railway tunnel in the Northeast.

The 555 metre long bridge is being constructed across the valley of river Makru in Tamenglong district of Manipur with a pier

height of 100 metre (equivalent to 33 storied building). The steel girders are pre-fabricated in a workshop at Kolkata, transported in segments and erected at site by Cantilever launching scheme which requires very meticulous planning and execution. Indian Railways Engineers have successfully demonstrated

their expertise. It is mentioned that during the entire works of open web Girder launching, no mishappening has occurred.

Despite facing difficult terrain, plagued by poor infrastructure facilities the last Open Web Girder of the Bridge launched successfully on Friday.

Obey Vedic principles

It is unfortunate that nowadays, humans are facing many diseases. The outbreak of coronavirus has been detected a few weeks ago. God being our real father gives us the knowledge of four Vedas to destroy illusion and solve all kinds of problems, including those of medical science. Many fatal infections can be destroyed if we simply perform daily *Agnihotra* in our homes.

When we obey the Vedic principles of God, diseases are either destroyed from its roots or do not even generate. Vedic mantra states that *agnihotra* purifies food grains, water, and bestows mental and physical strength so that people can enjoy prosperous life.

Everybody must offer *aahutis* in the fire of *havan-kund*. The nature of that fire is such that it purifies the entire atmosphere and prevents diseases. In *shloks* of Bhagwad Geeta, Yogeshwar Sri Krishna Maharaj states that Oh Arjun, when *Yajyen* is performed, the atmosphere is purified, which will in turn purify our food too.

Dr Kundanlal conducted an experiment taking twelve test tubes filled with food particles. He filled six of them with fresh air and rest with air generated from *agnihotra*. He found that food of the test tubes filled with air started decomposing much earlier than the food filled with the air of *agnihotra*. It proves that air gener-

ated by *agnihotra* is pure and further purifies the atmosphere.

According to *Atharvaved* mantra by performing *Yajyen*, the human beings protect themselves from all kinds of sufferings including diseases. *Yajyen* is basically performed by using wood of mango tree. A scientist named Trelle of France did experiments on *Yajyen*. He found that when the mango wood is burnt then a gas — formic aldehyde — is liberated, which destroys the harmful bacteria. Another scientist named Tautlik came to know that when *Yajyen* is performed with *samagri* containing raisins and black currants and if we inhale its smoke, the germs of typhoid and TB are destroyed.

Ingredients to prepare the *samagri* of *Yajyen*:

1. Honey, jaggery or raw sugar
2. Antibiotic herbs like gyoil
3. Ghee and dry fruits
4. Fragrant materials like cardamom or dried petals of flowers

If people start performing *agnihotra* with Vedic mantras daily, he would surely protect himself, his family and the surroundings from all kinds of diseases and problems.

(The author is Swami Ram Swarup, Yogacharya, the Chief Editor of *Ved Ishvareeya vani*, a bi-annual Magazine.)

ITDC signs MoU with Gujarat to promote tourism



India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) Ltd, in an attempt to enhance the tourism growth in India signed an MoU on Thursday for providing consultancy services for innovative/decorative lighting and illumination of important monuments and sound and light show at important places in Gujarat.

It was signed by G Kamala Vardhana Rao, C&MD, ITDC, Jenu Devan, Commissioner of Tourism and Managing Director, Tourism Corporation of Gujarat in the presence of Union Minister of State for

Tourism, Prahlad Singh Patel, Gujarat Chief Minister, Vijay Rupani, senior officials from Gujarat Tourism department and Ministry of Tourism.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Prahlad Patel said, "There is a great scope for developing tourism in Gujarat for which the state government has developed many more new focussed sights to attract tourism. It may work with ITDC to promote and develop tourism through innovative and creative steps."

The event organised from Thursday to Saturday at

Dhordo, Kutch was to discuss the importance of Destination Management and Community Participation in the tourism sector. It involved speaker sessions by government officials, tourism industry and private sector entrepreneurs showcasing best practices/case studies from various states and Union Territories in the related field. The meeting aided in understanding the concepts and frameworks, approaches, challenges faced in implementation and impact generated by such initiatives on the society and the overall economy.

NTPC BAGS TWO AWARDS



NTPC has been awarded India's Best Workplace in Manufacturing 2020-Top 30 award in Mumbai. AN Verma, ED (HR) received the award along with CV Anand, RED (WR-I & SR). This year 142 organisations in the manufacturing sector undertook this

assessment. Based on the rigorous evaluation, GPTW has identified the Top 30 organisations among India's best Workplace in Manufacturing 2020.

The company has excelled in people's practices designed for their employees and the

feedback on creating a High Trust Culture from their employees.

It has also bagged the Central Board of Irrigation and Power (CBIP) 2020 award for outstanding performing utility in Thermal Power Sector. The award recognises the com-

pany's outstanding contribution by setting new benchmarks in generation and maintenance practices, excellence in engineering and use of latest State-of-the-art technologies and smart solutions.

Rattan Lal Kataria, Minister of State, Ministry of

Jal Shakti presented the award to Prakash Tiwari, director (operations). Prakash Mhaske, chairperson Central Electrical Authority (CEA), RK Jain, chairman, Central Water Commission and VK Kajaria, secretary, CBIP were present on the occasion.

Trend Blazer

Deepika shares her first look of 83

Actor DEEPIKA PADUKONE unveiled her look as Romi Dev, wife of cricket legend Kapil Dev, in the forthcoming film 83.

She says the film is an ode to every woman who puts her husband's dream before her own.

She captioned it: "To be able to play a small but significant part in a film that captures one of the most iconic moments in sporting history has been an absolute honour. I've seen very closely the role a wife plays in the success of her husband's professional and personal aspirations in my mother and 83 for me in many ways is an ode to every woman who puts her husband's dream before her own."



'Portraying a young girl from Bombay who saved the lives of the 359 passengers was not only challenging but also a great honour. As the film completes its fourth anniversary, I would want people to recall how fear gave courage to the young Neerja Bhanot. She was the true icon of bravery, strength, and sacrifice for our country. She continues to be an inspiration to everyone.'



—Sonam Kapoor

Actor DIA MIRZA loved playing the character of someone who makes choices on her own in the new film Thappad.

Sharing her experience on how she prepared for her role in the film, Dia said: "Playing any character is a combination of both, preparation as well as spontaneous emotions. Many years ago, one of my friends told me that one must meet opportunity with preparedness, one should understand the story from all the perspectives and not just the character's side."



Britney gets injured while dancing

Singer BRITNEY SPEARS was hospitalised after a dance move went wrong.

The 38-year-old was left with a fractured metatarsal bone and her foot in plaster. Her boyfriend, Sam Ashghari, shared photos of the star in a hospital on his Instagram page. He revealed that the singer had fractured one of a group of five long bones in the foot, located between the tarsal bones and the phalanges of the toes.

Posting several photos and videos of themselves in hospital, Sam showed that Britney was laid up in the emergency room with a cast on her foot, on which the word "stronger" had been written.



WHEN VICKY WAS TRICKED

The actor tells CHAHAK MITTAL that working for *Bhoot: The Haunted Ship* not only compelled him to face his worst fears but also taught him how a horror film requires an artiste to give a lot of calculated expressions

What would it be like to react to something that is not even present in front of you? Confused? Well, now you can imagine what actor Vicky Kaushal's situation might have been when he was acting for *Bhoot: The Haunted Ship*. Be it romance, comedy, thriller or biopic, other drama genres hold a lot of facts from real life for actors to abide by. However, the expression of horror follows no grammar. Acting for a horror film is like acting for something that's not even real. And for Vicky, this was the trickiest part.

He tells us, "I was purely following Bhanu's (Pratap Singh, director) orders and vision. Everyday I would come on set and just ask him a number of questions. 'What are we exactly doing?' 'What does he want and how?' 'How are we going to create that fear?'" The actor had very little to work with. There were no props on the set, neither was there any sound track which is overlaid later.

He says, "There were times when I would find myself looking at the monitor, which I don't usually do. I would ask Bhanu what the background music would be like and what effects are going to be added in the post-production. It would require a lot of focus from all the departments together and then with myself to create that kind of atmosphere for the audience in the theatre. Hence, the grammar was very new to me. But there was a lot of conviction and clarity in Bhanu's narration, which made me think and act the way he wanted me to. I think! (Laughs)"

Vicky explains how he worked on the process. He says, "When you're doing a scene for a drama or comedy film, in your heart, you know that you've hit the right emotion. But with fear, it is always the planned emotion. It doesn't come to you naturally, especially if there is nothing around you. I am walking in a haunted ship and there's something I hear from the back. But that is only something that I have to imagine. It hasn't happened in reality. It is going to be added later. Yet I have to react, imagine the intensity of it and then come to an intensity of fear that can be visible from my facial expressions and body language. All of that is a very calculated process. You know that you are going to react in this way. You don't leave it to the moment. So this planning of reactions and still making it seem natural is very tricky!"

He accepted the film because Dharma Productions was in charge. "I was called by the production house when *Raazi* was going to be released. They wanted to have a discussion with me about doing another film with them, which was, surprisingly, a horror one. I was intrigued. I wondered 'kuch toh baat hogi'. My mind was blown after I the script. I thoroughly enjoyed it."

The film, also starring Bhumi Pednekar, revolves around the real-life haunted ship which was washed ashore on Mumbai's coast. The strange part of it was that when it hit the sand barrier, there was nobody on it, including the crew members. The mystery was undetected and alarmed the people when it went aground off the coast one day. For Vicky, the script was written in a way that it stuck to the genre authentically. There wasn't any Bollywoodisation of the theme. "It was fresh and had no unnecessary subplots or dance. I was very happy doing that. Aesthetically, it was rich. The geography, which plays a very important part in a horror film, was able to perfectly define the seriousness of the situation that was being created. There have been abandoned homes or a cemetery to showcase a horror element. But this one was a ship, which I thought was quite fresh and gave a lot of scope to explore the genre. In that container ship, there are about a hundreds rooms — engine room, pump room, staircases, lifts, which are all worn out because it's a dilapidated, old ship. And there's nobody inside. So I thought it became a great setup, which was properly exploited too."

With films like *Masaan*, *Love Per Square Foot*, *Raazi*, *Uri*, and now *Bhoot*... there has been a whole range of genres that Vicky has explored — arthouse, romantic comedy, action, drama and horror. So how has such a variety of roles transformed him? He says, "Every film does that in some way or the other. *Masaan* just gave me a new perspective about life. Spending so much time in those *ghats*, where dead bodies are burnt, one realises the finality of life. Whatever you do or achieve, this is the real truth, where we all are going to end up one day. When I was shooting for



'A HORROR FILM IS AN EXPENSIVE ONE, WHICH REQUIRES A LOT OF POST-PRODUCTION WORK. WE HAVE TRIED TO NOTCH UP THE AESTHETIC SENSE OF THE FILM AND GIVEN IT ELEMENTS TO CONNECT ON AN INTERNAL LEVEL SO THAT THE HORROR ENTHUSIASTS AND NON-HORROR ENTHUSIASTS CAN WATCH IT TOGETHER'

Uri, it gave me such a new understanding about the lives of military personnel and their families. I realised what they go through. *Aap kiina hi kitaabo mei padhle*, but to actually live their stories, changes you."

Vicky hasn't been a fan of horror films himself and like most, also flinches at the thought of it. So how was it working for one? "When you do a horror film, being that person from the audience who is very scared to watch such films, you kind of overcome that fear. You face it while being a part of it directly. I am very afraid of water. And in this

film, there were a lot of underwater sequences. I had to literally face my fear in a very genuine way. It hit me very personally. But yes, eventually, it also becomes a very liberating process. And that experience changes you, slightly."

Horror as a genre hasn't been explored in India much. Like *The Conjuring*, *Annabelle*, *Paranormal Activities*, there are no Hindi equivalent. Why? For Vicky, it's because a horror film does not comply with the entertainment needs of the majority. He says, "There are people with nine to five jobs. They are not willing to watch a serious rather tension *vaali* film after a tiring day. Not everyone is able to enjoy a horror film. That's why producers do not want to invest in such a film. And even when such films are made, they are made on such a low budget because of the fear of not earning enough. Eventually, it looks tacky. A horror film is an expensive one, which requires a lot of post-production work. We have tried to notch up the aesthetic sense of the film and given it elements to connect on an internal level so that the horror enthusiasts and non-horror enthusiasts can come and watch it together."

Well, the film's trailer looks promising and certainly makes one feel that this could be India's *The Conjuring*. It is certainly no cliched '*mehelon vaali bhootiya kahaani*' (haunted house story) anymore." We are trying to give the audience a feel that it's fresh. Give us a chance, the ship will sail! (Laughs)."

The class satire

Filmmaker BONG JOON-HO feels happy as *Parasite* succeeded despite exposing the brutality of disparity in modern society

Oscar-winning *Parasite* director, Bong Joon-ho said that the film's "biggest pleasure and the most significant meaning" to him is that it succeeded even though the audience might feel uncomfortable with his explicit description of bitter wealth disparity in modern society.

Bong's dark comic thriller about two families on the opposite ends of South Korea's social spectrum is a history-making film. It won best picture at this month's 92nd Academy Awards ceremony, becoming the first non-English-language film to get the top honor. Bong and his film clinched three other Oscars.

He told reporters that the film's story has not only "funny, comic" elements but also "bitter, painful natures" of the disparity between the haves and have-nots in modern society.

"I didn't want to avoid such a part even a little," Bong told a nationally televised news conference. "Audience might hate that or feel uncomfortable to watch it... but I thought the only option I can have for this film is depicting the world we live as frankly as possible, though that might be risky commercially."

Noting that *Parasite* was already commercially successful in North America, France, Vietnam, Japan, the United Kingdom and his native South Korea even before his Oscar triumph, Bong said, "Regardless of the (Oscar) wins, the biggest pleasure and the most significant meaning was the fact that the audience around the world of our times responded to the film."

The class satire tells the story of how a family of four poor, unemployed people living in a slum basement apartment comically infiltrates a wealthy family residing at a luxurious mansion before things unravel violently and tragically.

Bong already had commercial and critical success with his 2013 sci-fi film *Snowpiercer*, which starred Chris Evans and Tilda Swinton along with South Korean *Parasite* actor Song Kang-ho. But nothing that's come before has been remotely as successful as *Parasite*, a profoundly South Korean film shot in the Korean language.

Along with the best picture award, Bong was also named best director and co-shared another Oscar title, best original screenplay,



with *Parasite* co-writer Han Jin Won. The film won best international feature film as well.

The film, which is also the first South Korean film to win an Oscar, has made Bong a national hero. Ahead of April's parliamentary elections in South Korea, some politicians even proposed setting up a Bong statue, establishing a street named after him and rebuilding the house where he was born. Asked about such proposals, Bong joked, "I hope people will talk about such things after I die." He said that he will leave it to

critics, journalists and fans to analyse the film's commercial appeal and that he'd fully focus on working on this next film.

At the same news conference, actor Lee Jeong-eun, who plays a live-in housekeeper for the wealthy family in *Parasite*, said the film portrayed universal problems such as unemployment "in a very interesting yet an in-depth manner." Han said he believes audience sympathised with the film's 10 main characters, who "have their own dramas and have their own reasons to live." Bong said he was ready for a

break after a successful yet exhausting Oscars campaign. But he said prominent American director Martin Scorsese pleaded that he get back to work quickly. "I just read his letter a few hours ago and it was an honour," Bong said. "He said I did a good job and should rest but only a little because he and everyone else was eagerly waiting for my next film."

He had mentioned his admiration of Scorsese while receiving the directing Oscar, inspiring an impromptu standing ovation from the crowd. He said he was discussing with HBO making a TV adaptation of *Parasite*, with American director and screenwriter Adam McKay agreeing to be a writer on the series, which could run five or six episodes. "We have smoothly taken the first step with HBO," said Bong, while denying reports that Mark Ruffalo and Swinton have been finalised as cast members.

"The TV adaptation of *Snowpiercer* is planned to air in May, but since we started talking about it in 2014 or 2015, it took about five years. (The TV version of) *Parasite* might take quite a while too," he said. —AP



Women power drives Karan Johar's *Guilty*

Filmmaker-producer Karan Johar, whose digital content production wing Dharmatic has collaborated with streaming giant Netflix for a venture named *Guilty*, has said that his forthcoming edge-of-the-seat thriller film has intrigue, resonance and relevance, combined by some terrific performances. *Guilty* is led by women in all departments — be it in acting, direction, writing and production — and Johar declares he will continue collaborating with female talent in future, too.

At the trailer launch, Johar was accompanied by the film's director Ruchi Narain, writers Kanika Dhillon and Atika Chohan, and cast members Kiara Advani, Gurfateh Singh Pirdada, Akansha Ranjan Kapoor and Taher Shabbir. Sriшти Behl Arya, director, International Original Film, India, Netflix, was also present, as were Apoorva Mehta, CEO, Dharmatic Productions, and Somen Mishra, head of creative development at Dharmatic Movies.

On the female-centric cast and crew, Johar said, "It's quite interesting that it is such a strong female-led narrative, led by a mainstream female

actor, directed by a woman, creatively nurtured by a strong woman and all of us at Dharmatic are such strong feminists including Somen (Mishra), Apoorva (Mehta) and me. We feel proud to tell this story."

In *Guilty*, Kiara essays a musician's girlfriend. The story explores the different versions of truth that emerge when a small town girl accuses her college heartthrob of rape.

"The film has a strong narrative and storytelling along with terrific performances," said Johar. After her grand web debut with Karan Johar's segment in the anthology *Lust Stories* (2018), Kiara returns to the digital space with this one.

Talking about his collaboration with Netflix, Johar said, "This is the first time that Dharmatic and Netflix has come together. All of you know that Netflix is a tremendous global platform and they really encourage and nurture strong content, so to collaborate with them was an honour and also a privilege to be able to tell stories we really want to with the abundance and the craft and creativity."

Guilty will stream on Netflix from March 6. —IANS

AFP ■ MADRID

Liverpool were the victims of an old-fashioned Atletico Madrid masterclass on Tuesday as Diego Simeone's side ground out a 1-0 win in Madrid to give themselves hope of reaching the Champions League quarter-finals.

Saul Niguez raised the roof at a bouncing Wanda Metropolitano by scoring in the fourth minute before Atletico's defence kicked in, suffocating the European champions and denying them a single shot on target.

"Tonight is one of those nights you don't forget," said Simeone. "We haven't gone through but we have beaten the best team in the world."

If Alvaro Morata had not slipped at the crucial moment, Atleti might even have taken a two-goal lead to Anfield, where they can expect an onslaught next month.

"We are not 5-0 down," said Jurgen Klopp. "We don't think it will be easy but as long as we can get 11 players in Liverpool shirts we will give everything we have. And for all the Liverpool fans that can get a ticket — welcome to Anfield."

If Liverpool remain favourites to go through, the roar from the Atleti fans at the final whistle, aimed at their fist-pumping players on the pitch, suggested Simeone's team now have belief.

Few had tipped them to keep this tie even alive for the second leg given their own stuttering form, in contrast to Liverpool, unbeaten in the Premier League, and gunning for a treble.

Jurgen Klopp said on Monday Atletico were a "results machine" but the temptation was to see his words as platitudes, not an accurate reflection of a side that sits 13 points behind La Liga leaders Real Madrid and had already lost six times this season.

Yet Atletico under Simeone have also become synonymous with upsetting the odds, just as they did when winning the Spanish title in 2014 and then twice reaching the Champions League final.

For all their failings this season, they summoned that spirit here to produce a throwback performance full of tenacity, resilience and guts that was always going to be needed to give them any chance of success.

Better call Saul Ha la land

Niguez's early strike punish Liverpool on return to Wanda Metropolitano



He sprung a surprise by starting Thomas Lemar for the first time this year while Alvaro Morata and Diego Costa both returned from injury, the former from the start and the latter off the bench in the second half.

Liverpool, who began with their expected eleven, have blitzed numerous opponents with explosive starts but they were the ones rocking early on as Atletico snapped at their heels, pressed hard and relished being first to every loose ball.

They took the lead, aided by a hint

of fortune as Liverpool failed to clear the corner and the ball cannoned back off the foot of Fabinho for Saul to stab in from three yards.

On the sideline, Simeone beckoned his players to stay calm but they were celebrating in the corner while in the stands, the fans were delirious and given hope. Atletico were given a lead to defend and the rest of the game was largely a picture of Liverpool dominating the ball but failing to break down the 10 red and white shirts in front of them.

FIGURATIVELY

6 Since the start of 2018-19, no side has lost more UCL matches away from home than Liverpool (six — level with Crvena Zvezda)

5 Only Antoine Griezmann (6) has scored more goals in the CL knockout phase for Atletico Madrid than Saul Niguez (5)

0 Atletico haven't conceded a shot on target vs Liverpool, the second team to get it after Napoli at San Paolo in October 2018 in Jurgen Klopp era for Liverpool in all competitions

0 Atletico have never lost at home under Diego Simeone in the Champions League knockout stages (W8 D4). In those 12 games, they've only conceded two goals

10 Erling Haaland is just the fifth player after 1958/59 — Just Fontaine (10); 1978/79 — Claudio Sulser (11); 2017/18 — Sadio Mané (10) & Roberto Firmino (10) to score 10 goals in their first season in the European Cup/CL

10 Erling Haaland is only the second teenager to score 10 CL goals, after Kylian Mbappé (13), and is the first teenager to score 10 in a single campaign in the competition

10 Erling Haaland has scored 10 CL goals in just seven appearances, reaching the tally four games quicker than any other player in the competition's history

10 Erling Haaland has scored 10 goals in his seven appearances for Borussia Dortmund; this is at least two more than any other player for a big-five European league club in all competitions since his debut for them in Jan

1 Erling Haaland is the first Borussia Dortmund player ever to score on his debut in the Bundesliga, DFB Pokal and Champions League

Erling's double gives Dortmund edge over PSG but Neymar strike keeps tie alive

AFP ■ DORTMUND

Teenage record-breaker Erling Braut Haaland scored twice as Borussia Dortmund sealed a 2-1 win over Paris Saint-Germain, for whom Neymar scored on his return to action, in Tuesday's Champions League last 16, first leg in Germany.

Forward Haaland took his tally to 11 goals in seven games since Dortmund paid Salzburg 20 million euros (\$22 million) for the 19-year-old with second-half goals either side of Neymar's equaliser.

Having also scored eight times for Salzburg in the group stage, Haaland now has 10 goals in just seven Champions League games this season.

"These are the moments you play football for. I really enjoyed it," beamed the Norwegian.

His performance left Kylian Mbappe and Neymar in the shade, with the latter struggling to truly make his mark having been kept on the sidelines for the last two weeks ahead of this game due to a rib injury.

However, the Brazilian superstar's away goal means PSG remain very much in contention to reach the quarter-finals after three consecutive exits in the last 16.

The presence of the world's most expensive player was a major boost for his team, after he missed last season's surprise last-16 loss to Manchester United with a foot injury.

He also sat out the second leg of their defeat by Real Madrid at the same stage in 2018.

However, Dortmund deserved the win as PSG's star-studded attack, with Angel Di Maria supporting Mbappe and Neymar, was repeatedly frustrated by the home side, for whom the midfield duo of Axel Witsel and Emre Can



regularly helped snuff out attacks. There was little to separate the teams in the first half although Dortmund's English winger Jadon Sancho squandered one chance on the counter-attack and then forced a fine save from Keylor Navas just before the half-hour mark.

After the goalless first half, Dortmund poured forward and kept finding spaces to exploit down the flanks.

Dortmund's Swiss coach Lucien Favre then brought on Giovanni Reyna, who only turned 17 last November, for his Champions League debut midway through the second half.

Moments later Haaland got the breakthrough when he stabbed past Navas from close range after Thiago Silva had blocked a Raphael Guerreiro shot.

The game had now come to life, and with their German coach Thomas Tuchel frantically urging them on, PSG drew level six minutes later when Mbappe unpicked the Dortmund defence and presented Neymar with a straight-forward finish.

However, the scene was set for Haaland to continue his phenomenal scoring run with a stunning finish from the edge of the area following a Reyna pass.

"We didn't have enough possession, we made too many easy mistakes, we weren't smart enough and we lost the ball too early. It's difficult, but it's 2-1 and we still have a few games left to get back into the rhythm."
—THOMAS TUCHEL

"Of course it's a dangerous result, but we played well in both defence and attack. However, as things stand it's 2-1 to us."
—LUCIEN FAVRE



SINGLES

AL SADD BEAT SEPAHAN, DUHAIL SHOCKED

DOHA: Qatari sides had mixed luck in the Asian Champions League on Tuesday as Xavi's Al Sadd eased past Iran's Sepahan 3-0 in Doha while Al Duhail crashed to a 2-0 defeat against Saudi Arabia's Al Taavoun in Buraidah. Akram Afif opened the scoring while veteran Hassan al-Haydos scored a brace at the Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Stadium as the side coached by the former Barcelona captain grabbed their first win after having drawn against Saudi side Al Nassr last week.

CASILLAS TO END PLAYING CAREER

LISBON: Porto president Jorge Nuno Pinto da Costa said that Iker Casillas is set to retire, a day after the World Cup-winning captain announced he would run for the presidency of the Spanish Football Federation. Casillas had been expected to bring an end to a glittering playing career after making the announcement but has never confirmed that he was hanging up his boots. "Before announcing his candidacy, Iker Casillas came to see me to inform me of his decision to end his career," Pinto da Costa told Portuguese media on Tuesday.

PUJARA SIGNS UP WITH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

LONDON: India Test specialist Cheteshwar Pujara was on Wednesday signed up by Gloucestershire for the first six matches of the English County Championship. His stint will be from April 12 to May 22. "I am really excited to get the opportunity to represent Gloucestershire this season. The Club has a rich cricketing history, and this is a great opportunity to be a part of it and contribute to its success," Pujara said. The club took into consideration his ability to bat for long periods. He will bring his experience to a Gloucestershire side, which will be playing in Division One of the County Championship for the first time in over a decade.

10-YEAR-OLD HANSINI SET FOR ITTF DEBUT

CHENNAI: Following impressive performances on the national circuit, 10-year-old M Hansini is all set to feature in her maiden ITTF junior circuit event, Swedish Junior and Cadet Open, to be held in Orebro from February 19 to 23. It has been a memorable year for Class V student who bagged Bronze medal in cadet girls' singles at the 2019 National Table Tennis Championships and will start the upcoming season as India No1 in the U-12 category. Hansini has been placed in the Group 8 in junior girls' singles alongside Germany's Naomi Prankovic, Sweden's Hannah Högström and England's Amy Marriott.

INDIA WILL HOST 2022 AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP

KUALA LUMPUR: India will host the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup as the sport's continental body awarded the showpiece to the country with an aim to maximise the promotion of the game. It was felt that India, which will also have the experience of hosting the FIFA Women's U-17 World Cup later this year, was best placed among the three bidders - Chinese Taipei and Uzbekistan were the other competing candidates - to maximise the promotion of the women's game. The venues proposed by India - D Y Patil Stadium, Trans Stadia Arena and Fatorda Stadium - are also being used in the FIFA tournaments, the AFC said. The dates of the tournament are likely to be in late October and early November 2022 and the match schedule will be worked out keeping in mind the start of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.

B'DESH RETAIN MASHRAFE AS ODI CAPTAIN

DHAKA: Bangladesh pace bowler Mashrafe Murtaza will lead the country in the forthcoming three-match one-day international series against Zimbabwe despite uncertainty over his future. Mashrafe has not represented Bangladesh in any ODI since the ICC World Cup last year, and in January withdrew his name from a lucrative national team contract. But Bangladesh Cricket Board officials said he would skipper the side despite his apparent lack of commitment. "At this moment we don't have a substitute for a captain like Mashrafe," president Nazmul Hassan told reporters in Dhaka. "If he is not fit, that is another issue." Hassan said while Mashrafe's captaincy was vital to the team, it was also time for him to decide his future. "We have to decide about our next captain very soon," he said.

AGENCIES

Usual suspects need to be wary of lesser opponents

NEW DELHI: The Ranji Trophy quarter-finals begin across four venues today with usual suspects such as Saurashtra and Karnataka taking on the lesser teams capable of springing a surprise.

On paper, the most well contested quarterfinals should be between Saurashtra and Andhra in Ongole, Andhra Pradesh as both teams go into the knockouts from the elite cross pool. Last year's runners-up Saurashtra are expected to go past Andhra, having shown solid form in the league stage to finish with three wins, four draws and a loss from eight games.

Seasoned pacer Jaydev Unadkat will be expected to fire once again, having taken 51 wickets this season at an average off 11.90, continuing his stellar form from last season. In the batting department, Sheldon Jackson has stepped up in the absence of Cheteshwar Pujara and is the leading scorer of the team with 605 runs at an average of 55. Andhra go into the game after back-



to-back losses towards the end of the league stage. However, their rampaging run in the first half of the season, when they were leading the table, helped them

advance in the competition. They will rely a lot on in-form medium-pacer K V Sankaranarayanan and batsman Ricky Bhui in the must-win game.

In Jammu, the mighty Karnataka take on the spirited bunch of J&K players. Karnataka finished third in the elite pool behind Gujarat and Bengal and scripted important wins over Tamil Nadu and Mumbai.

They play Group C top-toppers J&K, who lost only to Haryana in the league stage. Captain Parvez Rasool has led from the front scoring 403 runs at 44.77 and 25 wickets at 14.56. Another player who has contributed massively to the success of the team is batsman Abdul Samad who has amassed 547 runs.

In Cuttack, a comfortable win is expected from Bengal against Odisha. Their confidence must be sky high following memorable victories over Rajasthan and Punjab in the last two

games. They chased down 320 against Rajasthan before beating Punjab in a low-scoring game on a difficult track in Patiala.

The seasoned Manoj Tiwari has been their go-to batsman and left-arm spinner Shahbah Ahmed their stand out bowler. At the Sardar Patel Stadium in Valsad, hosts Gujarat would be overwhelming favourites against Goa who advanced from plate group having suffered relegation last year.

Gujarat made it to the last eight after topping the elite cross pool with five wins from eight matches and three draws.

Goa will have their hopes pinned on their leading run-scorer Amit Verma (791 runs) and S K Patel (751 runs) and would want them to play another crucial knocks in the marquee clash. But the quarterfinal will be a different ball game as they face a formidable Gujarat attack led by Roosh Kalaria, who has taken 30 wickets so far.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's Ashu and Aditya Kundu

I won a bronze medal each in 67kg and 72kg Greco-Roman category respectively on the second day of the Asian Wrestling Championships here on Wednesday.

Ashu beat Syria's Abdulkarim Mohammad Al-Hasan 8-1 while Kundu defeated Nao Kusaka of Japan 8-0 inside one and a half minutes in a lop-sided 72kg Bronze medal bout.

India has so far won four

Ashu, Aditya win Bronze



medals in the championships, after Sunil Kumar's historic Gold in 87kg and Arjun Halakurki's Bronze

in 55kg Greco-Roman category on Tuesday.

Gyanender, however, lost 0-6 in the 60kg Greco-Roman Bronze medal bout on Wednesday. The gold was won by Kenichiro Fumita of Japan, who beat Kyrgyzstan's Zholaman Sharshenkov 4-0.

The other Bronze in 60kg was won by Mehdi Seifollah Mohsen Nejad who beat Kazakhstan's Aidos Sultangali 4-3.

Poker majorly is game of skill

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The game of poker is majorly a game of skill which decides the winner says India Poker Championship 2020 winner Ruben Labroo, who won this year's championship which took place at Big Daddy Casino in Goa last month.

"Technically Poker is a mind game played with a lot of strategies. Obviously, luck is involved but a lot of it can be beaten by your skills and how good you understand how the game is. It's a very strategically motivated game," says Ruben who was introduced to the sport during his college days back in 2006.

Talking about the skills involved, he said: "It's a long term game and the result doesn't depend on what happens in one game."

"On a given day one might beat me but on the long term you will not be able to do so, that's the idea of a game. It's long term strategy you put in volume, numbers and over a period of time. If your math is strong and you are strategically better you will definitely beat the odds."

"In terms of skills edge, there is a lot of maths involved, selling and buying courses. There's a lot of studies involved, people study online, live and



books written on this and it's basically a statistical probability game. And also there is a lot of live tells that you can pick up on the table. Different kind of people drop hints via hand movements and this all understanding will come with experience.

The 2020 edition was his second appearance in the IPC and speaking about the experience of playing in it, he said: "I was playing in some other tournament before the IPC and was not in good touch, so I booked my ticket back home and decided to skip the event. But then on my friends' insistence, I decided to play and I am glad that I stayed back and won the tournament," he said.

Gunathilaka out of Windies ODIs

AFP ■ COLOMBO

All-rounder Danushka Gunathilaka will miss the three-match one-day international series against the West Indies due to injury, the cricket board said Wednesday.

The 28-year-old was excluded from the 15-member squad as a recurring back injury had worsened, a board official said.

He is replaced by Shehan Jayasuriya. The first ODI is on Saturday in Colombo, while the second takes place in Hambantota on February 26.

The final will be held on March 1 in Kandy. After the ODI series the sides will play two Twenty20 matches.

Squad: Dimuth Karunaratne (c), Avishka Fernando, Kusal Perera, Shehan Jayasuriya, Niroshan Dickwella, Kusal Mendis, Angelo Mathews, Dhananjaya de Silva, Thisara Perera, Dasun Shanaka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Lakshan Sandakan, Isuru Udana, Nuwan Pradeep and Lahiru Kumara.

Saina advances to 2nd round but Prannoy loses

PTI ■ BARCELONA

India's Olympic Bronze medalist shuttler Saina Nehwal advanced to the women's singles second round of the \$170,000 Barcelona Spain Masters with a 21-16, 21-14 win over Germany's Yvonne Li here on Wednesday.

Sania took just 35 minutes to beat her opponent in the first round match.

Pranaav Jerry Chopra and Sikki N Reddy also won their mixed doubles first round match against Denmark's Mathias Christiansen and



Alexandra Boje 10-21, 21-16, 21-17. However, H S Prannoy lost to Malaysian Daren Liew 18-21, 15-21 to bow out of the tournament.

Kenin loses to Rybakina on WTA return

AFP ■ DUBAI

Sofia Kenin lost her first SWTA match since winning the Australian Open earlier this month as she went down 6-7 (2/7), 6-3, 6-3 to Elena Rybakina on Tuesday at the Dubai Championships.

American Kenin played a pair of non-Tour Fed Cup matches immediately after her Melbourne win over Garbine Muguruza, who cut short Kim Clijsters' comeback on Monday.

The 21-year-old went down in just over two hours to her 19th-ranked opponent who stood 192nd in the world a year ago.

"There's a bit more pressure coming from my side



(after first Grand Slam win). But I've just got to try to manage it for the next tournaments," said Kenin. "I just didn't feel my game really well. I just made too many unforced errors, I didn't take my chances. I felt really off the whole match."



We can put any team under pressure: Harman

PTI ■ SYDNEY

India captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Wednesday said her team has the ability to put pressure on any side in the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup if it stays in the right frame of mind.

Insisting that positivity is the biggest strength of this Indian team, Harmanpreet said they are eagerly waiting to face four-time champions and title holders Australia in the tournament opener tomorrow.

"The nerves do start to kick in because we are very excited about that opening game and we're looking positive in that," said Harmanpreet, who knows the city well after her stint with Sydney Thunder in the Women's Big Bash League.

"We are a side that can put pressure on any team, we just look to stay in the right mindset and play in the way we can because that is our biggest strength."

"In sport, sometimes you are in good form and others you are not. I know that everyone playing in this tournament will look to be positive, and that is good for our team," she added.

With less than two days remaining for their clash against Australia at the Sydney Showground, Harmanpreet said a slow track and a huge Indian diaspora augurs well for her side.

Kenin loses to Rybakina on WTA return

Kazakh Rybakina won the Hobart title in January and reached the final last weekend in St Petersburg.

"I prepared with good practice. I didn't expect that I would win. I tried to do my best," she said.

"I wasn't nervous (after flying here from Russia) at all because I knew it's going to be tough."

"I didn't think about that she just won the Australian Open, I know that now everyone can beat everyone," she added.

Seventh seed Aryna Sabalenka set up a potential quarter-final clash with world number two Simona Halep after seeing off Greek Maria Sakkari 6-2, 4-6, 6-1.

Ishant, Shaw to play in 1st Test

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

India captain Virat Kohli on Wednesday dropped enough hints to indicate that seniormost pacer Ishant Sharma and young opener Prithvi Shaw will be in the playing XI for the first Test against New Zealand at Basin Reserve.

If India's net session on Wednesday is taken into consideration, Wriddhiman Saha is starting as the wicketkeeper ahead of Rishabh Pant for the series opener beginning tomorrow.

Hanuma Vihari, team's designated No 6 batsman for away Tests, will be the fifth bowling option with Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and Ishant being three specialist pacers.

Ravichandran Ashwin is in the mix for the lone specialist spinner's spot though Ravindra Jadeja's all-round skills can't be ignored either. Ishant, who was out for three weeks with ankle injury sustained during the Ranji Trophy game, bowled full tilt at the nets and even earned appreciation for troubling batsmen with his pace and bounce.

"He (Ishant) looked pretty normal and pretty similar to what he was bowling before the ankle injury. He is hitting good areas again and he has played (Test cricket) in New Zealand couple of times, so his



Prithvi Shaw and Mohammad Shami share a fun moment during India's practice session ahead of 1st Test BCCI/Twitter

experience will be useful to us. It was really good to see him bowling with pace and in good areas," Kohli said during media interaction.

The skipper also said in as many words that the team wouldn't like to change Shaw's natural stroke-play which was a good enough hint that Shubman Gill will have to warm the benches for now.

"Prithvi is a talented player and he has his own game and we want him to follow his instincts and play the way he does. Look, these guys have no baggage and are not desperate

to perform in any manner," the skipper said.

The skipper wants Shaw to take a leaf out of Mayank Agarwal's performance in Australia back in 2018-19 when he hit back to back half-centuries in Melbourne and Sydney.

"They don't have any nerves to do well overseas. Like a clear head with which Mayank played in Australia, Prithvi can do the same in New Zealand.

"A bunch of guys playing with fearlessness, something that can motivate the whole

team, gives us start that the team wants and not get intimidated by the opposition in any way."

The skipper downplayed India's below-par show in the three-match ODI series, especially that of Agarwal.

"Prithvi, I think you can call him relatively inexperienced and Mayank, I wouldn't call him that inexperienced because he has scored a lot of runs last year. So he understands what his game is like in Test cricket.

"I think sometimes in white ball cricket we try to do

too much but once you come into red ball cricket, you fall into that disciplined mode of batting, which obviously suits him much more at this stage."

While he didn't give an answer on the Saha-Pant debate, the burly Delhi keeper had precious little to do at the main nets and was seen spending more time doing his keeping drills and only got an opportunity to bat when the first team completed its routines.

New Zealand are likely to go with an all-pace attack but the Indian captain wants to stick to his team's strengths which is play with one spinner in the four-pronged bowling attack.

"If it had been a Johannesburg pitch, I could have said it's a possibility (to play four pacers) but our team has that skill that we can bowl out other teams with only three fast bowlers," he sounded confident.

"But you need one world class skillful spinner, who can take wickets on any pitch. We won't copy the home team. We would rather figure out what is the most lethal combination, which gives us balance," he added.

"As a bowling group it's better than the one that came to NZ last time and that is why we have got so many teams all out in last two and half years. We would like to repeat that here also," Kohli added.

Will play all formats for at least 3 more years: Kohli



Virat Kohli attempts to take catch during India's practice session ahead of 1st Test BCCI

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

India captain Virat Kohli is preparing himself for a "rigorous three years" of playing all three formats after which he might reassess his workload amid a "transition phase" setting in.

The world's premier batsman is looking at the "bigger picture" in Indian cricket with two T20 and one 50-over World Cup in the next three years after which he might decide on playing two of the three formats.

"My mindset is on the bigger picture as I prepare myself for a rigorous three years from now and after that we might have a different conversation," Kohli replied when asked if he is having second thoughts about quitting at least one format after the 2021 World T20 in India.

"It's not a conversation you can hide away from in any manner. It is around eight years now that I have been playing 300 days a year, which includes travelling and practice sessions. And intensity is right up there all the time. It does take a toll on you," the Indian captain was forthright in his reply.

The skipper understands his presence and peak performance is crucial till the 2023 World Cup after which he understands that the next phase of transition will set in.

"I can keep going on with the same intensity and also understand that the team wants a lot of my contribution in the next two to three years, so that I can ease into another transition that we faced five-six years ago," he said referring to the retirements of Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman.



Indian pacers Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma & Mohammad Shami during nets BCCI

Ishant adds new dynamic to Indian bowling attack: Taylor

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

A fit-again Ishant Sharma will add a fresh dimension to India's bowling attack, says seasoned New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor, who foresees trouble for his team if it focusses only on tackling Jasprit Bumrah during the upcoming Test series.

Taylor is only two days away from becoming the first cricketer to play 100 games across formats. Less than three weeks away from his 36th birthday, he has already competed in 231 ODIs and 100 T20s.

"I think if we just look at

Bumrah, we are in trouble. I think their whole bowling line-up is fantastic. Obviously, Sharma coming back will bring new dynamics to the team," Taylor told reporters.

Ishant is returning to the Indian squad after recovering from an ankle injury sustained during a Ranji Trophy clash last month.

"They have got a world-class batting line-up as well and we have to get through that. But they are the No 1 team in the world for a reason and we know we have to be on our game to be successful against them," he added.

HENRY CALLED AS WAGNER'S COVER

WELLINGTON: New Zealand on Wednesday called in pacer Matt Henry for the first Test against India as cover for Neil Wagner, who is awaiting the birth of his first child.

Wagner is among New Zealand's senior pacers alongside Trent Boult and Tim Southee. The left-arm fast bowler has an impressive record in Tests, having taken 204 wickets in 47 games at an average of 26.63.

"Neil Wagner will not be joining the squad in Wellington ahead of the first Test as he and his wife Lana await the birth of their first child. Wagner will remain in Tauranga until the birth. Matt Henry joins the squad tonight as cover," the Black Caps tweeted.

Though Kyle Jamieson is in line to make a Test debut, Henry, who has played 12 Tests and 52 ODIs, is also in the mix.

Test C'ship pinnacle of all ICC tourneys

WELLINGTON: India captain Virat Kohli on Wednesday rated the World Test Championship as the biggest among all the ICC events in the wake of revelations that the game's governing body is planning to have more flagship white ball tournaments during the next eight-year cycle from 2023-2031.

According to ICC's proposed 2023-2031 Future Tours Programme (FTP) cycle, a proposed T20 Champions

Cup is earmarked for 2024 and 2028 and an ODI Champions Cup in 2025 and 2029, alongside the T20 World Cups in 2026 and 2030, and the ODI World Cups in 2027 and 2031.

"I think World Test Championship as an ICC tournament should be right up there. All the other tournaments for me they start under that. This is probably the biggest of them all as every team wants to make it to the final at the

Lord's. We are no different.

"We are in that zone. We want to make sure that we qualify as soon as we can and be in that frame of mind to hopefully win that (championship)," said the Indian skipper ahead of first Test against New Zealand.

Kohli has no doubts that World Test Championship has added a context to the traditional format making the contests more exciting with points

on offer.

"It has made Test cricket more exciting and that's something we have experienced as a side although we haven't had too many games away from home. Couple of games in the West Indies and we haven't had a tour of Australia as a part of Test Championship. This is our first away tour since the start of home season," said Kohli.



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