

**OPINION 8**  
A CONSTITUTION  
NOT SO FRAGILE

**WORLD 12**  
TURMOIL IN MALAYSIA AS  
PM MAHATHIR RESIGNS

**SPORT 15**  
NEW ZEALAND BEAT  
INDIA BY 10 WICKETS

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## India natural anti-terror ally: Trump US Prez lauds India for unity in religious diversity



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump during the Namaste Trump event at Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad Monday

PNS/AGENCIES ■ AHMEDABAD

India and the US are natural partners and both the countries are committed to defend their people from radical Islamic terrorism. This was the focal point of visiting US President Donald Trump's riveting speech made before a capacity crowd at Motera stadium here on Monday. The crowd erupted in a thundering applause when the US President said his country "loves India and its people."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who spoke both before and after the US President, hailed Trump's visit as a "new

chapter" in ties between the two countries.

Both the leaders made these points during a public event "Namaste Trump" at the new look Motera stadium shortly after Trump arrived here to commence his two-day visit to India. He was accompanied by his wife Melania, daughter Ivanka, son-in-law Jared Kushner and top brass of his administration.

Modi and Trump will hold talks in New Delhi on Tuesday wherein the two countries will ink a \$3 billion defence deal for 24 Naval multi-role helicopters and six Apache attack helicopters for the Army. While

the Naval helicopter deal is about \$2.6 billion, the Apache contract is over \$980 million. Trump announced in his speech here about the two deals. The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) headed by Prime Minister Modi had cleared the two defence deals last week.

While the chemistry between Modi and Trump was fully evident as the two leaders shared many hugs and heaped praise on each other in front of 1,00,000-strong enthusiastic crowd, the traditional and colourful welcome left the US President impressed.

"Five months ago, the US

welcomed your PM at a giant football stadium, and you welcomed us at the world's largest cricket stadium. Thank you for spectacular welcome. We will always remember this remarkable hospitality," Trump said.

Known for his fondness to tweet, Trump earlier took to Twitter and tweeted messages in Hindi, including one expressing eagerness to visit India, to which Modi responded by tweeting the Sanskrit phrase, "Atithi Devo Bhava (guest is god)".

Talking about India's rich culture and extraordinary diversity repeatedly, Trump said India is always admired

around the world as the place where millions of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Christians and Jews worship side by side in harmony as it has great tradition of embracing individual freedom, rule of law, dignity of every human being.

"The First Lady and I have travelled 8,000 mile around the globe to deliver the message to all citizens across this nation — America loves India, America respects India, and America will always be a faithful and loyal friend to the Indian people," Trump said.

During his nearly 30 minutes long speech, Trump also said, "While our nations have many differences, they are both defined and propelled by a fundamental truth — the truth that all of us are blessed with divine light and every person is endowed with a sacred soul" and quoted Swami Vivekanand.

On his maiden visit to India as the US President, Trump, who was welcomed by Modi on his arrival here, said his country will remain a "loyal" friend of India and called Prime Minister Modi an "exceptional leader" who works day and night for the country.

"India and the US are committed to fight terrorists and their ideology; that is why my Government is working with Pakistan to crack down on terror groups," the US President said.

"Under my Administration we unleashed the full power of the military on blood-thirsty killers of ISIS in Iraq and in Syria. Today the ISIS territorial caliphate has been 100 per cent destroyed and the monster known as Al-Baghdadi, the founder and leader of ISIS, is dead," he said.

Continued on Page 7

## Cop, 4 men killed in riots over CAA



Protesters hurl stones during clashes between a group of anti-CAA protesters and supporters of the new citizenship act, at Jaipur in North-East Delhi on Monday

### DCP among 10 policemen hurt in Maujpur

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi Police Head Constable and four civilians were killed while several police personnel, including the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) and Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), were injured after pro and anti-Citizen Amendment Act (CAA) groups clashed for the second consecutive day on Monday and hurled stones at each other at Gokulpuri, Chanbagh and Maujpur areas.

Violence between groups supporting and opposing the CAA was also reported in the Jafrabad and Bhajanpura areas. A youth also opened eight rounds of fire in the air on the streets on Monday afternoon in the Maujpur while the police tried to control him. The man, identified as Shahrugh from Shadara, was arrested later in the day.

Police fired tear gas shells and also resorted to lathi charge to disperse the violent crowd of protesters.

Following the violence, the Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik also stationed himself in the police control room (PCR) and closely monitored the situation. The police have also imposed section 144



An undated image of Head Constable Ratan Lal, who died in a clash over the CAA in Maujpur on Monday

of the CrPC, which prohibits assembly of four or more people, in areas affected by violence in northeast Delhi.

There was heavy stone pelting in Maujpur, while police baton-charged to disperse protesters in Jafrabad. Shops and houses were vandalised and set on fire in Maujpur and Bhajanpura. Amit Sharma, the DCP Shahdara, official vehicle was also set on fire in Gokulpuri while a petrol pump was put on fire by the protesters at Bhajanpura. This is the second day of clashes in the city where US President Donald Trump will arrive on Monday evening.

Meanwhile, sources in the Central security agencies hinted that riots were orchestrated by certain elements to malign the image of the country during the Trump visit. In the evening, Minister of

State for Home Affairs, G Kishan Reddy condemned the attack by rioters. "My deepest condolences to the family of the Delhi Police Head Constable who lost his life amidst the protests in Delhi. Our Narendra Modi government condemns all forms of violence and we assure a stern action against the culprits," he tweeted.

Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla said the situation is fully under control and sufficient forces were deployed on the ground. "The situation in Delhi is fully under control. The senior police officials are on the ground and sufficient forces are also deployed at the spot," said Bhalla.

"Armed police personnel have been deployed at strategic points. Areas with history of past clashes such as Jafrabad, Seelampur, Maujpur, Gautampuri, Bhajanpura, Chand Bagh, Mustafabad, Wazirabad and Shiv Vihar, are being monitored to maintain law and order situation," said Alok Kumar, the Joint Commissioner of Police, Eastern Range.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Metro closed entry and exit an uneasy calm prevailed in the Northeast areas. "Entry & exit gates of Jafrabad, Maujpur-Babarpur, Gokulpuri, Johri Enclave and Shiv Vihar are closed. Trains will terminate at Welcome metro station," the DMRC tweeted.

Continued on Page 7

**The life of Prime Minister Modi underscores the limitless promise of this great nation. He started out by his father's side as a chai-wallah... Prime Minister Modi, you are not just the pride of Gujarat. You are a living proof that with hard work and devotion Indians can accomplish anything, anything at all, anything they want —**

DONALD TRUMP

America's commitment to defeating terrorism and the leadership of President Trump has served humanity and, therefore, I believe that a special leader like President Trump and a special friend of India coming to India at the beginning of this decade is a big occasion... his visit to this country has created a "new history" in Indo-US relations  
Narendra Modi

## Taj Mahal inspires awe: POTUS

PTI ■ AGRA

Walking hand-in-hand, US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump on Monday evening went around the iconic Taj Mahal, hailing the 17th century Mughal-era mausoleum as a "timeless testament" to the rich and diverse beauty of Indian culture.

The American power couple spent almost an hour at the Taj Mahal, soaking in the beauty of the monument of love, and were briefed about the history and traditions associated with architectural marvel. "The Taj Mahal inspires awe. A timeless testament to the rich and diverse beauty of Indian culture! Thank you India," Trump and Melania wrote on the visitor's book.

Trump, accompanied by his wife, daughter Ivanka and son-in-law Jared Kushner,

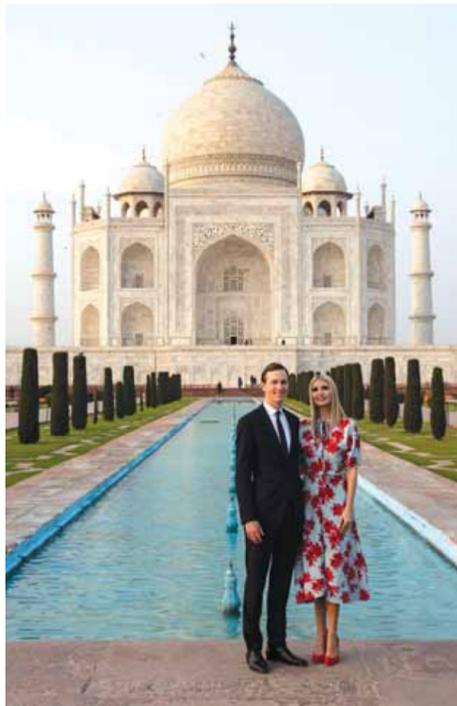
arrived here from Ahmedabad where they attended the 'Namaste Trump' event at the Motera stadium.

The Taj Mahal, which was built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal who died in 1631, was refurbished for the visit.

Holding hands, the couple took a stroll in the resplendent gardens adjoining the pool at the celebrated monument, as a cool breeze made their experience even more pleasant.

Trump, dressed in a dark suit with a tie of light shade, and Melania, wearing a white dress accessorised with a green waistband, also posed for photographs. Ivanka, wearing a white dress with red floral prints and red shoes, and Kushner, dressed in a sharp suit, took a stroll hand-in-hand around the monument.

Continued on Page 7



US President Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka Trump with her husband and White House Senior Adviser Jared Kushner at the Taj Mahal in Agra on Monday

### SALIENT TAKEAWAYS

- 3 wise monkeys, charkha gifted to Trump, Melania at Sabarmati Ashram
- Trump celebrates 'genius' of Bollywood, remembers 'DDLJ' and 'Sholay'
- Modi, Trump to hold extensive talks on Tuesday to expand Indo-US global partnership
- US President accorded traditional welcome at ITC Maurya Hotel in Delhi on Monday evening
- Melania Trump to witness 'happiness curriculum' at Delhi school, interact with students today
- Former PM Manmohan Singh, Cong leaders to skip President's banquet in Trump's honour

## Global mkts down with coronavirus

Sensex sinks 807 pts

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI

World stock markets, including Indian indices, and oil prices tumbled on Monday with Milan and Seoul falling hardest on growing fears of a coronavirus pandemic, as gold hit a seven-year peak on safe-haven buying, dealers said.

Wall Street stocks plunged in early trading on Monday, joining a global equity selloff on mounting worries that the spread of the new coronavirus will derail global growth. About 10 minutes into trading, the benchmark Dow Jones Industrial Average stood at 28,191.85, down 2.8 per cent or around 800 points. The broad-based S&P 500 dove 2.6 per cent to 3,252.23, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index sank 3.1 per cent to 9,282.16.

Losses were widespread with the technology, financial and energy sectors all down significantly as news of the infections in Europe, West Asia and Southeast Asia triggered more drastic efforts to stop people from travelling.

"There is burgeoning fear that the shutdown effect that has hit China's economy is



Specialist Peter Mazza, left, works with traders at New York Stock Exchange on Monday

going to take over elsewhere, dealing another blow to global growth, and earnings growth, prospects," said Briefing.Com analyst Patrick O'Hare.

Indian stock benchmark Sensex on Monday sank nearly 807 points, the second biggest single-day fall this year, tracking sell-offs in global markets as coronavirus cases rose exponentially outside China.

Starting off on a weaker note, the BSE gauge plunged to a day's low of 40,306.36 after being caught in a panic selling as investors kept fretting over reporting of a large number of new virus cases in South Korea, Italy and Iran.

Continued on Page 7

## Sunni Waqf Board to build mosque, hospital on 5-acre land

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

UP Sunni Central Waqf Board decided to accept the five acres of land offered to construct a mosque after the Supreme Court verdict of November 9, 2019.

A charitable hospital, public library and Indo-Islamic cultural centre would also be constructed at the site. Six of the eight members were present at a crucial meeting on Monday, even as two members — Imran Mabood and Adul Razzaq, chose to boycott it.

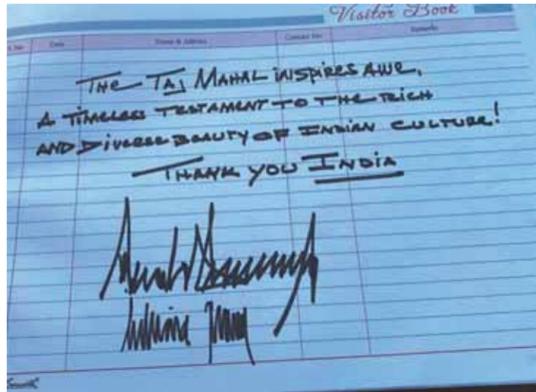
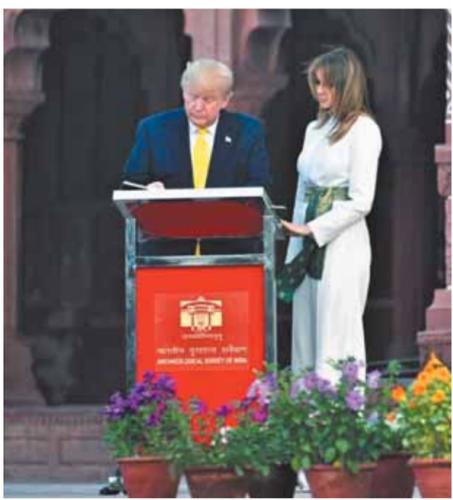
The land was given to Sunni Waqf Board as per the Supreme Court verdict to compensate for the demolished Babri mosque at Ayodhya. The Board also decided to set up a trust for the construction of the mosque.

The Sunni Waqf Board was the main litigant from Muslim side in Ram Janma bhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute title suit. A Board team had visited the alternate land last week. Chairman of UP Sunni Central Waqf Board Zulfar Farooqui said, "In Monday's

Continued on Page 7



UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath presenting a photograph to US President Donald Trump after the latter's trip to Taj Mahal in Agra on Monday. US First Lady Melania Trump and UP Governor Anandiben Patel are also seen in the picture



(Clockwise from top) Governor Anandiben Patel welcoming US President Donald Trump in Agra; Trump's writing in the visitor's book at the Taj Mahal; Trump's note in the visitor's book; and Donald Trump and his wife Melania Trump being welcomed at Agra airport on Monday

# कार्यालय मुख्य चिकित्सा अधिकारी गोण्डा

पत्रांक-मु0चि0अ0 / रा0मा0स्वा0प्रा0 / अधि0 / 2019-20 / 1822 दिनांक-24.02.2020

## 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 care - givers or non - governmental organizations working in the field of mental health.

By Order,

President

State Mental Health Authority, U.P.

## Opp flays annual budget, says Yogi in self-congratulatory mode

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**  
Opposition parties in UP Assembly trashed the annual budget for the 2020-21 fiscal presented on February 18, accusing the Yogi government of being in 'self-congratulatory mode', claiming that it had presented the biggest-ever budget of over Rs 5 lakh crore.

The opposition said on Monday that the annual hike in the budget was a routine affair and actual achievement lay in utilisation of budgetary grants and the government had singularly failed to spend money on development schemes and projects.

Initiating the general debate on budget, Leader of Opposition Ram Govind Chaudhary said, "There is an atmosphere of fear in the state as the BJP government is aggressively pursuing

divisive politics based on caste and religion. Development works have come to a grinding halt. Even as the government claims to sign MOUs for investments worth lakhs of crores of rupees, nothing is visible on the ground. The government made tall claims that it presented the biggest ever budget akin to claims made during the presentation of 2019-20 budget in February last year."

Chaudhary added, "The claim is fictitious as by adjusting 7.5 percent inflation, the actual budget size has in fact shrunk. Provisions in last budget for new schemes included was over Rs 20,000 crore which has dipped to little above Rs 10,000 crore for 2020-21."

The Leader of Opposition also said that the utilization of budgetary grants in 2019-20 budget was less than

50 percent, yet the government inflated the size of the 2020-21 budget.

"There is no point in expanding size of the budget if the government lacks the resources for financing schemes and the ability and administrative competence to utilize the budget," said the Samajwadi Party leader.

Questioning the efficacy of development schemes of the government, the SP leader said, "The government claims to provide free power and LPG connections to millions of people in the state. But it also hiked power tariff by 27 percent in less than three years. Also, due to economic slowdown and high inflation, very few people are in a position to afford refill of the LPG. Instead of putting money in the pocket of people, the government is in fact extracting it from them."

Chaudhary said that the government's policy of devoting each year's budget for particular sector yielded nothing.

"The first budget of Yogi government in 2017-18, was dedicated to farmers, second for industrial development, third for women empowerment and the fourth and the present one for youth, education and employment. So far no sector has benefitted from the policy," he charged.

The SP leader also said that the haphazard loan waiver scheme for farmers announced in 2017 made little impact and thousands of farmers committed suicide and were still ending their lives.

Leaders of Bahujan Samaj Party and other members also participated in the debate which will continue on Tuesday.



### NOTICE

My house no. 14/606, Sector-14, Indira Nagar, Lucknow (Financed & Purchased from PNB Housing Finance Ltd. Lal bagh Lucknow) Original Allotment letter have been lost. Geeta Devi W/o Shri Manvendra Sharma, 14/606, Indira Nagar, Lucknow.

### NOTICE

I, Nasir Abbas R/o 337/142B, Ahata Burhan Saheb, Saadatganj, Lucknow - 226003, inform that the correct name of my father is Late Nawab Hussain but He was also known by the name Chhote Nawab and both these names are of the same person.

### NOTICE

I, Kamlesh Kukreti, R/o D-3223, Indira Nagar, Lucknow declare the name of my wife Ruchira and son Karun Eipist Kukrety may be read as Ruchira Dobhal and Karun Kukreti vide Aff. No. EZ 969354, dated 24.2.2020

### OBITUARY

#### OBITUARY



**NB SUB RAMAKANT SINGH**  
01 MAR 1978-13 FEB 2020  
ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS SOLEMNLY PRAY TO THE ALMIGHTY TO BESTOW PEACE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL AND GRANT STRENGTH TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY TO BEAR THE GREAT LOSS OF NB SUB RAMAKANT SINGH WHO DIED WHILE SERVING WITH 155 BH.  
FROM : LT GEN NAVDEEP SINGH LAMBA AND ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

## MP, Raj sending stray cattle to UP: Minister

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

Making light of stray cattle menace in Uttar Pradesh, Animal Husbandry Minister Chaudhary Laxmi Narain said that agriculture production in the state had gone up indicating there was no such menace and instead Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan for sending stray cattle into UP.

The issue was raised during Question Hour in Assembly where even members of Treasury Benches joined the opposition in blaming bad upkeep in government-run cow sheds resulting in deaths of bovine.

The issue was raised by Sushma Patel (BSP) wherein she wanted to know as how to many cattle had died in state-run cowsheds. Narain admitted that around 9261 cattle heads died due to natural reasons in shelter homes in 2019. However, the BSP members alleged that the deaths were due to starvation, but the minister denied it saying that the government was paying Rs 30 per day per stray animal and presently around 5.5 lakh such animals were in shelter homes or taken care by villagers.

Leader of the Opposition, Ram Govind Chaudhary said that the problem of stray animal started after the BJP came to power but in response, the minister said that the government protected cows from being sent to slaughter houses.

When Ajay Kumar Lallu (Congress) pointed out that farmers were committing suicide because of stray cattle menace, Narain said that people of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, were sending their stray animals into UP and asked the Congress members to ask their governments to stop it.

Annoyed with the answer, Congress members staged a noisy walkout.

During the debate, Surendra Singh (BJP) said that it was a serious issue and he had seen dogs devouring carcasses of cow. "The government was giving money for fodder but there was no one to take care of these animals and hence, the govern-

**THE ISSUE WAS RAISED BY SUSHMA PATEL (BSP) WHEREIN SHE WANTED TO KNOW AS HOW TO MANY CATTLE HAD DIED IN STATE-RUN COWSHEDS. NARAIN ADMITTED THAT AROUND 9261 CATTLE HEADS DIED DUE TO NATURAL REASONS IN SHELTER HOMES IN 2019**

ment should appoint people who could take care of stray cattle at cowsheds," he said. The minister, however, said that he had no information on this.

### SP WALKOUT

SP members walked out of the House, after Alternative Energy Minister Srikant Sharma could not answer on the subsidy given to consumers for installing a solar panel.

SP member Sanjay Garg alleged that the government was not disclosing the details of subsidy given to consumers for installing solar power units. The Power minister however said that said that the government was providing 75 per cent subsidy to farmers installing solar pump sets below 5 Horse Power (HP) while subsidy was 30 per cent above 5 HP.

Sharma further said that that the government was also providing Rs 15,000 per HP and maximum of Rs 30,000 for roof top solar plant.

The government also claimed that during the three-year-BJP regime, demand of power had spiked by 54 per cent after the government went for a drive to provide power connections in a big way. Not satisfied with the Minister's reply, SP members staged a walk out.

## Aligarh violence rocks both Houses

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

The face-off between anti-CAA protesters and police in Aligarh rocked both the Houses of UP Legislature on Monday with opposition parties demanding a judicial probe claiming that law and order situation was spiraling out of hands in the state.

The issue was first raised during Question Hour in the Assembly and later during Zero Hour in both Houses.

Leader of the Opposition Ram Govind Chaudhary alleged that women were beaten up by the police and in the ensuing firing one person was killed.

"The situation in Aligarh is very tense and innocent people faced harassment of the people," he said.

However, Parliamentary Affairs minister Suresh Kumar Khanna charged the opposition for instigating violence and claimed that there was no deaths during the violence.

"UP government is committed to maintaining law and order and will take action if anyone takes law into their hand and the opposition were just shedding crocodile tears," Khanna added.

Later, SP and Congress members joined the issue demanding a debate.

However on pursuance of Speaker Hriday Narain Dikshit, the opposition agreed to raise the issue during Zero Hour in which Samajwadi Party said that the government had willfully targeted members of a particular community.

"This government does not want people to raise voice against its policies. Poor people are out on the streets against the draconian CAA but this government is hell bent on muzzling voice of dissent," Chaudhary said.

The SP demanded a probe into the matter by the sitting judge of High Court. On the other hand, the Congress demanded a judicial probe into the matter.

The government claimed that the police used restraint and was forced to act when the situation went out of hand.

The Parliamentary Affairs Minister ruled out a probe into the matter after which SP members walked out of the Assembly.

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# 13 SHOs reshuffled, three sent to lines

## Induction of some raises eyebrows

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Struggling to check crime incidents, Commissioner of Police Sajeet Pandey reshuffled 13 inspectors and sent three to Reserve Police Line. However, the induction of new personnel raised eyebrows.

Hazratganj SHO Dheerendra Pratap Kushwaha was sent to Gosanganj in the same capacity, replacing DK Updhyaya, who was appointed as Krishna Nagar SHO.

Crime Branch inspector

Santosh Singh, who was sent to police lines from the post of SHO Madaon during former SSP Lucknow Kalanidhi Naithani's regime, was given the charge as Hazratganj SHO.

Former Alambagh SHO AK Sahi, who is said to have a good rapport with those in power corridors, was appointed as Sarojininagar SHO while former Vibhuti Khand SHO Rajeev Dwivedi was appointed as Alambagh SHO.

There was a mysterious fire at PIC-UP Bhawan when Dwivedi was holding the charge of Vibhuti Khand. Inspector SB Shukla was appointed as Vibhuti Khand SHO.

"Some of the inspectors who were given charge had been involved in controversies

in the past, and had failed miserably in checking the crime. Inspectors should be appointed on the basis of performance, and not on any other criteria," sources said.

They said the list included the names of some of the inspectors who were given marching orders by former SSP Kalanidhi Naithani on the charges of poor style of working and poor supervision. Kshitij Tripathi from Crime Branch was appointed as Chinhat SHO while TP Singh as Jankipuram SHO, Ram Soorat Sonkar as Gomti Nagar Extension SHO and Pramendra Singh as Gomti Nagar SHO.

Former Chinhat and Jankipuram SHOs were sent to police lines.

# Man who duped investors of crores arrested

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A joint team of the cyber crime wing of Special Task Force (STF) and Vibhuti Khand police nabbed a swindler, who had duped several people of huge amount running into several crores in multi-level marketing, from Vibhuti Khand police station area on Monday.

The accused, identified as Mukesh Singh of Sarojini Nagar, was named in a case of fraud registered at the Gomti Nagar police station. He was said to have been absconding.

The team recovered two mobile phones, three ATM cards, 10 cheque books, one laptop, one SUV and other items besides Rs 3,250 in cash. Mukesh owned his crime and disclosed how he forayed into the crime world. He earlier had a PCO in Sarojininagar after he flunked Class X.

He later took to property dealing work and soon struck gold. He set up several real estate companies (Vastum Infraland India Pvt Ltd, Green Care Aggretech, Lucknow Infraction and Lucknow Colonizers etc). He appointed his wife Rinki and his family members as directors in the companies and later opened the offices in Transport Nagar and Vibhuti Khand (Rohtas Summit).

Mukesh roped in Siddharth Upreti, former GM of Hello Ride company, Asif and Ajay Gupta (both team leaders of Shine City) and several others to promote his scheme among the gullible.

To trap the innocents, he offered a profit of Rs 13 per cent per month against the investment and amassed over Rs 200 crore. He purchased 100 bigha land on which he

runs a hatchery, poultry farm and a factory preparing poultry feed.

After the case was registered, he shifted base to New Delhi but fell into the police trap after he visited Lucknow for some work.

Meanwhile, a police team arrested a gun-runner and recovered 11 Munger-made pistols from his possession in Ghazipur police station area on Monday. The accused, identified as Surendra Upadhyay (54) of Sultanpur, was arrested when he was going to Sitapur to deliver the pistol to a customer. He confessed to his crime and disclosed that he had sold over 100 pistols to different customers in Jaunpur, Sultanpur, Sitapur, Hardoi, Barabanki and Lucknow. The police were collecting the names of the persons who purchased the illegal weapons from the accused. He said he sold the pistols at Rs 3,000 each.

## BODY RECOVERED

The body of 19-year-old Arjun (of Chinhat), who fell into Indira Dam under mysterious circumstances on February 18, was recovered from Indira Canal (near Baisingh Kheda culvert) in Nagram on Monday. His father Ayodhya had lodged a missing report on Sunday.

The police said Arjun had gone to meet the contractor for whom he worked. He was clicking a selfie at Indira Dam but lost balance and fell into the canal.

He could not be searched for over five days and his body was found floating in the canal on Monday. The police said the body was sent for autopsy and further investigations were underway.

# Special trains to clear Holi rush

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

To clear extra rush of passengers in view of Holi, Northern Railway will run special trains to various destinations from March 5.

According to an official communiqué, Chandigarh-Gorakhpur Weekly Express (04924) will remain available on Thursdays from March 5 to 12 while Gorakhpur-Chandigarh Weekly Express (04923) on Fridays from March 6 to 13, Ghaziabad-Aligarh MEMU (04442) from March 6 to 10 on daily basis, Aligarh-Ghaziabad MEMU (04441) on Tuesdays from March 6 to 10, Gandhidham-Bhagalpur (09451) on March 6, Bhagalpur-Gandhidham (09452) on March 9, Malda Town-Anand Vihar Terminal (03429) via Sultanpur & Anand Vihar Terminal-Malda Town (03430) via Sultanpur on March 17, 24 & 31, Howrah-Gorakhpur (03033) on March 6, Gorakhpur-Howrah (03034) on March 7, and Howrah-Gorakhpur (03031) on March 8, Gorakhpur-Howrah (03032) on March 10. All these trains will pass via stations under the Lucknow division of Northern Railway.

# Over 10 detained for group clash at Clock Tower

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Thakurganj SHO lodged a case of murderous assault and rioting while armed with weapons against more than ten persons, five of whom were identified by the police, in connection with the group clash at Hussainabad Clock Tower reported on Sunday. The police detained two of the accused while efforts were on to nab the rest.

Thakurganj SHO Pramod Kumar Mishra said advocate Mirza Fazal Ali Beg of Kaiserbagh opened fire on his rival group in which he had a narrow escape as he was moving towards Beg, who was brandishing his pistol at the crime scene where cops were on duty. He added that the police also nabbed Imran Haider of Thakurganj while others fled the scene.

According to the SHO, two groups were fighting when Beg reached the scene and opened fire twice. In police custody,

Imran said that his brother Kamil had a verbal spat with Eraj and few others soon after which Beg and some youths arrived there and opened fire.

On the other hand, Beg said Eraj and his son (on one side) had a brawl with Kamil who called several other youths, including his brother Imran. Beg said someone called him and informed about the fight between the two groups after which he rushed to the scene. He said the groups did not stop fighting and he opened fire in the air to intimidate them. The case file had no mention of any eyewitness account even as the police impounded Beg's pistol. The SHO said the public present there refused to become witnesses fearing backlash from the warring groups.

It may be mentioned that two groups of volunteers present near Hussainabad Clock Tower, where anti-CAA stir has been underway for over a month, had a fierce fight on Sunday evening.



As security was beefed up in Lucknow, police personnel carrying out a march in Aminabad on Monday

Pioneer

**ANDHRA BANK**  
KATSAPRA BRANCH: Katsapra Village, Sahjanwa Tehsil, Gorakhpur-273209 (Telephone No's -0551-2657055)

**POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)**  
RULE 8(1) OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT RULES) 2002

WHEREAS The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Andhra Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) of the Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notice dated 04.12.2019 calling upon the Borrower M/S RAMESHWARI AUTOMOBILES, Prop. Mr. Bikash Gupta S/o Late Adya Prasad, Sahjanwa Highway, H-28, Opp. Indian Oil Petrol Pump, Sahjanwa, Dist-Gorakhpur to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs 16,31,637.63 (Rupees Sixteen Lakhs Thirty One Thousand Six Hundred Thirty Seven and Sixty Three Paise Only) within sixty days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this Nineteen (19th) day of February Month of the year two thousand twenty (2020) (19.02.2020).

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Section 13(8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured asset.

The borrower(s) in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Andhra Bank for the amounts due from the borrower(s) and interest thereon.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

All that part and parcel of the property consisting of - Residential Land and Building (Extent of Site is 1744.00 Sq.ft. or 162.06 Sq.mt) belonging to Mr. Bikash Gupta S/o Late Adya Prasad, Mr. Akash Gupta S/o Late Adya Prasad, Mr. Pintu Gupta S/o Late Muni Lal, Mr. Mukesh Gupta S/o Late Muni Lal (Owners of the Property), situated at Mauja-Paikhnauli, Ward No. 11, Tappa-Gahasar, Pargana-Hasanpur, Maghar, Tehsil-Sahjanwa, Dist-Gorakhpur, Bounded by: North-House of Sri Ram Naval, East-Road (Sahjanwa to Ghaghsara Marg), West-Land of Sri Sanjay Yadav, South-House of Sri Nabiraja.

Place - Katsapra Date 19.02.2020 AUTHORIZED OFFICER, ANDHRA BANK

# Weatherman predicts rains

Lucknow (PNS): The Met department has forecast light rains across the state on Tuesday. There is warning of thunderstorm accompanied by lightning and gusty winds (30-40 kmph) and hail at isolated places over eastern UP.

Met director JP Gupta said similar weather conditions would prevail on Wednesday as well. "There is a cyclonic circulation above eastern UP which is causing these weather conditions," he said. On Monday, the state capital witnessed cloudy weather and light rains in some parts. Lucknow recorded the maximum temperature at 28.2 degree Celsius, which was 0.8 degree above normal. The minimum temperature at 16.2 degree Celsius was 5.1 degrees above normal. The forecast for Lucknow is partly cloudy sky with rains and thunder-shower likely in some areas. The maximum and minimum temperatures are expected to be around 26 degree Celsius and 15 degree Celsius, respectively.

# Conmen posing as cops dupe elderly woman of ornaments

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Two miscreants posing as policemen scolded an elderly woman for wearing gold ornaments and later duped her of the valuables on Monday morning. As per reports, the woman, identified as Sheela Upadhyay of Vishal Khand, was returning home from St Joseph Hospital where she had gone for some work.

When she reached near LDA market, the bike-borne miscreants approached her. "One of them told me that they were policemen. He then said a murder had taken place in the locality and asked me as to why I was wearing gold ornaments. He sternly asked me to put off the ornaments. They took the satchet in which I put my gold ring and gold chain and then returned it to me," she told the police. She said she was asked to leave the spot instantly.

"I reached home feeling nervous and frightened. When I opened the satchet, I found it filled with stones," she told the police. A police spokesman said a case was registered and further investigations were on.

"We have scanned scores of CCTV footages and some images of suspects were obtained. The police are scanning more footages and hopefully, the case will be worked out soon," he said.

## COMPLAINT

Wife of a political party leader and his female friend on Monday lodged complaints at Gomti Nagar police station accusing each other of assault, criminal intimidation and insult. The incident took place on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday. The leader had come to Lucknow from Noida for some work and was staying in his apartment in Gomti Nagar Extension.

In the FIR, the wife of the politician said that she arrived along with her kids around midnight and found another woman leaving the house.

"When I inquired about the purpose of her visit, she started abusing me and later attacked me and my kids. She fell down when I pushed her in self-defence. She then started issuing life threats," the political leader's wife alleged.

However, the other woman alleged that she was just strolling around in the apartment when the politician's wife, accompanied by an aide, assaulted her and used cuss words. She further alleged that she was threatened with rape by the person accompanying her.

Police spokesman Anshuman Singh said they were working on the case. "Both the parties gave complaints against each other but later agreed for negotiations," he added.

# Registration for 327 flats begins

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Registration for 327 flats began on Monday and will continue till March 6. Houses would be allotted through a lottery system to be held in its compound on March 26. The possession will be given within two days after completion of administrative formalities, LDA secretary MP Singh said on Monday.

A rebate of 7 per cent will be given to buyers who make one-time payment. For queries, buyers can contact the secretary on LDA portal.

Singh claimed that a large number of buyers turned up at its head office on the first day to submit application forms for registration. He said that submission of forms and payment would be done online. The aim is to check the buyers from interacting with touts who are often seen moving freely in the compound, he added.

The prices range from Rs

13 lakh to Rs 90 lakh. As many as 177 flats are situated in Gomti Nagar Extension and 150 flats in the Sultanpur Road housing scheme.

RC Mishra, an expert in real estate, said it would evoke good response as the locations of both the sites are good.

The flats were completed in the last week of January but could not be handed over to the property department due to unknown reasons at government level. Now, the flats will be handed over before Holi.

Both the projects are said to be slightly delayed. However, the chief engineer claimed that from now on, no project would be delayed in future as the engineering department would ensure the completion on time.

The chief engineer said that there are about six housing projects under construction and they will be finished and possession will be handed over without any delay.

# Coronavirus scare impacts sale of Chinese goods

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Coronavirus has apparently made a dent in Lucknow markets. According to president of Adarsh Vyapar Mandal Sanjay Gupta, business worth Rs 100 crore has been affected because of the coronavirus scare and there has been a slump in the sales of Chinese goods in Lucknow.

He said that the items of wholesale have been impacted as have other goods coming from China like furniture, chandeliers, electronics, bike spare parts, mats, toys, pen drives, memory cards etc.

"The combination of government restrictions on getting goods from China, traders' reluctance for these goods and panic among people has resulted in the slump," he reasoned.

He said that the Chinese goods are cheap and hence witness a good sale among the customers. "The production of

these goods have never been great in India and despite the fact that there are occasional outbursts of nationalism, we have failed to be able to produce goods which can replace the Chinese ones," he added.

He admitted that the most affected would be the mobile users who opt for affordable devices from China. When asked as to who would benefit by this slump, he said since these goods were largely imported, it would help the country in saving foreign currency.

एनीमिया मुक्त भारत

10 से 19 साल किशोर और किशोरियों वाहिए स्वस्थ शरीर और तेज़ दिमाग?

सुरक्षित मातृत्व, स्वस्थ शिशु, खुराकाल बचपन, स्फूर्तिवान किशोर, नियोजित परिवार, सम्मानित वृद्ध

आयर्जन युक्त आहार

खाणे में लें

आई.एफ.ए. साथ में एक नीली गोली हर हफ्ते

विटामिन-सी युक्त आहार

एल्बेन्डाजोल

पेट के कीड़े मिटाए एक गोली साल में दो बार

यदि बकान महसूस हो, काम न लगे, ज़रूरी बातें या सांस फूलने लगे तो नज़दीकी स्वास्थ्य केंद्र में जाकर एनीमिया की जाँच करवाएँ एवं उपचार लें।

आई.एफ.ए. व एल्बेन्डाजोल की गोली सरकारी रूक़ों और ऑनलाइन से नि:शुल्क प्राप्त करें।

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विक्रिया, स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश - टोल फ्री नं: 1800-180-5145 / राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन, उत्तर प्रदेश - टोल फ्री नं: 1800-180-1900

# 'Avadh Ke Ram' shows secular aspects

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Urdu play 'Avadh Ke Ram' was staged at Sant Gadge Auditorium on Monday with the support of Institute of Human Resources, Research and Development Society and UP Urdu Academy.

The play highlighting the secular aspects of Lakhnawi culture traced all the anecdotes connected with communal harmony over a period of 7,000 years and the contribution made by the Muslim community in the worship and honour of Lord Ram. The story revolved around the Nawabs of Lucknow and their healthy respect for Hindu religion.

The play brought forth the contribution of Nawab Safdarjung who gave special grants for Hindu temples, Nawab Shuja-ud-Daulah who gave the land for Hanuman Garhi on which the temple of Aliganj was made.

The play also brought forth the contribution of Nawab Asaf-ud-Daulah who gave grants to the temple and alms to all the members of the community. While Nawab Asaf-ud-Daulah gave land for Ramlika, it was Nawab Wajid Ali Shah who started the tradition of lighting of firecrackers on the occasion of Diwali. Wajid Ali Shah was one of the Nawabs who celebrated Diwali and Janmashtami with a lot of fervour and enthusiasm.

The play touched upon the incidents wherein the outsiders had made several attempts to cre-



A scene from play titled 'Avadh Ke Ram', which was staged on Monday Pioneer

ate disharmony among the communities but they understood the manipulations and continued to live in harmony.

The play was written by SN Lal, directed by Nawab Masood Abdullah & SN Lal, and conceptualised by Nawab Jafar Mir Abdullah.

According to the director, cer-

tain little known aspects of ancient history have been highlighted in the play such as naming of a town as 'Laxmanpur' by Lord Ram in honour of his younger brother.

"Facts and circumstances attending the authorship of Ramayan by Maharishi Valmiki, conditions under which Tulsidas's Ramayana was written and

Ramcharitmanas in dohas. During intermissions, the audience were informed about the manner in which different stages of the glorious history were interconnected," Abdullah said.

During the function, the Nishan-e-Urdu awards were given away to several persons for their contributions in respective fields

— such as Dr Surya Kant, Shashank Srivastava, Hasan Rizvi, Dr Anwar Rizvi, Wamiq Khan, Dr Talat Rizvi, Alok Raja, Prof Abbas Raza Nayyar and Sunita Verma. The awards were given away by Justice Shahibul Hasnain and Prof Mahrukh Mirza, Vice-Chancellor of KMC Urdu-Farsi-Arabi University.

## Night traffic management in Lucknow

Lucknow (PNS): The Traffic department has begun night-time management at ten locations of the city. Additional DCP (Traffic) Suresh Chandra Rawat said that night management of traffic has begun in the city for the first time.

He said it is important in view of the fact that after the 'no entry' is opened, a large number of big vehicles enter the city and create snarls at various points. "The load of traffic increases when 'no entry' is cleared. Shaheed Path is one point where traffic snarls occur and even if one car is trapped, it results in a major problem. After we started the night management of traffic, we are getting fewer calls," he said.

He said the duties are from 10 pm to 7 am and the points where night management is being carried out are Transport Nagar, Shaheed Path, Kanpur road, Dubagga tri-crossing, Munshipulia crossing, IIM Bithauli tri-crossing, Ahimamau underpass, Polytechnic crossing, Hazratganj crossing, Khurram Nagar crossing, Tedhipulia crossing, Kanta crossing, Nadarganj tri-crossing and Bara Birwa tri-crossing.

He pointed out that with the start of the commission-erate system, they have got over 350 constables and 50 sub-inspectors who have been deployed at various points in the city and will be used in traffic management.

## Members of Congress Labour Cell protests in support of MDM cooks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Labour Cell of Uttar Pradesh Congress attempted to take out a march and gherao the Chief Minister's office in support of demands of mid-day meal cooks on Monday afternoon, but were restrained along with hundreds of cooks inside the Congress headquarters at Mall Avenue. The agitators later handed over a memorandum to the officials present there.

Chairman of UPCC Labour Cell Irshad Ali, who handed over the memorandum to Lucknow administration, said on Monday that several women have been engaged as cooks in primary schools to prepare meal and serve to children under the Mid-Day Meal scheme.

Ali said that these cooks were given honorarium which helped the poor women to run their households. He claimed that since the BJP came to power, the government started harassing these cooks and forced a lone cook to prepare food for 50 or more children.

"Despite the hardships, these women continued to do their jobs. But with the government deciding to outsource mid-day meal preparation to private and specialised agencies owning modern kitchens, adversely affected the future of these women who were set to lose their jobs," he said.

The Congress leader further said that the cooks were not the only ones losing jobs, but youths and professionals have lost employment in

big number under the present BJP regime.

To highlight these issues, hundreds of cooks and labourers were called to UPCC office on Monday and it was decided that a march would be taken out and the CM's office would be gheraoed to draw attention.

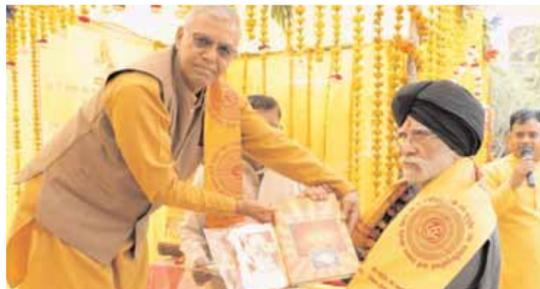
"However, the district administration forcibly confined Congress workers and cooks inside the party office campus and instead asked to submit a memorandum. The officers assured that necessary action would be taken," the Congress leader said.

Ali threatened that if the government failed to take a favourable decision, then the Congress workers and leaders would take to the streets and gherao the Assembly soon.

**उपग्रह पारदर्शिता कार्यक्रम**  
**UPP** लि. शुद्धि पत्र, इस कार्यालय द्वारा आमंत्रित निविदा संख्या 149, 155 एवं 156/विभाग/गोष्ठा/2019-20 के सम्बन्ध में निम्न शुद्धि पत्र जारी किया जाता है। निविदा संख्या 149, 155 एवं 156/विभाग/गोष्ठा/2019-20 के खुलने की तिथि विस्तारित कर दी गयी है। अब यह निविदा दिनांक 02.03.2020 को 14.00 बजे तक अपलोड एवं स्वीकार की जायेगी एवं दिनांक 02.03.2020 को 15.00 बजे सार्वजनिक रूप से खोली जायेगी। निविदा की अन्य नियम व शर्तें अद्यतन रहेंगी। निविदा के अन्य विवरण [www.etender.up.nic.in](http://www.etender.up.nic.in) पर देखे जा सकते हैं। **अधिकांश अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारिषद मण्डल, 220 कैंपेथी उपकेंद्र परिसर जेल रोड, गोष्ठा। संचयन : 2873/विभाग/गोष्ठा/2019-20 दिनांक 24.02.2020 "राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचाय, साधारण बल के स्थान पर एल.ई.डी. बल्ब का प्रयोग करें"**

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## CITYBRIEFS



**KRIPAL SINGH ABBOTT HONOURED**  
 A special yagya to preserve environment was organised by Samar Vihar Yagya Samiti at Sadbhavana Park in the colony. Residents, including members of all

communities, took part in the programme with enthusiasm. On the occasion, secretary of Gayatri Parivaar Dr Shukla honoured Kripal Singh Abbott for conducting the programme smoothly and successfully. Corporator Girish Mishra was also

honoured.

## ONE YEAR IN OFFICE

Vice-Chancellor of BBAU Acharya Sanjay completed one year in office on Monday. About the achievements of the VC in the last one year, media spokesperson Rachna Gangwar said that he signed various MoUs with five leading institutions of the country. "UIET, which was a self-financed course, has now become a regular course, and for this the university has received approval for 16 posts, which is a major achievement for the university, and the credit goes to the VC. BBAU has established a cell related to innovation, incubation and start-up. A roadmap to construct 2 new hostels and improve the basic facilities of the university has also been prepared," he added.

## Criminal carrying ₹1.5 crore reward killed in encounter

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Slueths of Special Task Force (STF) claimed to have eliminated a hardened criminal carrying a reward of Rs 1.5 lakh during an encounter in Suhela village in Basti in the early hours of Monday. However, one of the aides of the slain criminal managed to escape. Slain gangster Feroz Pathan was wanted in several cases in Uttar Pradesh and other states.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi said that Pathan was killed during a gunfight, in which STF constable Imran was also injured. The cops of Gorakhpur Police were also assisted the STF during the exchange of fire. Awasthi said that acting on a tip-off, a team comprising STF and local police personnel of Gorakhpur surrounded Lalgarh area in Basti early on Monday morning and noticed two men coming

on a motorcycle. When the riders were signaled to stop, the person riding pillion got down and started firing at the police team while the driver managed to escape. "Pathan and constable Imran were injured in the gunfight and were taken to a Community Health Centre from where Pathan was referred to District Hospital, Basti, where he was declared dead upon arrival," Awasthi said.

Awasthi said that the state government announced a cash reward of Rs 2 lakh for the police team for the successful operation. SP of Basti, Hemraj Meena said that they had declared a reward of Rs 1 lakh on Pathan while Allahabad SSP had announced a bounty of Rs 50,000. The body of the slain criminal was sent for autopsy and a magisterial enquiry was also ordered into the matter.

## UP blames Delhi for Yamuna pollution

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The UP government blamed Delhi for the pollution in Yamuna river and claimed that Holy Ganga had been cleaned from Bijnore to Ballia. Replying to a question of BSP member Shyam Sunder Sharma in the Assembly, UP Jal Skakti Minister Dr Mahendra Singh said that the state government was doing every thing to clean Yamuna too, but due to Delhi, the river still remained polluted.

"Delhi is doing nothing to clear Yamuna except for taking water to meet drinking water need of the national capital. As Mathura shares border with Delhi, it is bearing the brunt of the former's callous approach," he said. The minister said

that the government identified nullah flowing into the Ganga. "Out of the total 217 nullah flowing in Ganga, 191 nullah were diverted while in Yamuna, of the total 170 nullahs, 49 have been diverted," he said. Singh said that all 1038 villages and 21 cities on the bank of Ganga have been declared Open Defecation-Free (ODF) while 123 STPs were working and 51 were under construction. Singh also said that under Namami Gange programme, 78 cremation places on Ganga river have been modernised while similar cremation places would be developed on the banks of Yamuna too. "We are doing everything to make the important rivers of India like Ganga and Yamuna free of pollution."

लखनऊ नगर निगम									
विलोकनार्थ मार्ग, लालबाग, लखनऊ फोन: 2202570 फैक्स नं. 0522-2622440 ई-मेल: <a href="mailto:nllko@up.nic.in">nllko@up.nic.in</a>									
निविदा संख्या : 227 / मु.स. / 2019-20									
अत्यकालीन निविदा सूचना									
दिनांक: 20.02.2020									
क्र. सं.	कार्य का नाम	आगमन बजट (रु. में)	जमानत बजट (रु. में)	कार्य पूरा करने की अवधि	निविदा अंश का प्रतिशत	12 अंशों का की.रक.	कुल निविदा अंश		
1	हेडरिंग प्रथम वार्ड के अन्तर्गत विक सिटी मीहान रोड बुद्धेश्वर चौक/हाथी मन्दिर प्रभाग में एक समरसोविल पम्प लगाने का कार्य।	112962.00	12000.00	1 माह	120.00	14.00	134.00		
2	हेडरिंग प्रथम वार्ड के अन्तर्गत ई विव मन्दिर सामू नाथेश्वर मन्दिर समकालीन नगर हस्तकला पार्क की सड़क का निर्माण कार्य।	767794.00	77000.00	2 माह	770.00	92.00	862.00		
3	हेडरिंग प्रथम वार्ड के अन्तर्गत पार मीहान में कामधारा मन्दिर के पास समरसोविल पम्प लगाने का कार्य।	112962.00	12000.00	1 माह	120.00	14.00	134.00		
4	हेडरिंग प्रथम वार्ड के अन्तर्गत विक सिटी में देवकाली मन्दिर में समरसोविल का कार्य।	112962.00	12000.00	1 माह	120.00	14.00	134.00		
5	हेडरिंग प्रथम वार्ड के अन्तर्गत विक सिटी में हिन्दू धर्म प्रसार मण्डल में शंकर राम सेवा केंद्र का आवरण तालाब नाली व इन्फ्लेक्शन का कार्य।	878771.00	88000.00	2 माह	880.00	106.00	986.00		
6	सहायक प्रथम वार्ड में सरीपुर्वा मानस विहार कालोनी में शीपरीड वाली सड़क पर नाली व इन्फ्लेक्शन का कार्य।	468460.00	47000.00	1 माह	470.00	56.00	526.00		
7	सहायक प्रथम वार्ड में बेतवाली वाली गली में हरि ओम्प गुरु 372/48 के घर से रविन्द्र कुमार 372/125 के घर तक इन्फ्लेक्शन सड़क और नाली निर्माण कार्य।	847536.00	85000.00	2 माह	850.00	102.00	952.00		
8	बालगंज वार्ड के अन्तर्गत बरगन कला में जेहदा मार्ग में सहायक प्रथम वार्ड नाली एवं सड़क निर्माण कार्य।	875820.00	88000.00	2 माह	880.00	106.00	986.00		
9	बालगंज वार्ड सहायक प्रथम वार्ड में दलीप वार्ड के घर से लेखक कैंबर अवासर ली के घर तक सड़क एवं नाली निर्माण कार्य।	845286.00	85000.00	2 माह	850.00	102.00	952.00		
10	बालगंज वार्ड के अन्तर्गत जयकरन लोधी के मकान से अलका गुरुवा के मकान तक नाली व इन्फ्लेक्शन का निर्माण कार्य।	875201.00	88000.00	2 माह	880.00	106.00	986.00		
11	हेडरिंग द्वितीय वार्ड बादशहरोका आलम नगर के पास सड़क व नाली निर्माण का कार्य।	176287.00	18000.00	1 माह	180.00	22.00	202.00		
12	हेडरिंग द्वितीय वार्ड के अन्तर्गत साई मंडिकल स्टोर (एन.सी.डी) के पास सड़क व नाली का निर्माण कार्य।	883240.00	89000.00	2 माह	890.00	107.00	997.00		
13	हेडरिंग प्रथम वार्ड के अन्तर्गत विक सिटी में 899 पीओसी/459 विक सिटी बुद्धेश्वर में दिनेश दिनेश के पीछे वाली गली में सड़क व नाली का कार्य।	979675.00	98000.00	2 माह	980.00	118.00	1098.00		
14	हेडरिंग प्रथम वार्ड के अन्तर्गत मीहान रोड में माजल सिटी में अजय कुमार के घर से लेखक दिनेश जिन्दी के घर तक इन्फ्लेक्शन व नाली का निर्माण कार्य।	532094.00	54000.00	1 माह	540.00	65.00	605.00		
15	हेडरिंग प्रथम वार्ड के अन्तर्गत हंस नगर कालोनी पुरा धाना के सामने गली नं 1 में इन्फ्लेक्शन व नाली का निर्माण कार्य।	876144.00	88000.00	2 माह	880.00	106.00	986.00		
16	आलमनगर वार्ड में सलीही नगर में राम नारायण राहू के मकान से मोहन प्रसाद के घर तक सड़क व नाली का इन्फ्लेक्शन का कार्य।	600430.00	61000.00	2 माह	610.00	73.00	683.00		
17	कल्याण मन्दीर द्वितीय वार्ड में अन्न सुधार वाली गली में नाली व इन्फ्लेक्शन का निर्माण कार्य।	120382.00	13000.00	1 माह	130.00	16.00	146.00		
18	कल्याण मन्दीर द्वितीय वार्ड में कालीघाट में करण के घर से मोहन प्रसाद के घर तक नाली व इन्फ्लेक्शन का निर्माण कार्य।	873941.00	88000.00	2 माह	880.00	106.00	986.00		
19	कल्याण मन्दीर द्वितीय वार्ड में हेमन हासिन्दर वाली सड़क पर नाली व इन्फ्लेक्शन का कार्य।	267665.00	27000.00	1 माह	270.00	32.00	302.00		
20	कल्याण मन्दीर प्रथम वार्ड में एल.ई.डी. बल्ब नगर में मकान नं 64/44 की नाली व इन्फ्लेक्शन का कार्य।	871443.00	88000.00	2 माह	880.00	106.00	986.00		
21	न्यू हेडरिंग प्रथम वार्ड में अन्न विहार में डेन बाबाजी वाली गली में इन्फ्लेक्शन व नाली का निर्माण कार्य।	795323.00	80000.00	1 माह	800.00	96.00	896.00		
22	न्यू हेडरिंग प्रथम वार्ड में हाजी टोला में सैयद मिशा व टोली वाली गली तक इन्फ्लेक्शन व नाली का निर्माण कार्य।	842764.00	85000.00	2 माह	850.00	102.00	952.00		
23	न्यू हेडरिंग प्रथम वार्ड में लकड़मन्दी में सुन्दरवाली गली में इन्फ्लेक्शन व नाली का निर्माण कार्य।	797262.00	80000.00	2 माह	800.00	96.00	896.00		
24	मसलीही टोला प्रथम वार्ड में मुजली टोला बरखलाना लकड़मन्दी की पूरवोलाव के मकान से श्री रोष के मकान तक नाली व इन्फ्लेक्शन का कार्य।	697903.00	70000.00	2 माह	700.00	84.00	784.00		
25	मसलीही टोला प्रथम वार्ड में मसलीही मालवे में सिद्धेश्वर मन्दिर से रवि शुक्ला से पीपलेश्वर मन्दिर होते हुए इन्डुस्तान इन्फ्लेक्शन का कार्य।	833418.00	84000.00	2 माह	840.00	101.00	941.00		
26	मसलीही टोला प्रथम वार्ड में अन्न विहार में सलीहीला पाई का सोईयकरण का कार्य।	842764.00	85000.00	2 माह	850.00	102.00	952.00		
27	शीतलादेवी वार्ड में कटरा खुदायार वी में समलीला पाई में बाउण्डी बाल का निर्माण कार्य।	839130.00	84000.00	2 माह	840.00	101.00	941.00		
28	मसलीही टोला द्वितीय वार्ड में जयकार कालोनी में पाई में सोईयकरण एवं इन्फ्लेक्शन का कार्य।	403397.00	41000.00	1 माह	410.00	49.00	459.00		
29	हनुमानगंज वार्ड में मोहिनी पुर्वा मालवे में राजकुमार मिशा व राजेश वाली गली नाली व इन्फ्लेक्शन का कार्य।	849064.00	85000.00	2 माह	850.00	102.00	952.00		
30	दीलगांज वार्ड के अन्तर्गत न्यू पञ्जाब नदीवी बाबा पुलिस वी में मकान से धानूक कब्रिस्तान तक नाली व इन्फ्लेक्शन का कार्य।	857337.00	86000.00	2 माह	860.00	103.00	963.00		
31	दीलगांज वार्ड के अन्तर्गत अम्बरगंज मालवे में ट्यूबवेल से धानूक कब्रिस्तान तक नाली व इन्फ्लेक्शन का कार्य।	385680.00	39000.00	1 माह	390.00	47.00	437.00		
32	मसलीही वार्ड में समरसोविल एवं टकी का निर्माण कार्य।	112962.00	12000.00	1 माह	120.00	14.00	134.00		
33	आवाय नरेश देव वार्ड में काशी टोला में राजकुमार साहू के घर से सलीही कान्तिजा के घर तक नाली व इन्फ्लेक्शन का कार्य।	873845.00	88000.00	2 माह	880.00	106.00	986.00		
34	आवाय नरेश देव वार्ड में एक समरसोविल पम्प एवं टकी लगवाने का कार्य।	112962.00	12000.00	1 माह	120.00	14.00	134.00		
35	अम्बरगंज वार्ड में समरसोविल एवं टकी का निर्माण कार्य।	112962.00	12000.00	1 माह	120.00	14.00	134.00		
36	अम्बरगंज वार्ड में दो समरसोविल पम्प / टकी लगवाने का कार्य।	225924.00	23000.00	1 माह	230.00	27.00	257.00		
37	मीलाना काल्वे अविद प्रथम वार्ड में एन.ए.ए.डी.डी.डी. मीन, सिन्धी वाली गली, हसन पुरिया मन्दिर के पास तीन नये समरसोविल पम्प एवं टकी लगवाने का कार्य।	338886.00	34000.00	1 माह	340.00	41.00	381.00		
38	अम्बरगंज वार्ड में अन्न विहार में सलीहीला पाई में समरसोविल पम्प एवं टकी लगवाने का कार्य।	225924.00	23000.00	1 माह	230.00	28.00	258.00		
39	समानगंज वार्ड के अन्तर्गत अन्न विहार मन्दिर एवं हरिशंकर तथा रियाज के घर तक नाली व इन्फ्लेक्शन का कार्य।	872773.00	88000.00	2 माह	880.00	106.00	986.00		
40	दीलगांज वार्ड के अन्तर्गत सलीही वार्ड में नाली निर्माण कार्य।	879731.00	88000.00	2 माह	880.00	106.00	986.00		
41	दीलगांज वार्ड के अन्तर्गत सलीही वार्ड में सड़क व पम्प का कार्य।	849252.00	85000.00	2 माह	850.00	102.00	952.00		
42	कल्याणमन्दिर द्वितीय वार्ड में एक समरसोविल लगाने का कार्य।	112962.00	12000.00	1 माह	120.00	14.00	134.00		

शर्तें -  
 1.15 प्रतिशत से अधिक निम्न निविदाओं को स्वतः निरस्त माना जायेगा। 2. 15 प्रतिशत कम की निविदा हेतु अतिरिक्त जमानत धराराशि (Extra Performance Guarantee) जमा करनी होगी। 3. 10 प्रतिशत निम्न निविदा वाले जमानत पर 0.50 प्रतिशत अति 1 प्रतिशत की दर से तथा 10 प्रतिशत से निम्न निविदा वाले जमानत पर 1.00 प्रतिशत की दर से विचारणीय। परचक्रमन्त्र मन्दीरी की संख्या - 4 शासन संख्या सं 982/नं-8-2017/819 का दिनांक 17.10.2017 के अनुसार जीओएसडीटी का मूल्यांकन धर्म द्वारा सार्वजनिक वास्तव प्रस्ताव करने के उपरान्त प्रतिपूर्ति की जायेगी। 5. शासन संख्या संख्या-715/नं-5-2018-120बजट/2013 दिनांक 17 मार्च 2018 के अनुसार नगरीय सड़क सुधार योजनामन्तर्गत सीमेंट कंक्रीट (सीसीटी) की सड़क पर 5 वर्षों तक हेतु रखाना किमे जाने की जिम्मेदारी सम्बन्धित ठेकेदार की होगी। बिदिमन्त्र रोड के 5 वर्षों तक के रख-रखाव हेतु आगमन में अतिरिक्त धनराशि सम्मिलित की जाय। परियोजना लॉन्ग की 5 प्रतिशत धनराशि परचक्रमन्त्र मन्दीरी के रूप में 5 वर्षों तक के उपरान्त सड़कों के सम्बन्धित रख-रखाव होने के दशा में मूल्यांकन सम्बन्धित ठेकेदार को किया जाये। 6. आदमन दिनांक की शासन संख्या सं 3890

# Cong leaders to skip banquet invite

## Banquet hosted by Prez in Trump's honour

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Peeved at the Modi Government's move to not allow its top leaders, including party chief Sonia Gandhi, to meet with the visiting US president Donald Trump, as has been the tradition, the Opposition Congress has decided to give the official banquet hosted by President Ram Nath Kovind in honour of the visiting dignitary a completely miss.

On Monday, news came in about former Prime minister Manmohan Singh too not attending the banquet hosted by President Ram Nath Kovind in honour of the US President on Tuesday.

Singh had earlier accepted the invite but expressed his inability to attend the same. He has conveyed his regret to the President's office for not being able to attend the banquet, sources close to Singh said.

Earlier, Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and Leader of

Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad had decided to skip the President's banquet in protest over the party's top leaders not being extended an invitation.

Chowdhury said the Modi Government has done away with the tradition of allowing the principal opposition party to hold discussions with the visiting US President, unlike in the past when such meetings were arranged. "I will not attend the banquet hosted by the President on February 25. It is a protest on my behalf," he said.

He said the Government has not extended an invite to Congress president Sonia Gandhi. "We do not feel good about the change in tradition by the Modi Government, when the principal opposition party leaders are ignored during such key visits. In the past, we ensured the principal opposition party leaders meet the visiting dignitaries, including US President George Bush or Barack Obama," he said.

# Namaste Trump on line of Howdy Modi: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the US President Donald Trump began his ambitious two-day visit to India on Monday, the BJP described "Namaste Trump", an event at Ahmedabad on the line of "Howdy Modi", a "master stroke" of public diplomacy between the two countries.

Trump has said that the US and India will seal major trade pacts during his visit which is exclusively focused on India. Trump is to seek re-election as President later this year.

A high-powered delegation is accompanying the US President with an eye on extracting a favourable trade deal and reduction in tariff by India on American exports. "Modi is a tough negotiator," said the US President while making his speech at the 'Namaste India' event in the



Gujarat Capital.

On day one of the visit, 'Namaste Trump' was held at Motera Stadium in Ahmedabad to welcome Trump who was given a rousing ovation by a capacity crowd of over one lakh.

Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi also addressed the audience in the stadium, the largest cricket stadium in the world.

"Namaste Trump is a masterstroke of public diplomacy between India and US," Vijay Chauthaiwale, who heads the BJP's overseas

affairs department, said in a series of tweets.

He asked if any other visiting foreign head of state has ever praised a country, its national heroes, heritage, culture, music and leader so profusely.

"This day will be written in the golden letters in the history of India, thanks to the visionary leadership of PM Narendra Modi," he said.

The US president was driven from airport to Sabarmati Ashram and later to the stadium as people lined-up on both sides of the 22-km-long route to cheer both the leaders.

Describing Modi as a "tremendously successful leader" of the Indian republic, Trump, in his speech in the stadium, referred to the BJP leader's "landslide victory like no other in the largest democratic election ever held anywhere on the face of the earth".

# Air Force flight to evacuate 100 students from Wuhan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 100 Indians stranded in coronavirus-hit Wuhan could heave a sigh of relief as the Centre on Monday said an Air Force flight to the crisis-hit Chinese city is being planned for February 26 for bringing the evacuees back on February 27.

Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan, who undertook a review of the ongoing coronavirus (COVID19) management across the country with senior officials of the Ministry, said he has been informed about the flight by the Ministry of External Affairs Ministry.

The Health Ministry quoted Vardhan as saying this. India's national carrier Air India has already evacuated around 640 Indians from Wuhan in two separate flights. According to estimates, over 100 Indians are still living in Wuhan.

A sizeable number of countries have evacuated their citizens from China and restricted movement of people and goods to and from the country in view of the massive

India's national carrier Air India has already evacuated around 640 Indians from Wuhan in two separate flights

The screening of passengers is being done in all 21 airports, 12 major and 65 non-major seaports and border crossings

A revised travel advisory on travel to Singapore has been issued on February 22

COVID19 and have gone back to their homes from the quarantine facilities. In all, 23,259 persons were brought under community surveillance in 34 States/UTs through the Integrated Diseases Surveillance Programme (IDSP) network," said the Minister.

A revised travel advisory on travel to Singapore has been issued on February 22.

Regarding movement across Kartarpur border in Punjab, it was informed that in discussion with the Home Ministry, Health Ministry and Health Secretary, Punjab, special screening has been strengthened across the border and further necessary facilitation for masks to be worn by pilgrims is being initiated.

At present, in addition to screening of passengers from flights coming from China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Japan and South Korea, entry screening has been extended to flights coming from Vietnam, Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia with effect from February 23.

outbreak of coronavirus there.

At present, the screening of passengers is being done in all 21 airports, 12 major and 65 non-major seaports and border crossings.

In all 4,214 flights and 4,48,449 passengers have been screened so far while as of now, 2,707 samples have been tested of which only 3 samples had earlier tested positive (Kerala) and all the three patients have been discharged from the hospitals and are now in home isolation.

"All Indian evacuees from Wuhan have tested negative for

## ISIS-RELATED CASES

# NIA conducts raids in TN, K'taka

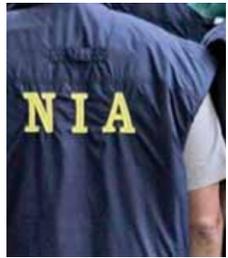
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday conducted searches at multiple locations in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka in connection with three ISIS-related cases.

In Tamil Nadu, searches were conducted at 10 locations including one in Chennai City, one in Kanchipuram district, one in Toothukudi district, three in Salem district and four in Cuddalore district.

The searches were conducted in connection with Chennai Q Branch Case, ISIS Khaja Moideen Module case and ISIS-AL Hind Module Case.

The Q branch case relates to 10 Bengaluru-based accused persons who allegedly conspired with ISIS/ Daish member Khaja Moideen, native of Parangipettai, Cuddalore district, with the intention of carrying out unlawful activities



and committing terrorist acts in India by procuring illegal arms in furtherance of the terror outfit's agenda. During searches at the houses of the 10 accused, 16 SIM cards and 2 internet dongles besides documents and books have been seized, the NIA said.

The ISIS Khaja Moideen Module Case, originally registered by Special Cell of Delhi Police, was re-registered by NIA on January 30 this year against arrested accused Abdul

Samad, Khaja Moideen, Syed Ali Navas and Jaffer Ali besides their associates for the conspiracy to further the objectives of the banned terror outfit ISIS/ Daish by carrying out terrorist attacks in Delhi and NCR. During searches at the houses of the arrested accused on Monday, the NIA seized four laptops, one tablet, two mobile phones and three SIM cards besides certain documents including books supporting violent jihad.

In Karnataka, NIA carried out searches at 15 locations in Bengaluru city and Kolar district in connection with investigation of ISIS AL Hind Module Case at the houses of arrested and absconding accused and office of AL-Hind Trust. During searches, a number of digital devices including nine mobile phones, five SIM cards, one Laptop, two Hard Discs, four CDs/DVDs, 18 Books, one auto rickshaw, fire

crackers and other incriminating documents have been seized from these locations, the agency said in a statement.

ISIS AL Hind Module Case pertains to a criminal conspiracy with an objective of murdering Hindu leaders, creating communal riots and to do anti-national activities by forming a terrorist gang, being inspired by ISIS, a proscribed terrorist outfit.

The members of the AL Hind module conducted meetings at Bengaluru and other parts of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and propagated ISIS ideology, procured arms and ammunition and other incriminating material for executing their plans. The seized items will be submitted before the jurisdictional NIA Special Courts at Chennai and Bengaluru and the digital devices subjected to cyber forensic examination, the NIA added.

# Doon, Delhi elevated expressway OK'd

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/DEHRADUN

The Centre on Monday gave in-principle approval to the construction of an elevated expressway between Dehradun and New Delhi which will reduce the distance between the two cities to 180 kms. The Centre's Go-ahead to the project was conveyed to Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat by the National Highway Authority of India Chairman SS Sandhu.

Congratulating the people of the State after his meeting with Sandhu, the Chief Minister said the construction of the highway will boost tourism and prove to be a milestone in its economic development. It will reduce the distance between Dehradun and the national capital to 180 kms and the State Government will extend



It will reduce the distance between Dehradun and the national Capital to 180 km

all support to the NHAI for the construction of the elevated highway, Rawat said.

At present, the distance between Dehradun and Delhi is around 250 kms.

Work on the highway, which will reduce travel time between the two cities to two and a half hours, will begin soon, Sandhu said at the meeting with Rawat.

Construction of an elevated road on the route besides a new tunnel near

Mohand on the outskirts of Dehradun is proposed as part of the project, the NHAI chairman said. Noting that parts of the proposed highway falls under the jurisdiction of forest and wildlife department of neighbouring Uttar Pradesh, Sandhu asked the Chief Minister to request the UP Government for speedy forest and environment clearances so that work on the project could be expedited.

# EC destroyed VVPAT data of 2019 LS polls before expiry: NGOs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Two NGOs alleged in the Supreme Court on Monday that the Election Commission (EC) has violated election rules by destroying the VVPAT (voter verifiable paper audit trail) data of last year's Lok Sabha polls before the conclusion of the statutory one-year period.

The NGOs - Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and Common Cause - referred to the response received through an RTI application from the EC and alleged before a bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde that the VVPAT data was needed to be

preserved for a period of one year - a rule of the Conduct of Election Rules. "We do not look into it at the moment," the bench, also comprising justices BR Gavai and Surya Kant, said.

Appearing for the NGOs, lawyer Prashant Bhushan said the "shocking fact" had emerged in an RTI response and they would file an application in this regard.

The bench had earlier issued notice to the poll panel on the PIL seeking a probe into alleged discrepancies between the voter turnout figure and the number of votes counted in 347 constituencies during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

# Centre denies allegations of starvation death in J'khand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday denied allegations of a starvation death in Jharkhand and arbitrary cancellation of nearly three crore ration cards of poor people across the country in the Supreme Court, asserting that it was ready to prove them wrong.

"Let it be put on affidavit. I will respond and show all these are wrong. It is all incorrect statistics," Attorney General KK Venugopal told a bench comprising Chief Justice SA Bobde and justices BR Gavai and Surya Kant.

The attorney general had to intervene when senior advocate Colin Gonsalves, appearing in a PIL, alleged starvation deaths following denial of food

in the absence of Aadhaar card.

Gonsalves also claimed that as many as three crore ration cards of poor people have been cancelled by authorities across the country and a 13-year-old girl had died of starvation in Jharkhand after she was denied ration on account of non-matching of Aadhaar details with her ration card.

The attorney general submitted that the Centre would file a comprehensive affidavit on the issue and was waiting for replies of state governments which failed to file the same in compliance of notices issued to them on December 9, 2019.

He said the Centre would collate the responses of states and file a response.

# SC refuses plea seeking sanction to prosecute Kanhaiya in sedition case

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a plea seeking framing of guidelines to ensure an expeditious grant of sanction to prosecute the accused in serious offences like the sedition case against former JNU Students' Union president Kanhaiya Kumar. A Bench of Chief Justice SA Bobde, justices BR Gavai and Surya Kant said such an order could be passed only in a specific case and directions of generic nature could not be issued. "The law should be followed in a particular case," the bench told lawyer Shashank Deo Sudhi, who was appearing for former BJP MLA Nand Kishor Garg.

# CAG holds meeting with Ministries over auditing suggestions

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) on Monday held a brainstorming session with representatives of as many as seven Ministries to seek suggestions from the executive on areas that could be selected for audit.

This would help in understanding their concerns and would also supplement the risk-assessment exercise being undertaken by the CAG in the course of finalising the annual plan of audit activities.

The meeting, chaired by Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General Anita Pattanayak, sought more effective audit exercise from the sec-

retaries and representatives of the selected Central Ministries and departments.

The Ministries included environment, forest and climate change, jal shakti, earth sciences, new and renewable energy, science and technology, food processing industries, and food and consumer affairs.

The meeting was intended to focus on development, technology and climate-related issues.

"We are keen on this interaction... Activities undertaken by scientific and environmental ministries are critical to the national objective of broad-based economic growth and balanced development across all sectors.

# 2.13 cr framers left out from PM KISAN yojana

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A year since its launch, the Modi Government's ambitious cash-for-farmers programme 'PM KISAN' (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi) has reached a saturation level due to some States' reluctance to adopt the Central scheme and implementation hurdles like linking with Aadhaar persisting.

There could be 2.13 crore more potential beneficiaries who are left out from the scheme as States like West Bengal and Bihar have not adopted the scheme.

With the enrolment of 9.74 crore potential beneficiaries, the new registration has reached a saturation level, sources said and pointed out that the scheme intended to cover 14 crore farmers.

As per the Agriculture Ministry's data, of the 68 lakh

farmers from the West Bengal, about 10 lakh farmers have already self-registered for the scheme via the online portal of PM-Kisan. Bihar's potential is 158 lakh whereas data of only 59.7 lakh has been uploaded. Bihar has adopted a beneficiary application based approach which is delaying identification and upload.

According to Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, barring West Bengal and Bihar, all other States and Union Territories are implementing the scheme which has benefited 8.45 crore farmers so far in the country, against the target of 14 crore farmers.

On PM-Kisan portal, the centre has received data of total 9.74 crore farmers. The minister also launched PM-Kisan mobile App on completion of one year of the implementation of the scheme.

"States which have achieved 90 percent or more saturation have been asked to look at inter district variations while states to do 100 percent verification of 25 randomly selected villages in comparatively low saturation districts," he said.

The data says, only 9 farmers registered from Adaman and Nicobar Islands; 123 from Arunachal Pradesh; 121 from Chandigarh; 21 from Dadra Nagar Haveli; 633 from Delhi; 30 from Goa, 4902 from Himachal Pradesh; 11 from Sikkim; 43 from Puducherry; 733 from Meghalaya and 1010 from Tripura.

According to sources, Aadhaar-based enrolment and cash transfers, slow internet connections in many rural centres, and messy land records have slowed the programme.

"Problems in Aadhaar authentication, or the process

of validating the biometric identity with a beneficiary's bank account, have limited the number of potential payouts," sources added.

Aadhaar linking was optional for the first tranche that covered the December 2018-March 2019 period.

For the second instalment covering the period April-July 2019, Aadhaar authentication was compulsory, except for north-eastern States and the erstwhile Jammu & Kashmir. On the first anniversary of launch of the Government's ambitious PM-Kisan scheme, Tomar on Monday launched a mobile app to broaden the reach of the programme that aims to provide annually ₹6,000 to each eligible farmer.

Under PM-KISAN, the government provides income support of ₹6000 a year to farmers with a valid enrolment,

paid in three equal cash transfers of ₹2000 - one every four months. It was launched on 24 February 2019, when the first instalment was paid.

Stating that the cash benefit under the scheme will not only help farmers but also boost the state economy, Tomar said: "Our officials have approached the state government in this regard many times. I have also written twice to the chief minister urging to join the scheme."

But no reply has come yet from the CM. "Tomar said some states like Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Sikkim are slow in authenticating their farmers' data and the central government is pursuing with them seriously."

About 85 per cent of the farmers data registered under the scheme has been Aadhaar verified, the rest will be completed soon, he added.

# Rajnath hands over best marching contingent to CISF

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday handed over to the CISF the trophy for the "best marching contingent" amongst the paramilitary forces and other auxiliary squads for performance during the Republic Day parade this year.

An event was held in the South Block office of the defence ministry where CISF Director General (DG) Rajesh Ranjan, contingent commander Deputy Commandant Prabh Simran Singh and other officials of the force received the trophy from Singh, an official spokesperson said.

The CISF contingent is identified by its distinct yellow-coloured headgear and had 148 members when they marched this time at the



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh presents a trophy of Best Marching Contingent of Republic Day Parade 2020 to Central Industrial Security Force at South Block in New Delhi on Monday

Rajnath on January 26, this is the sixth time that the force has won this award, the spokesperson said.

With a strength of nearly 1.70 lakh personnel, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) is a Central paramilitary that secures 61 airports

at present apart from vital infrastructure in the nuclear and aerospace domain.

The CISF DG congratulated Contingent Commander and other officers of CISF for their excellent performance and bringing laurels to the organization.

TRUMP'S INDIAN TOUR

# At cricket arena 'man of match' President Trump strikes chord with crowd



**Ahmedabad:** The renovated Motera stadium here is yet to host its first cricket match but on Monday the sprawling facility became the site of a public spectacle where US President Donald Trump showered encomiums on India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi amid a rather delirious crowd.

The jam-packed arena, also known as Sardar Patel Stadium, frequently broke into applause as people displayed enthusiasm for the first visit by any US president to the home State of Modi.

Trump's praise for India, his denouncing of the menace of terrorism and his try at Hindi during his over 25-minute-long speech was well received by people and punctuated by constant clapping by the nearly 1.25 lakh-strong crowd.

# Trump's Taj visit: Graves get mud pack, chandelier refurbished

PTI ■ AGRA

Authorities at the Archaeological Survey of India had "advanced the dates" for mud-pack treatment for the graves of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan and wife Mumtaz Mahal at Taj Mahal in view of US President Donald Trump's planned visit to the famed mausoleum on Monday, an official said. The 17th Century monument to love, built over a period of nearly 20 years by Shah Jahan in memory of his wife after her death in 1631, is being refurbished to welcome the American leader and US First Lady Melania Trump. "The red sandstones of the Taj complex are being cleaned of stains from weather, fountains have been spruced up and extra stock of shimmering flowers added in gardens to enhance the glory of the monument," ASI Agra Circle Superintendent Archaeologist Vasant Swarnkar said. The ASI official said the world heritage site was also getting ready to welcome Trump just like Agra was being decked up for his visit on Monday evening. "We have already done the mud-pack treatment of the two royal graves. It is done with 'murtani mitti' and takes a couple of days," Swarnkar told PTI. "After the treatment, it is cleaned with distilled water. It was done in the last few days. Asked if the special treatment was being given after a long time, he said such works were carried out regularly and its date was due in coming time. "But, we preponed the mud-pack dates keeping in view the visit of the US president," the official said.

Swarnkar said the Taj Mahal would be closed to visitors in the second half of the day, adding the tickets would be issued till 11.30 am and it will be cleared of visitors by noon. According to Agra District Magistrate Prabhu N

Singh, Trump is scheduled to arrive at the Taj Mahal at 5.15 pm on Monday and will spend about an hour at the complex. "From the airport, the US president's convoy will travel till the Oberoi Amarvilas hotel situated near the East Gate of the Taj Mahal complex. "From there, the president and his family, and members of the high-level delegation accompanying him will move into eco-friendly golf carts to travel into the monument premises," Singh said, adding about 20 golf carts would ferry them.

As per Supreme Court directions, petrol or diesel-operated vehicles are not permitted within 500 metres of the Taj Mahal's gate.

The architectural marvel, which entered the UNESCO World Heritage Site list in 1983, is made of white 'makrana' marble and red sandstones, and renowned for its intricate inlay work on the stone surface. Asked if the chandelier above the graves had also been refurbished, he said: "Yes, we did refurbish it."

Taj Mahal, considered one of the seven wonders of the world, stands on the bank of Yamuna and is always high on the itinerary of visiting heads of state. In 2015, then US president Barack Obama was scheduled to visit the monument during his India visit. It is said he could not do so due to security reasons.

In 2000, President Bill Clinton and his daughter Chelsea Clinton had paid a visit to the famed monument.

In all, the Taj Mahal covers an area of 60 bighas and the terrain gradually sloped from south to north towards the Yamuna in the form of descending terraces.

The monument has some wonderful specimens of polychrome inlay art both in the interior and exterior on the dados, on cenotaphs and on the marble jhajhari (jali-screen) around them, according to the ASI.



**Ahmedabad:** Folk dancers rehearse their performance along a route U.S. President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump are expected to take during their visit in Ahmedabad, Monday

# Trump praises India's unity in diversity

**Ahmedabad:** India embraces freedom, liberty, individual rights and the rule of law, and is admired around the globe as people of different religions worship side by side in harmony, US President Donald Trump said on Monday, lauding the country's accomplishments during his maiden State visit here.

He noted that India has an incredible potential and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is laying the foundations of its future. Hailing India's diversity, the US President said its unity is an inspiration to the world as it is known for its democracy, tolerance and peace.

"India is a country that proudly embraces freedom, liberty, individual rights, the rule of law, and the dignity of every human being. "Your nation has always been admired around the earth as the place where millions upon millions of Hindus and Muslims, Sikhs and Jains, Buddhists, Christians, and Jews worship side by side in harmony," he said while addressing a packed Motera stadium at the 'Namaste Trump' event here.

"The story of the Indian nation is a tale of astounding progress, a miracle of democracy, extraordinary diversity, and above all, strong and noble people.

"India gives hope to all of humanity. In just 70 years, India become an economic giant, the largest democracy ever to exist and one of the most amazing asians anywhere in the world," Trump said.

The potential for India is absolutely incredible, he said while noting that India's rise as a prosperous and independent nation is an example for every nation all over the world and one of the outstanding achievements of the century. It is inspiring because India has achieved all this as a democratic, peaceful and tolerant country, PTI

# US Prez hails 'genius' of Bollywood, remembers 'DDLJ' and 'Sholay'

**Ahmedabad:** Using Bollywood to strike a chord with movie-loving Indians, US President Donald Trump on Monday hailed the 'genius' of the Hindi film industry and recalled two all-time favourites, 'Sholay' and 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge' (DDLJ).

Addressing the 'Namaste Trump' event at the Motera Stadium here, the US president said people 'take great joy' in watching Bollywood films and understanding Indian culture through them.

"This is the country that produces nearly 2,000 movies a year from the hub of genius and creativity known as Bollywood," he told the gathering of about 100,000 people packed into the stadium.

"All over the planet people take great joy in scenes of bhanga, music and dance, romance and drama, and classic Indian films like 'DDLJ' and 'Sholay,'" Trump said, referring to two of the biggest hits in Bollywood history.

While the 1975 multi-starrer 'Sholay', labelled a 'curry western' by many, is an action-adventure film that has stood the test of time, the 1995 Shah Rukh Khan-Kajol-led 'DDLJ' is an out and out romance.

'Sholay' director Ramesh Sippy said he was delighted that Trump included the film as a creative piece from India in his speech. "I feel overwhelmed, humbled that the US president felt this way. I am delighted that 'Sholay' is included in his speech as a creative piece from India. I am thankful to him for having mentioned 'Sholay' after 45 years of the film," Sippy told PTI. Yash Raj Films, the makers of 'DDLJ', posted on Twitter, "DDLJ trumps!" This is not the first effort by the US president to use popular culture to reach out to Indians. Ahead of his maiden visit to India, Trump shared a video in which his face was superimposed on the hit movie-character Baahubali.



PM Narendra Modi presents a memento 'Three Wise Monkeys' to US President Donald Trump as First Lady Melania Trump looks on in Ahmedabad on Monday



President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump pause as they tour the Taj Mahal on Monday, in Agra



People wear masks of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Donald Trump at Sardar Patel Motera Stadium, in Ahmedabad on Monday



PM Narendra Modi, US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump at Sabarmati Ashram, in Ahmedabad on Monday



US President Donald Trump along with his wife Melania Trump, daughter Ivanka Trump and her husband Jared Kushner, accompanied by UP Governor Anandiben Patel and CM Yogi Adityanath upon their arrival in Agra on Monday

# Trump, wife try spinning charkha at Sabarmati Ashram

**Ahmedabad:** US President Donald Trump and His wife Melania on Monday tried their hands at spinning the 'charkha' (spinning wheel) at the Sabarmati Ashram here. Accompanied by PM Narendra Modi, the US president and his wife went around the Ashram, before resuming the roadshow from the airport to the Motera stadium.

"To my great friend Prime Minister Narendra Modi, thank you for this wonderful visit," Trump wrote in the Ashram visitors'

# Thousands line up to greet Trump, Modi

**Ahmedabad:** Waving Indian and US flags and shouting slogans, thousands of people lined up the 22-km-long roadshow route US President Donald Trump and his wife Melania took to reach Motera stadium for the 'Namaste Trump' event.

Many people, including students, from Ahmedabad and different parts of Gujarat arrived here since morning for the spectacle of the 'India Road Show' as troupes showed cultural performances.

Many were left disappointed after being refused entry to the Motera stadium for want of passes. But they took solace in standing along the



road to catch a glimpse of the leaders.

Authorities had earlier said over one lakh people were expected to line up along the roadshow route.

Wearing traditional costumes, artistes from different states performed on these 30-

odd stages and greeted the VVIPs when they passed from the route. Govindbhai Patel and eight members of his village in Sabarkantha district, around 70 km from here, reached Ahmedabad early morning and stood in a queue along the Sabarmati riverfront and waited for the convoy to arrive.

Modi's convoy arrived first at the Sabarmati Ashram, followed by that of Donald Trump, with the US President and his wife sitting in the Cadillac armoured limousine, called The Beast.

From the Ashram the convoy then proceeded to Motera stadium. PTI

# Twitterati surprised over Trump not writing Gandhi in visitors' book

**Ahmedabad:** A lot of eyebrows were raised on Twitter and many people expressed surprise as US President Donald Trump left a message in the visitors' book at Sabarmati Ashram without any mention of Mahatma Gandhi.

In the book, Trump wrote, "To my great friend Prime Minister Narendra Modi, thank you for this wonderful visit."

Trump, who reached Ahmedabad on Monday for the first leg of his India tour, visited the Ashram along with wife Melania minutes after he landed here. After noticing no mention of Mahatma Gandhi in the message by Trump, netizens took to Twitter, comparing his note with that of former US President Barack Obama.

When Obama visited the Mani Bhavan - where Gandhi used to stay while in Mumbai - in south Mumbai in 2010, his note in the visitors' book read: "I am filled with hope and inspiration as I have the privilege to view this testament to Gandhi's life. He is a hero not just to India but to the world."

Five years later, in January 2015, after visiting the Raj Ghat in Delhi, Obama wrote, "What Dr Martin Luther King Jr said then remains true today. The spirit of Gandhi is very much alive in India today. And it remains a great gift to the world. May we always live in the spirit of love and peace among all people and nations."

Congress leader Manish Tewari posted an image of Trump's remarks in the Ashram visitors' book, saying "This is a snapshot of the note that someone sent. It ostensibly is @realDonaldTrump's note at Sabarmati. No mention of the Great Mahatma. Does he even know who Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was?"

PTI

# Agra residents eager to catch a glimpse of 'the Beast'

PTI ■ AGRA

As the city awaits the arrival of US President Donald Trump for his maiden visit to Taj Mahal, many residents are eager to catch a glimpse of 'the Beast' — the luxurious armoured vehicle of the American president. The US Presidential limousine is expected to be part of Trump's convoy. However, district authorities have kept the details on the 'Beast' under tight wraps.

Days ahead of Trump's visit, a nearly 50-year-old iron bridge, which falls on the 13-km route designated for the convoy from Kheria Air Force station to Oberoi Amarvilas, had caused some hiccups for the district administration, as only 'light vehicles' were permitted to cross the bridge.

"That restriction on the bridge for use by only light vehicles was kept as a precautionary measure six months ago. But, after the announcement of President Trump's visit, we got the strength and capacity of the bridge checked multiple times and it is fine. It has a load capacity of 11.4 tonne," a senior official said. All con-



Motorcade of the US President Donald Trump arrives in Agra, Monday

cerns were "discussed threadbare" and there is "no issue" on any part, he said.

Another senior official said, the district administration was asked to check the capacity of the bridge, and "they had given clearance from their side a few days ago".

The bridge in the middle is made of iron and stands over

railway tracks, while two flanks on either side (up and down sides) are under the PWD, officials said. Trump, his family and the members of the delegation accompanying him, will reach the city on Monday, and will move to golf carts from there to reach the 17th century monument. "The advanced security liaison team, consist-

ing of members from district administration, MEA, CISE, NSG and US Secret Service had discussed all concerns threadbare, and the route was checked multiple times.

"So, things are fine and President Trump will have a pleasant visit and enjoy the beauty of the Taj in the evening," the senior official

said. When asked if the Beast will be used to ferry Trump from the air force station, he did not divulge details and only said, "There is excitement about it in people, but let's wait".

The US Presidential limousine, nicknamed the 'Beast' is based on a Cadillac. It has an 8-inch thick body armour plating and bulletproof windows which insulate the President from all sorts of threats.

Ever since the assassination of President John F Kennedy who was riding an open top Lincoln Continental, the United States has pulled out all stops to make every succeeding presidential vehicle virtually impenetrable. The armoured luxury vehicle's doors weigh similar to those on a Boeing-757 aircraft. People of Agra are excited about the visit of Trump and also curious to see his ultra-luxe 'Beast'. "I had seen it on TV when President Obama had visited India in 2015. It created so much flutter in the crowd when it moved on Rajpath in Delhi during Republic Day celebrations. We also want to catch a glimpse of the Beast," said Rahul Kumar, a college student who stays in Tajganj area.

PTI

# Global mkts down

**From Page 1**  
While, the broader NSE Nifty sank 251.45 points or 2.08 per cent to 11,829.40.  
In late morning deals, Milan's stock market dived almost five per cent following reports of a fourth death amid the COVID-19 epidemic, an 84-year old man in the northern Lombardy region.  
It was the third death in Lombardy, where villages have been sealed off and security measures enforced to stem the spread of the disease. Traders' screens were awash with red

elsewhere in Europe too, with Frankfurt falling 3.7 per cent, London losing 3.5 per cent, Madrid down 3.3 per cent and Paris shedding 3.8 per cent.  
Brent oil prices slumped four per cent as the burgeoning crisis sparked global energy demand worries.  
Conversely, on the London Bullion Market gold surged to USD 1,689.31 per ounce --- a level last seen in January 2013 --- as investors snapped up the precious metal as a safety measure amid the market turbulence.

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ**  
E-Tender No.: ALD-Sig-141-2019-20 Date: 20.02.2020

**E-Tender Notice**  
Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/Coordination/ North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invite E-Tender on prescribed form for the following works up to 12.00 hrs. on 13.03.2020. The details of the Tender are as under:

Tender No. & Name of Work	Approx. Cost of work	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender Form
ALD-Sig-141-2019-20: Provision of Back to Back 32" LED Panel for Coach guidance cum advertisement system at PF No. 01 of Kanpur Central Station.	46,62,737.25	93,300/-	3,000/-

**Completion Period:** 01 Months, **Date of Opening of tender:** 13.03.2020, **Availability of tender form:** Tender forms shall be available on [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) 21 days prior to date of opening of the tender, **Time, date & place of opening of tender:** Tender will be opened through E-tender at office of Divisional Railway Manager, Prayagraj on or after pre-determined date 13.03.2020 at 12.30 hours. 262/20 (R)

**E-Tender No.: ALD-Sig-123-2019-20** **E-Tender Notice**  
Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/Coordination/ North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invite E-Tender on prescribed form for the following works up to 12.00 hrs. on the opening date of E-tender mentioned therein.

Tender No. & Name of Work	Approx. Cost of work	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender Form
123: Provision of Fire detection and Alarm System in the Relay Room at balance stations in Deen Dayal Upadhyay-Ghaziabad section over Prayagraj Division.	1,79,35,740/-	2,39,700/-	5,000/-

**Completion Period:** 06 Months, **Date of closing of tender:** 12.03.2020, **Availability of tender form:** Tender forms shall be available on [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in), **Time, date & place of opening of tender:** Tender will be opened through E-tender at office of Divisional Railway Manager, Prayagraj on or after pre-determined at date 12.30 hours. 251/20 (R)

**E-Tendering Tender Notice**  
Chief Medical Superintendent, Central Hospital, North Central Railway, Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders on prescribed form for the following work up to 13.30 hrs. on 23.03.2020. The details of the Tender are as under:

E-Tender Notice No. & Tender No and Name of the Work	Approximate Cost	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender documents
E-Tender Notice No.:146-Med/San/Door to door/02/2020, dated 20.02.2020, Tender No.: Door to door/02/2020: Door to door garbage collection from various colonies of North Central Railway, Prayagraj with 04 Mechanized trolley with drivers and safai karamchari/Sweeper in each Mechanized trolley and other materials.	60,83,936.80	1,21,700/-	5,000/-

**Type of Tender:** Two packet System i.e. (i) Packet I-Technical Bid, (ii) Packet II-Financial Bid, **Similar work for 35% Minimum eligibility criteria:** Removal and disposal of all kind of rubbish, silt, garbage, refuse and garden refuse etc. from railway colony/area, station by Truck/Mechanical Transport, **Validity of Contract:** Three years (03 Years) from the actual date of Commencement of the work. **Date & Time of tender opening :** 23.03.2020 after 13.30 hours. **Note:** (1) The complete information along with tender booklet of above E-tenders will be available/ uploaded since 00.01 AM of 09.03.2020 and shall be remained on Website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) up to 13.30 hrs. on the due date of 23.03.2020 of tender opening. (2) Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above tenders. For this purpose, Vendors/Bidders are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with Digital Signature Certificate issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. (3) Rates entered into financial rate page and duly signed digitally shall be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form/letter head if attached by Vendors/Bidders shall be straightway ignored and shall not be considered. (4) Documents being attached should be signed by the tenderer on its body. (5) This tender notice has also been uploaded on [www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in). (6) Payment of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and Tender Document Cost (TDC) in respect of e-Tendering shall be accepted through net banking or payment gateway only. (7) In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the website of IREPS may be approached. (8) Tenderer online can be submitted upto 13.30 hrs on 23.03.2020. 263/20 (R)

**E-Procurement Tender Notice No. 20/12** **E-Procurement Tender Notice** **Date: 20.02.2020**  
On behalf of the President of India, The Principal Chief Materials Manager, North Central Railway, Prayagraj (An ISO 9001:2015 certified unit) invites the following E-Procurement Tenders.

S. No.	Tender No.	Description	Qty.	Tender Opening Date
1.	10204172	Battery Storage Unit (Ni-Cd Battery)	50 Nos.	12.03.2020
2.	30192449	Top Housing For Side Bearer Pad Assembly	8999 Nos.	23.03.2020
3.	30192231	Rear Cover For Axle Box	4728 Nos.	20.04.2020
4.	50205003	Single Band 2 port Cross Polarized Antenna	04 Nos.	12.03.2020
5.	70202055	Set of M.S. M20 hex head bolt	700 Set	11.03.2020
6.	70191869	Rivets M.S. Snap Head 20 MM	36400 Kgs.	12.03.2020
7.	50195173A	X-Ray Operator training Simulator	01 Nos.	19.03.2020
8.	60195030	Surge Tester	01 Nos.	24.03.2020
9.	30192255	Guide bush for axle box	10000 Nos.	11.03.2020

**Note :** 1. The complete information of above E-Procurement Tenders are available on IREPS website i.e. <http://www.ireps.gov.in>. 2. Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above Tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with class III, digital signature certificates issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. 3. Rates entered into Financial Rate page and duly signed digitally shall only be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form/letter head if attached by vendor shall be straight way ignored and shall not be considered. 257/20 (R)

**E-Tendering Tender Notice**  
Chief Medical Superintendent, Central Hospital, North Central Railway, Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders on prescribed form for the following work up to 13.30 hrs. on 23.03.2020. The details of the Tender are as under:

E-Tender Notice No. & Tender No and Name of the Work	Approximate Cost	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender documents
E-Tender Notice No.:146-Med/San./DSA-Malg. colony/03/2020, dated 20.02.2020, Tender No.: DSA-Malg./03/2020: Complete Sanitation work of DSA, Leader Road, Malgodam and New Malgodam Railway colony, Prayagraj.	1,43,55,117.85	2,21,800/-	5,000/-

**Type of Tender:** Two packet System i.e. (i) Packet I-Technical Bid, (ii) Packet II-Financial Bid, **Similar work for 35% Minimum eligibility criteria:** Any Sanitation work. **Validity of Contract:** Two years (730 days) from the actual date of Commencement of the work. **Date & Time of tender opening :** 23.03.2020 after 13.30 hours. **Note:** (1) The complete information along with tender booklet of above E-tenders will be available/uploaded since 00.01 AM of 09.03.2020 and shall be remained on Website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) up to 13.30 hrs. on the due date of 23.03.2020 of tender opening. (2) Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above tenders. For this purpose, Vendors/Bidders are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with Digital Signature Certificate issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. (3) Rates entered into financial rate page and duly signed digitally shall be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form/letter head if attached by Vendors/Bidders shall be straightway ignored and shall not be considered. (4) Documents being attached should be signed by the tenderer on its body. (5) This tender notice has also been uploaded on [www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in). (6) Payment of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and Tender Document Cost (TDC) in respect of e-Tendering shall be accepted through net banking or payment gateway only. (7) In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the website of IREPS may be approached. (8) Tenderer online can be submitted upto 13.30 hrs on 23.03.2020. 265/20 (R)

North central railways [www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in) @CPRONCR

# Sunni Waqf Board to ...

**From Page 1**  
meeting held in Lucknow, members discussed the formalities related to accepting the land, initiating the formation of a trust and deciding on other linked structures, apart from the mosque, that could come up on the five-acre land.  
"Besides the mosque on the alternate land, the board will also set up a cultural centre depicting Indo-Islamic architecture and civilisation. The names of trust members and other details will be announced at a later date," said Farooqui.  
The board chairman further said that the centre would also undertake study and research in Indo-Islamic architecture. He said that a charitable hospital, public library and other facilities for common people would also be set up at the centre.  
On February 20, UP Sunni Central Waqf Board had said that it did not have the option to reject the alternative piece of land given to it by the Supreme Court's Ayodhya verdict but it would decide on its use when it meets on Monday.

In a historic verdict on Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute in November, 2019, the Supreme Court ruled in favour of the construction of a Ram temple at Ayodhya. It also ruled that an alternative five-acre plot be found for a mosque. Soon after the verdict, there were suggestions that the Board should not accept the land. Based on the SC verdict, the Centre had asked the UP government to allot five acres of land to Sunni Waqf Board.  
The UP cabinet allotted a land tract on February 5 and gave allotment letter of the plot in Dhannipur village in Ayodhya's Sohawal tehsil to the Waqf Board earlier this month.

# TRUMP'S VISIT Govt busy when Delhi burning and Kashmiris deprived of rights: Iltija

**Srinagar:** PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti's daughter Iltija Mufti on Monday said the Government was busy with the visit of US President Donald Trump to India, while Delhi was 'burning' and 8 million Kashmiris deprived of their fundamental rights.  
She said the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi is remembered only during visits by foreign dignitaries to Sabarmati Ashram.  
"Hi Tea' & Namastey Trump while Delhi burns & 8 million Kashmiris remain deprived of fundamental rights. Gandhi ji's legacy remembered only at perfunctory visits to Sabarmati ashram by foreign dignitaries. His values long forgotten," Iltija tweeted.  
Iltija has been tweeting from her mother's Twitter handle after the PDP president was taken into custody on August 5 last year following abrogation of Article 370.  
US President Donald Trump landed at Ahmedabad in Gujarat on Monday for his first visit to India to a grand welcome by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and thousands of people who lined the streets and packed into the Motera stadium there to say 'Namaste Trump'.  
The first stop in the Trump visit was the Sabarmati Ashram, home to Mahatma Gandhi between 1917 and 1930 during India's freedom struggle. From Ahmedabad, the Trumps will travel to Agra and then on to New Delhi on Monday evening.  
Meanwhile, a Delhi Police constable was killed and a deputy commissioner of police injured as clashes over the amended citizenship law broke out in northeast Delhi's Jaffrabad and Maujpur on Monday. **PTI**

# Sidda to BJP: Host event at Kashmir to prove normalcy

**Bengaluru:** Raising questions about the Situation in Kashmir, senior Congress leader and former Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday asked the BJP heading the Union Government to prove 'normalcy' by hosting US President Donald Trump's event in the valley.  
If @BJP4India feels Kashmir has returned to Normalcy, & If @BJP4India feels that there is no govt orchestrated violence. Now is the time to prove the same by hosting @realDonaldTrump's event at Kashmir, Siddaramaiah tweeted.  
Amid concerns raised by Opposition parties, the Government has said efforts have been made to restore normalcy in Jammu & Kashmir which faced months of restrictions after its special status under Article 370 was scrapped in August last year.  
Siddaramaiah, who is Leader of Opposition in Karnataka Assembly, in another tweet hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the long wall built near the airport in Ahmedabad allegedly to block view of a slum, ahead of Trumps visit. It is time for @realDonaldTrump to get inspired from @narendramodi. Inspiration to build decorative walls to hide not so decorative life! he tweeted.  
The Opposition Congress in Gujarat had accused the BJP --ruled civic body in Ahmedabad of building the 500-metre long wall to block view of a slum colony.  
Refuting the allegations, AMC officials had said the construction of the wall, around four feet in height, was approved much before Trump's Gujarat visit was finalised. **PTI**

# Visit won't make an iota of difference to Indians: Sena

**Mumbai:** Panning Donald Trump's visit to India, the Shiv Sena on Monday said the 36-hour-long sojourn of the US president in the country won't make 'an iota of difference' in the lives of poor and middle-class Indians.  
While leaving for India, Trump has said he is going to discuss business with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which makes it clear that his trip is aimed at boosting US trade, the Sena said.  
"There won't be an iota of difference in the lives of the poor and middle-class people in India due to Trump's visit. Then where is the question of people being appreciative or enthusiastic of his tour," an editorial in Sena mouthpiece Saamana said.  
"If there is any eagerness about Trump's visit, it may be in Ahmedabad, where he lands first," the Sena said. **PTI**

# FROM PAGE 1 COP, 3 MEN KILLED IN RIOTS OVER CAA

"Entry and exit gates of Udyog Bhawan, Patel Chowk, Central Secretariat and Janpath have also been closed. Interchange facility will be open at Central Secretariat," said a DMRC official. However, it is not clear if these metro stations have been closed due to Trump's arrival in Delhi or the CAA demonstrations. All these stations are close to ITC Maurya in Chanakyapuri where Donald Trump would be staying tonight.  
Meanwhile, the Delhi Police on Monday also appealed to the people to maintain peace and not to believe in rumours in the wake of violence in parts of northeast Delhi during protests for and against the new citizenship law.  
Beside the Delhi Police personnel, around eight companies of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and two companies of Rapid Action Force (RAF) have been deployed in the Northeast areas.  
"Some incidents of violence and arson were reported in areas of North East District, particularly in the areas of Maujpur, Kardampuri, Chandbagh and Dayalpur. It is appealed to the people of Delhi and particularly to the North East District to maintain peace and harmony and not to believe in any rumours. It is also appealed to the media not to circulate any disturbing pictures which may further aggravate the situation," said a senior police official adding that the Delhi Police is making every effort to restore normalcy.

"Section 144 has been imposed in the affected areas of North East district and strict action will be taken against miscreants and anti social elements," the senior police official added.  
"Ratan Lal, Head Constable was attached to the office of the Assistant Commissioner of Police, Gokulpuri and he was killed in the clashes today. Several police personnel have been injured in the clashes. The DCP, Shahdara, suffered injuries to his head and hand. He was hospitalised and is doing fine," said the senior police official.  
Following the clashes, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal urged Lt Governor Anil Bajjal and Union Home Minister Amit Shah to restore law and order in the wake of violence in parts of northeast Delhi during protests for and against the new citizenship law.  
"Very distressing news regarding disturbance of peace and harmony in parts of Delhi coming in. I sincerely urge Honble LG n Hon'ble Union Home Minister to restore law and order and ensure that peace and harmony is maintained. Nobody should be allowed to orchestrate flagrantions (sic)," he tweeted.  
"I just spoke to the L-G. He has assured that more police forces are being sent. Violence will not be tolerated by anyone. I request people to maintain peace. No solution will come out of violence," Kejriwal tweeted in Hindi.  
"The death of a head constable is very sad. He was also one of us. Please give up violence. Nobody benefits from violence. All problems will be solved peacefully," he said in another tweet.  
Bajjal on Monday instructed the Police Commissioner to maintain law and order in the national Capital in the wake of violence during clashes in northeast Delhi. Instructed @DelhiPolice and @CPDelhi to ensure that law and order is maintained in North East Delhi. The situation is being closely monitored. I urge everyone to exercise restraint for maintenance of peace and harmony," Bajjal tweeted.  
Delhi Minister and Babarpur MLA Gopal Rai also urged the people in the area to maintain peace in the wake of the clashes over the citizenship law, saying some people were purposely trying to disturb the atmosphere.  
Incidentally, on Saturday night, a group of women blocked a carriage way outside the Jaffrabad Metro station against the CAA. Clashes broke out on Sunday evening between pro and anti-CAA groups near Jaffrabad over blocking of the road, while similar sit-ins were launched in several other parts of the national Capital including Hauz Rani.  
The situation escalated after BJP leader Kapil Mishra called a gathering on Sunday. Mishra demanded that police remove the anti-CAA protestors within three days. Since then northeast Delhi has been on the boil. It has also been witnessing spurts of violence.

# FROM PAGE 1 TAJ MAHAL INSPIRES AWE: POTUS

She also captured the moments in her mobile phone and even gave her phone to a person to get a solo picture clicked.  
Trump and Melania were also briefed about the history and importance of the monument by a guide.  
The US President's visit to Agra and Taj generated huge excitement among local residents. Some shops even displayed their own banners, welcoming Trump to India.  
Trump also took to Twitter to express his sentiments about his first official visit to India.  
"First lady and I have travelled 8,000 miles around the world to give a message to each citizen of this country -- America loves India, America respects India, and the people of America will always be true and committed friends of the people of India," the American leader tweeted in Hindi.  
From the Kheria airbase here, Trump's convoy of over 30 vehicles drove to Oberoi Amarvilas hotel near the Taj Mahal complex, as over 15,000 school students who lined up on both sides of the route held US and India flags and cheered the US president as his motorcade passed by.  
Massive billboards bearing greeting messages and pictures of Trump, First Lady and Modi dotted the nearly 13-km convoy route as street roundabouts decked up with US and India flags symbolised the US-India friendship.  
An extensive three-layered security was in place for his Agra visit, and authorities had got the Taj Mahal premises cleared of visitors by noon, hours ahead of Trump's visit to the celebrated architectural landmark.  
The last US president to visit the Taj Mahal was Bill Clinton who had come to India in 2000. He had seen the Taj along with daughter Chelsea Clinton. In 1959, then US President Dwight David Eisenhower had visited Taj along with then prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru.  
From massive billboards bearing greeting messages to street roundabouts decked up with US and India flags, Agra had waited excitedly to welcome President Trump and authorities made arrangements to present a "lively Agra" to the visiting president, seeking to shake off the old tag of 'city of ghosts'.  
During Clinton's visit the city streets were deserted due to security arrangements, prompting him to call it a 'city of ghosts'. This time the excitement can be felt in the air," said Mohit Kumar, who works at a hotel in Tajganj area. "I was very young in 2000 when Clinton visited. We are very excited and happy that another US President has come to our city due to which the civic amenities have been improved," he said.  
Earlier, on his arrival at the airbase, over 250 artistes drawn from different parts of Uttar Pradesh performed the 'Mayur dance', 'Rai folk dance', 'Dhobia folk dance' as sonorous sounds of 'bumrasia' nagada, dholak, mridang, added to the festive ambience.  
A giant billboard there featuring Trump, First Lady Melania Trump and Prime Minister Modi greeted the couple with a message -- "Grand welcome of India's best friend to the City of Love -- Agra". Trump was received at the Kheria airbase by Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.  
"From the airport, the US President's convoy travelled till the Oberoi Amarvilas hotel situated near the East Gate of the Taj Mahal complex. From there the President and his family and members of high-level delegation accompanying him moved into eco-friendly golf carts to travel into the monument premises," a senior official said. As per Supreme Court directions, petrol or diesel-operated vehicles are not permitted within 500 m of the Taj Mahal's gate. The architectural marvel inscribed into the UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983 is made of white Makrana marble and red sandstones, and renowned for its intricate inlay work on the stone surface.  
Taj Mahal, considered one of the seven wonders of the world, stands on the bank of Yamuna, and is always high on the itinerary of visiting heads of state.  
In 2015, the then US President Barack Obama was scheduled to visit the monument during his India visit. It is said he could not do so due to security reasons. It is one of the most photographed sites in the world.

# India natural anti-terror ally: Trump

**From Page 1**  
He also announced that the two countries will firm up defence deals worth USD 3 billion on Tuesday and that the US will become India's premier defence partner. "US looks forward to providing India the best and feared equipment on the planet," he said.  
"India and US have natural and enduring friendship," Trump said to a cheering crowd. Trump said both countries are working on a "fantastic trade" deal, and observed that Modi is a "tough negotiator".  
The US President also praised Modi, saying the Prime Minister is a "living proof" of what an Indian can achieve with hard work as Trump referred to his humble background as a tea-seller. Modi praised Trump's leadership in containing terrorism.  
Trump said as the world's largest economy, India gives hope to all humanity and has become an economic giant. "There is a difference between a nation that rises by coercion and one that rises by setting its people free -- that is India. India and the US have natural and enduring friendship," he said.  
He also touched on India's cultural diversity and riches as he highlighted the success of its blockbuster movies like DDLJ (Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge) and Sholay, and its sporting icons like Sachin Tendulkar and Virat Kohli.  
He highlighted the boom in the US economy under his presidency and added that India will soon be home to the biggest middle class as it will eliminate extreme poverty in next 10 years.  
Addressing the gathering, Modi termed the visit as a "new chapter" and said the relations between the two countries are no longer just another partnership but a far greater and closer relationship.  
Welcoming the US President to "world's biggest democracy", Modi said foundations of new alignments, challenges, opportunities and changes are being laid.  
"India and the US relations and cooperation will play an important role in deciding the course of world in the 21st century. I am of the categorical view that India and the US are natural partners," Modi said. Underscoring the strong

ties between the two nations, Modi said the US is now India's largest trading partner and the Indian military is involved in its biggest war exercise with the US.  
Modi said Trump's visit is a new chapter in the relations. "A chapter that will become a new document of progress and prosperity of the people of America and India," he said.  
Modi said the two countries also share spirit of enterprise and innovation, shared opportunities and challenges and shared hopes and aspirations. The Prime Minister also appreciated Trump Administration's efforts in the field of health.  
The biggest strength between two people or nations is trust, Modi said while quoting an old adage that "friendship is where trust is unshakable".  
Highlighting the achievements of the country, Modi noted that India not only has the world record of sending the maximum number of satellites simultaneously, but also is making the world record by doing the fastest financial inclusion.  
"Increasing manufactur-

ing in India, expanding infrastructure, will bring new possibilities for America. In this era of Industry 4.0, the expansion of the digital economy in India will create many investment opportunities for the US as well," Modi said.  
Industry 4.0 has been defined as a name for the current trend of automation and data exchange in manufacturing technologies. Modi also said we are inspired by a long-term vision, not just short term considerations.  
"Our bilateral relations will grow, our economic partnership will expand, our digital cooperation will increase," he said. The Indo-US ties are no longer just another partnership but have touched far greater heights, and the Trump's trip with his family shows this, Modi said.  
The PM said today 130 crore Indians are jointly building a 'new India'. "Our youth power is full of aspirations. Setting big goals, achieving them is becoming the hallmark of new India today," he said.  
Modi noted that India not only has the world record of sending the maximum number of satellites simultaneously, but also is making the world record by doing the fastest financial inclusion.  
"Increasing manufactur-

## Indo-China row

Beijing's selective engagement with India on the Wuhan evacuations is plain confrontationist



Desperate times call for desperate measures and when a global crisis has a new name called Coronavirus with a hydra-headed manifestation, then politics should be the last concern between nations who must unitedly fight it. Unfortunately, China, which is filtering the extent of its health crisis lest it be construed as bad propaganda for its global stakes, has let that unease creep into its bilateral ties with India. Seems like the spiralling epidemic has torn the "relative calm" in the strategic partnership. A spat that could have

been settled by discussion and mutual understanding has unnecessarily been allowed to gain traction. The current row stems from China's refusal to grant permission to our military aircraft for the evacuation of several Indians from the Coronavirus-hit Wuhan. Although China facilitated the civil flights by rescue missions, it is dragging its feet over clearances for this one, attributing it to procedural norms given the disease has reached a higher degree of criticality. But India maintains that it is precisely because of this and its responsibility to protect its citizens that it was sending in the C-17 Globemaster, equipped with medical facilities, to bring back Indians, assuming they were infected. Yet in a tit-for-tat response, Beijing accused New Delhi of being selfish and holding back essential medical equipment required by local authorities and medical workers for treating patients. More, China has called upon the Indian authorities to follow the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines that call for resumption of all trade and personal exchanges with it to restore normalcy. Yet the world knows that when it comes to humanitarian missions, India has never held itself back. So this strong-arm and negotiatory tactics by the Chinese are not warranted. In all this bickering, not least unexpected, the Chinese response was the same as it was during the outbreak of the virus, "denial." So the fate of around 100-odd Indians, who remain stuck in the Chinese city, is still undecided.

Besides, Beijing cannot justify its "selective" engagement with India on the evacuation process, allowing permission to some while denying it to others. As it turns out, in the same "critical period," three other nations were allowed to operate their evacuation flights. What is incomprehensible is that just a few days ago, the Chinese authorities applauded the "kindness" shown by New Delhi in helping them tackle the outbreak. Premier Xi Jinping had himself lauded India for offering solidarity and assistance. The mixed messages are typical of the larger Chinese strategy of keeping us on our toes by speaking in a forked tongue. Despite this blow-hot-blow-cold attitude of the Chinese, the Indian Government chose to keep differences aside and sought to aggressively push itself to help China contain the virus. From agreeing to test clinical samples from abroad in its laboratories to offering help with the evacuation of people from affected areas to lifting the ban on the export of personal protection equipment — it has done it all. The least one could have expected of the Chinese, given their continued emphasis on strategic relationship and intention to look at trade and other broader areas of cooperation, was to acknowledge the role played by other nations, including India, in fighting the epidemic. But that's too much to ask from it. In all the three sorties carried out to date, where more than 600 Indians have been airlifted, working with China has been a nightmare with the biggest hurdle coming by way of getting approvals from its authorities — Central, provincial as well as local. It must also not be forgotten that ripple effects of the spread of the virus are being felt in India, as in other nations. We, too, need to be prepared to tackle any potential crisis. India's stand with regard to restrictions on some medical devices assumes prominence on account of our fast depleting stocks and low domestic output. In fact, the crisis has led to the deep realisation of how we are heavily reliant on the Chinese for the procurement of raw materials and key ingredients for the production of medical equipment and drugs. So much so that the Government is all set to create new opportunities for Indian firms to emerge as an alternative producing destination to fill the supply vacuum. This outbreak should serve as a warning for Indian industries to diversify their supply chains and encourage the production of critical components within India. Till we are dependent on supplies from China, it will use our weakness to leverage diplomacy.

## Fatty Indians

Delhi and Ahmedabad top the ICMR's study of people consuming fats above prescribed levels



That Indian cuisine is high on flavour is an undisputed fact but so is the reality that it is making us sick. Not because there's anything wrong with our food but because our eating habits are askew and we are over-dependent on coating our food with fat. We think nothing of adding more butter to our food and eating deep fried snacks, biryani, paranthas and so on, especially in the metropolitan cities where there's a culture of indulgence, easy availability of rich foods, even late at night thanks to food apps and an increasing capacity to pay for foods that we crave for. It's no surprise then that a recent survey by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on consumption patterns in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai shows that the average intake of added fat in all the seven metro cities pooled together was 32.6 grams per person each day, which is higher than the ICMR-recommended levels of 20 grams. Out of these seven cities, Delhi and Ahmedabad topped the list in the daily average consumption of fat. Overall, 18 per cent of the total intake of energy was obtained from visible fat and vegetarians consumed more fat at 40.7 grams per person daily than non-vegetarians at 30.2 grams. The survey also revealed that men consume more fat at 34.1 grams than women who consume 31.1 grams per day. These figures are worrying as the country's burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is escalating at an alarming rate.

While NCDs typically affect people above 55 in most developed nations, in India, they occur at least 10 years earlier. Not only are they eroding our human capital, an increasing healthcare burden is one of the major public health challenges the country is facing. And as Government spending on health is a dismal 1.2 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), this means that the burden of rising lifestyle diseases like cancer, obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular complexities is increasingly being borne by individuals out of their pockets. Ludicrously, India is fighting the twin burden of undernutrition and overnutrition, which leaves the Government and healthcare professionals with the dilemma of solving both issues concurrently. Also, it is ironic that both Delhi and Ahmedabad top the list of unhealthy eaters, considering the fact that in Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has been improving healthcare facilities and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who hails from Gujarat, has been an avid proponent of the Fit India Movement. Maybe, it's time Governments began looking at creating more awareness as part of their efforts to keep India healthy.

The land of the Government, public sector undertakings (PSUs) and cooperative institutions will be utilised for this purpose. The Government has decided to instruct local self-Government institutions to identify land in their areas alongside the State and national highways. The Government has further stated that those agencies willing to cooperate with the project would be made partners. There is also an idea to start small shops and snack parlours along with these complexes, which can, in turn, give employment as well as boost the economy. But the public will have to use them and

# A Constitution not so fragile

Proud, natural-born citizens of the country must see through the dubious plans of selective propaganda on CAA and NPR



A SURYA PRAKASH

The agitation against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the National Population Register (NPR) and related matters, triggered largely by fears that the Union Government will deprive millions of Muslims of their citizenship, is one of the most confusing agitations that this writer has witnessed over the past few decades. The CAA has nothing to do with the Indian citizens. It only seeks to provide citizenship to a limited number of people who have been persecuted in three Islamic Republics neighbouring India. The premise on which the agitation is being carried on is completely baseless and is indicative of the extent of mischief a bunch of malcontents can do when the electorate rejects their agenda.

Organisers of the agitation are calling people to the protest sites by spreading rumours that the CAA will enable the Government to snatch away their citizenship, when the fact is that the law has nothing to do with the people of this country. More importantly, anyone, who reads the Citizenship Act, 1955, (the entire Act and not just the 2019 amendment to it), will realise how water-tight the citizenship of a natural-born citizen (a person born on Indian soil) is under this Act and that in reality, no one has the power to take it away. Section 3 of the Citizenship Act, 1955, describes citizens of India "by birth." It says: "Every person born in India (a) on or after January 26, 1950, but before July 1, 1987; (b) on or after the July 1, 1987, but before the commencement of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003, and either of whose parents is a citizen of India at the time of his birth; (c) on or after the commencement of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003, where (i) both his parents are citizens of India; or (ii) one of whose parents is a citizen of India and the other is not an illegal migrant at the time of his birth, shall be a citizen of India by birth."

As can be seen, probably 99 per cent or more of the Indian citizens fall in this category called "citizens by birth" and they belong to all religions — Hindu, Muslim and Christian among others. Such people are also known as "natural born" citizens. They are distinct from naturalised citizens and indeed constitute the highest class of citizens (for example in the US, only a natural born citizen can be the President). These citizens (this writer included) do not "apply" for citizenship. They become citizens when they first breathe life. They do not make an oath, swearing allegiance to the Constitution of India because their every breath is deemed allegiance. Their loyalty is taken for granted. They can give up their Indian citizenship but no power can deprive them of their citizenship. Among such citizens, those who commit rape and murder, can be hanged for the



offence, if the law so provides, but their citizenship cannot be snatched away from them. The Act does not provide for it. They will take their citizenship to the gallows. Such is the quality of this citizenship.

The citizenship Act offers other categories of citizenship like citizenship by registration (Section 5) and naturalisation (Section 6). These are basically for foreigners who wish to settle in India and seek Indian citizenship or people of Indian origin living abroad who want to return to India and live as citizens in this country. There is another category — foreigners, who marry Indian citizens and settle down in the country. Sonia Gandhi, the president of the Congress, is an Italian expatriate who moved to India after her marriage to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1968.

Under Section 5(2), Indian citizenship can be granted to a person coming via the registration route. There is a similar provision under Section 6 (2) for expatriates who apply for Indian citizenship through "naturalisation." In both cases, citizenship is granted, subject to conditions and restrictions, and only after they make the oath of allegiance.

In the case of Sonia Gandhi, as per the law at that time, she could have applied for Indian citizenship five years after marriage but she did so only after 15 years on April 7,



EVERY MUSLIM CITIZEN, WHO IS SWAYED BY THE ANTI-CAA ARGUMENT, MUST ASK HIMSELF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN ORDER TO KNOW THE QUALITY OF CITIZENSHIP HE/SHE ENJOYS: DID HE/SHE EVER APPLY FOR CITIZENSHIP LIKE SONIA GANDHI? WAS HE/SHE EVER ASKED TO SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA, LIKE HER?



1983, and was granted citizenship on April 30, 1983. Despite being an Italian citizen in 1980, she illegally entered the electoral rolls that year and following a complaint, her name was deleted from the rolls. However, this is another story for another day. But one may ask, how is all this relevant?

These facts are pertinent because unlike natural-born citizens, Sonia Gandhi's citizenship is extremely vulnerable. Being a "naturalised" citizen, her citizenship is subject to several conditions and restrictions. Further, if she violates any of those conditions, her citizenship can be cancelled.

Section 10 of the citizenship Act lists out the situations in which a citizen by registration or naturalisation can be deprived of his/her citizenship. It says that if the registration or certificate of naturalisation was obtained by means of fraud, false representation or the concealment of any material fact; or that citizen has shown himself by act or speech to be disloyal or disaffected towards the Constitution of India as by law established; or that citizen has, during any war in which India may be engaged, unlawfully traded or communicated with an enemy; or that citizen has been ordinarily resident out of India for a continuous period of seven years, his/her citizenship can be cancelled.

Further, unlike citizens by birth, a naturalised citizen has to swear allegiance to the Constitution of India. It cannot be taken for granted. Every Muslim citizen, who is swayed by the anti-CAA argument, must ask himself/herself the following questions in order to know the quality of citizenship he/she enjoys: Did he/she ever "apply" for citizenship like Sonia Gandhi? Was he/she ever asked to swear allegiance to the Constitution of India, like her? So, this is the power and quality of the citizenship of 99 per cent of the citizens under the Citizenship Act, 1955, but the Congress, after its decimation in the 2019 Lok Sabha poll, wants the Muslims of India to believe that their citizenship is as fragile as that of its party president.

This is nothing but an attempt to spread falsehood and disaffection. It could even be seen as an attempt to overthrow a duly elected Government through guile and subterfuge. Proud natural-born citizens of India — Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis and Jews — must disengage themselves from this campaign which is dangerous for our democracy and for our constitutional well-being.

(The writer is an author specialising in democracy studies. Views expressed are personal.)

## SOUNDBITE

Democracy in India gave rise to identity-based politics. From the lens of deepening democracy, this is a positive development because it leads to wider representation.



Former President —Pranab Mukherjee

There was a struggle in the beginning because very few commercial films were being made then. Today less commercial films are made but hatred has turned into love.



Filmmaker —Rohit Shetty

The US and India are the two largest democracies in the world and share many values. There is much to be gained from the friendship of Modi and Trump.



Indian-American politician —Nikki Haley

It (air purifier) helps neutralise the air but a bigger problem in Delhi is what to do with the far more toxic and harmful PM 2.0 molecules of Modi's second term.



Congress leader —Shashi Tharoor

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Emulate Kerala

Sir — The Kerala Government must be lauded for its ambitious sanitation initiative as it plans to set up 12,000 pairs of public toilets on highways. The lack of public toilets on freeways causes inexplicable difficulties for people, especially women and children. Most often, travellers are clueless. There are either unmaintained public toilets on the way or people have to visit hotels and spend money on food simply because they have to use the toilet there.

The land of the Government, public sector undertakings (PSUs) and cooperative institutions will be utilised for this purpose. The Government has decided to instruct local self-Government institutions to identify land in their areas alongside the State and national highways.

The Government has further stated that those agencies willing to cooperate with the project would be made partners. There is also an idea to start small shops and snack parlours along with these complexes, which can, in turn, give employment as well as boost the economy. But the public will have to use them and

### A versatile genius, really?

Supreme Court judge Arun Mishra was fulsome in his praise for the Prime Minister at the International Judicial Conference in New Delhi. His laudatory characterisation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "versatile genius who thinks globally and acts locally" flabbergasted watchers of Indian politics and judiciary. His encomium that Modi is an "internationally acclaimed visionary" left the citizens speechless in disbelief. Did the learned judge mean what he said? Did he know the meaning of what he said?

Usually, singing the paeans to a leader is left to his followers. The nature of his job has not deterred Justice Mishra from extolling the incumbent Prime Minister as a "versatile genius." He seems to have been smitten by "Modi worship syndrome." The moot question is whether a judge can lavish praise on a leader in an unbounded manner even if he is popular and has a huge cult following and risks being bracketed with sycophants. Modi bhakts abound in our country; they include television anchors, serving and ex-Army officers, yoga gurus and even Governors.

Now, a Supreme Court judge has joined the "Modi fans club." In glorifying the Prime Minister in such glowing terms, Justice Mishra has revealed his political and ideological leanings. But his praise does not alter the fact that Prime Minister Modi is a profound-



ly polarising figure with a chequered past and a promoter of the interests of privileged upper caste Hindus and corporate behemoths. In school, we learnt that Leonardo da Vinci was a versatile genius; he was a painter, a scientist, a mathematician, an engineer, an architect, a sculptor, a musician, a man of the theatre, a paleontologist, and a lot more, all rolled into one. Versatile geniuses hold a lofty place in our imagination. Modi does not.

G David Milton Maruthancode

maintain them properly. Other State Governments can follow Kerala's template.

M Pradyu Kannur

### Ill-conceived decision

Sir — By ordering that bars would remain open till late in

some Haryana cities, the State Government is looking to increase its revenue from liquor sales. While increasing liquor contracts and the number of

vends will generate some employment and income for people associated with the sector, the increase in liquor consumption may also cause a spurt in crime. The sale of liquor at shopping malls will also add to the problem. This method of adding on to the State's revenue is against public welfare.

Yugal Kishore Sharma Faridabad

### Stalemate continues

Sir — Rumours are rife that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi may once again take charge of the party. But more than once, the Congress scion has demonstrated that he is unsuited to lead the party. Leaders, too, are toeing the same line because they cannot be seen to be publicly writing him off. But Rahul does not seem to connect with the masses. If the Congress cannot really look beyond the family, why not persuade Priyanka Gandhi to step in? But who will bell the cat?

Srinivas Via email

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

FIRST COLUMN

## Waiting for Godot, as usual

The military justice system is in jeopardy and is only surviving due to the efforts of the SC and serving members in the Armed Forces Tribunal



DEEPAK SINHA

It is no secret that what differentiates us from countries like Pakistan is our commitment to the rule of law. However bruised or battered our justice system may be, it still continues to be trusted and it delivers, albeit rather slowly. This, however, does not hold true for the health of the military justice system, which has been in serious jeopardy for the last three years or so. That it continues to survive on the respirator and provide justice is only because of the extraordinary efforts of the Supreme Court and serving members in the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT). This state of affairs can directly be attributed to the shenanigans of senior bureaucrats in the Defence Ministry and the Prime Minister's Office, who were caught out when they first attempted to subvert the independence and functioning of the AFT by way of enacting new rules through a Gazette Notification issued under the Finance Act, 2017. In this, they changed the selection criteria and procedures for the appointment of the chairperson and members, especially with regard to that of the administrative members. Whether this was done with the tacit approval of their political bosses, is moot.

Since the role of administrative members is to advise the judicial members on aspects of military law, ethos, customs and functioning, only military veterans meeting a specific criterion could be considered for appointment, as per the Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007. However, the Finance Act, 2017 opened this up to "a person of ability, integrity and standing having special knowledge of and professional experience of not less than twenty years in, economics, business, commerce, law, finance, accountancy, industry, public affairs, administration or in any other matter useful to the Armed Forces Tribunal."

How anybody without the requisite expertise or domain knowledge could be useful in advising on matters military was not elucidated. However, it is not difficult to reach the conclusion that the intent was to provide further avenues for post-retirement sinecures for worthy members of our civilian bureaucracy. That apart, by attempting to tighten its hold on the selection process for the chairperson and members, the Government had unambiguously made clear that it expected those aspiring to be appointed to the AFT to follow its dictates. Obviously, if these amended rules were accepted, then the AFT would represent sheer tokenism of the worst kind as it would be a complete travesty of natural justice and go against the very concept of rule of law.

However, fortunately these reprehensible efforts were nullified when the Supreme Court initially stayed the matter and then subsequently struck it down on the grounds that "they were contrary to the parent Act and principles enshrined in the Constitution" (Rojer Mathews vs South Indian Bank Ltd and Others). The court further pointed serious anomalies in the rules and directed the Government to reframe them. In the ensuing stand-off between the apex court and the Government, serving personnel and veterans alike became victims of bureaucratic apathy and bloody-mindedness.

In a show of extreme vindictiveness and an utter lack of empathy for the military community, and with complete disregard of their actions on morale, the bureaucracy did what it does best, refused to move files, thereby ensuring vacant posts could not be filled. From a time when 17 Benches were functional (each Bench has one judicial and one administrative member) across the country, we are now down to two regular Benches in Delhi and one ad hoc roving Bench that moves from city to city in an attempt to try and provide some semblance of justice. The obvious implication is that the wait for justice just became even longer, with over 16,000 cases pending. If the stalemate continues, as it looks to, the situation will only get worse as administrative members complete their tenure around July, unless of course the apex court extends their terms, as it has done for the two judicial members.

That this Government has no intentions of changing course over the matter, despite all that has occurred, has been clearly brought by the issue of a new Gazette Notification in February under the Finance Act, 2017. The new rules notified therein are only marginally different with regard to selection criterion of the chairperson and judicial members but have made no attempt to change the previously-rejected selection criteria with regard to administrative members. Clearly this action on the part of the Government is not only completely brazen but also appears to be in contempt of the Supreme Court, if its directions were to be viewed in the spirit of the law. As to whether the court itself will view this matter seriously, only time will tell. However, one can be certain that there are bound to be a spate of writ petitions filed against this outrage. This implies we are back on the merry-go-round or maybe just as in Samuel Beckett's play of the same name we will continue "waiting for Godot." What a shame.

(The writer, a military veteran is a consultant with the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi and Senior Visiting Fellow with the Peninsula Foundation, Chennai)

WHILE TARGETTING US, THE BJP SHOULD SEE WHAT IS HAPPENING IN CENTRALLY-RULED NEW DELHI, WHERE TERRORISTS STORMED JNU AND BEAT UP STUDENTS.

—MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER  
 UDDHAV THACKERAY

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



THE FREQUENCY OF ASSAULTS, IN WHICH SOME WOMEN EVEN LOST THEIR LIVES, IS SERIOUS AND CANNOT BE IGNORED.

—FORMER MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER  
 DEVENDRA FADNAVIS

# Reduce the income gap

The solution doesn't lie in more sops, fiscal incentives and so on. There is need for change in the way our industrialists do business and netas and babus conduct themselves



UTTAM GUPTA

Successive Governments have remained obsessed with accelerating economic growth without caring about how it impacts income distribution, forget any attempt to internalise this crucial aspect in development strategies. They believe that the fruits of growth will automatically percolate to the lowest strata of society. Nothing could be farther from the truth. This is evident from a piece of research, *Time to Care*, released by rights group Oxfam ahead of the 50th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) held in Davos (Switzerland) from January 21-24. According to the study, India's richest one per cent hold more than four-times the wealth held by the 953 million people who make up the bottom 70 per cent of the country's population. Further, the combined total wealth of 63 Indian billionaires is higher than the total Union Budget of the country for the fiscal year 2018-19.

At the global level, too, the report (for calculations, it draws upon latest data sources available, including the Credit Suisse Research Institute's *Global Wealth Databook, 2019* and *Forbes' 2019 Billionaires List*) brings out glaring inequalities in the distribution of wealth. The world's 2,153 billionaires have more wealth than the 4.6 billion people who make up 60 per cent of the planet's population. The 22 richest men in the world have more wealth than all the women in Africa. The report notes, "global inequality is shockingly entrenched even as the number of billionaires has doubled in the last decade".

The Governments world over are fully aware of these glaring inequalities as well as their consequences. For instance, the WEF's annual *Global Risks Report (GRR)* — which was thoroughly discussed during the brainstorming sessions at Davos — observes, "inequality underlies recent social unrest in almost every continent, although it may be sparked by different tipping points such as corruption, constitutional breaches or the rise in prices for basic goods and services". It also warned, "the downward pressure on the global economy from macroeconomic fragilities and financial inequality continued to intensify in 2019".

They also routinely pledge to address these inequalities and come out with lofty declarations at multilateral platforms, including those under the auspices of the United Nations to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, including by use of what the *GRR* terms as "deliberate inequality-busting policies". Yet, when it comes to action on ground zero, there is acute lack of political will on the part of Governments and other stakeholders; hence, the business as usual scenario and ever-increasing inequities.

Fundamentally, inequalities are intrinsic to the way businesses are planned and orchestrated. It all starts with the Government offering a policy environment in which investors are offered an opportunity to earn an attractive rate of return on investment. What that attractive rate should be is not normally defined (though in certain sectors like power, it guarantees a minimum return); so any level, howsoever high, can fall within the scope of "attractiveness." A vast majority of the businesses pursue the famous adage "profit maximisation" to the hilt. They distribute their expenses in such a manner that the least amount is given to the labour and the bulk of it comes back to the owner (or promoter) as "retained earnings." The owners/promoters also

EVEN AS THE GOVERNMENT SHUFFLES POLICY CHOICES TO ATTUNE THEM FOR CREATING MORE JOBS AND INCREASE INCOME (BY PROMOTING LABOUR-INTENSIVE SECTORS SUCH AS TEXTILES, APPARELS, FOOD SERVICE, HOSPITALITY AND SO ON), UNLESS THE STAKEHOLDERS CHANGE THEIR MINDSET TOWARDS THE MAJORITY WHO ARE NOT SO PRIVILEGED, INEQUALITIES WILL CONTINUE TO HAUNT AND AS POINTED OUT IN THE *GRR*, EVEN GROWTH WILL REMAIN VULNERABLE TO THE DEEP DIVIDE BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR



leave no stone unturned in ensuring that their tax liability is kept at a bare minimum (for this, they retain the best talent viz. chartered accountants and other financial wizards, paying them extraordinarily high salaries). Big businesses also enjoy pricing power. For instance, those operating in metals such as copper, zinc or in hydrocarbon viz. oil and gas enjoy natural monopoly. Leveraging this, they charge high prices, making windfall gains even as consumers suffer erosion in purchasing power. This also applies to banks who enjoy margins of three-four per cent (difference between the average interest earning and the average cost of funds) yielding mammoth profit. Furthermore, there are companies in the IT (information technology) and IT-enabled sector which use their intellectual prowess to post huge profits year-after-year.

Then, there are enterprises in the chemical, petrochemicals and agro-chemicals sectors who have hugely benefited from a protective policy environment, with high tariff on imports as well as licensing and registration requirements. These companies make money at the expense of millions of consumers, including farmers (for instance, they have to pay a high price for "new" crop protection solutions for which domestic substitutes are not available).

The micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) may not be so well positioned vis-a-vis large enterprises but ape the latter when it comes to distributing the proceeds of wealth generation. Their owners spend the least on payment to workers thereby boosting their retained earnings. They, too, get tax bonanza from the Government in a variety of ways (for instance, special package under composition scheme of Goods and Services Tax as well as income tax). They may not find a place in the billionaires' club but definitely earn the multi-millionaire tag.

Then, there is the trader class, particularly entities dealing in farm com-

modities. They buy products from farmers at a throwaway price — the minimum support price (MSP) notified by the Government remains mostly on paper as its agencies don't have the wherewithal to procure their produce — and sell to the consumer at a high price. Irrespective of whether there is surplus or deficit, Indian markets are so orchestrated that only traders emerge as the real beneficiaries at the expense of farmers at one end and consumers at the other.

There is yet another class of rich who are an offshoot of corruption in governance systems. This includes corrupt bureaucrats, politicians (besides dubious businessmen) who amass wealth disproportionate to their known sources of income by siphoning off funds from welfare schemes and diversion of funds borrowed from public sector banks to personal accounts or shell companies of which they are the ultimate beneficiaries.

How does the Government address income inequalities? Typically, this takes the form of giving relief to the poor by providing State assistance in cash or kind. For instance, under the PM-KISAN, the Government gives ₹6,000 per annum to each of the 145 million farmers in the country in three installments of ₹2,000 each. As for help in kind, it provides Mid-Day Meals to schoolchildren or free medical services to Economically Weaker Sections in hospitals.

There are umpteen instances of such assistance — both by the Centre and States — entailing a mountain of burden on the public exchequer. All of this goes only to help millions barely survive even as a good slice of this is siphoned off (the malice continues in substantial measure despite the Government's efforts to prevent it, using the direct benefit transfer mechanism). However, it does nothing to augment their productive capacity and prepare them for getting jobs. Even where funds are given for empowering

and increasing the income earning capacity (for instance, availability of credit at concessional rate of interest to farmers and others engaged in petty occupations, supply of agricultural inputs such as fertilisers at subsidised rate, free electricity to farmers and so on), much of the promised help either does not reach or is cornered mostly by better-off farmers. Even those who gain from these support measures are at the receiving end when it comes to interface with traders for selling their produce.

Quite clearly, despite mammoth sums spent on welfare of the poor or "empowering" them, income inequalities increase even during periods of rapid economic growth. Even when, growth decelerates (for instance, during the current year when it declined to an 11-year-low of five per cent), then also the inequalities persist as the poor lose much more than the loss experienced by the rich.

The solution doesn't lie in more sops, concessional credit, fiscal incentives and so on. There is need for a fundamental change in the way our industrialists do business and politicians and bureaucrats conduct themselves. While, the former need to shed their overzealousness for profits, charge less from consumers, distribute more to workers and pay more taxes, the latter must ensure that every rupee is spent for the welfare and empowerment of the poor.

Even as the Government shuffles policy choices to attune them for creating more jobs and increase income (by promoting labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, apparels, food service, hospitality and so on), unless the stakeholders change their mindset towards the majority who are not so privileged, inequalities will continue to haunt and as pointed out in the *GRR*, even growth will remain vulnerable to the deep divide between the rich and the poor.

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

# Keep the momentum going to eliminate malaria

The challenges for the mammoth task — private sector partnership, increased domestic funding, surveillance mechanism, impact on the vulnerable population — need to be addressed. Till then there's no room for complacency



SANTANU MISHRA

Malaria, is known as the "disease of poverty" as it often hits those who have the least access to healthcare. Statistics show that 80 per cent of cases occur among 20 per cent of the country's population, mostly communities living in remote areas. For India, malaria has been a tricky foe with varying outcomes over the decades. It has achieved great strides in curbing the disease every time the Government has increased intensification and on the ground implementation of eradication programmes. The reverse is also true. Malaria was nearly eliminated in

the early 1960s but it soon re-emerged as a major public health problem. Early setbacks in its eradication coincided with DDT shortages and in the late '60s malaria cases in urban areas started to multiply. In the '70s its resurgence was a result of technical, financial and operational problems. As a result, in 1976, a whopping 6.45 million cases were recorded which led to the discontinuation of eradication efforts. In order to control the massive upsurge, the Modified Plan of Operation was launched in 1977 which brought the situation under control for five-six years. Malaria cases fell to 2.18 million in 1984 and climbed back to three million in 1995, with substantial mortality reported. However, since 2000, India has reduced the number of cases by more than half and the number of deaths by more than two-thirds. In the WHO's *World Malaria Report 2019*, India was lauded for strengthening its fight against the disease. These concerted efforts need to be sustained, reinvented and amplified if we are

going to end malaria by 2030.

**Challenges ahead:** In 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared the country's commitment to eliminating the disease by 2030. Soon after, in 2016, India introduced its National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination and took several measures to end the malady. But the biggest challenge remains as India's true burden of malaria is unknown. To understand and map malaria cases and fatalities, India solely relies on data from Government hospitals. This highlights a big gap in the realities of its malaria burden when approximately 70 per cent of urban and 63 per cent of rural households use the private sector to seek medical care. In some States malaria has been declared a notifiable disease, this means that private sector establishments have to adhere to Government guidelines, and report cases to the authorities. However, it is yet to be declared a notifiable disease for many States, which amplifies the gap in mapping the over-

all malaria burden. Several concrete steps are needed to win this fight.

**Disease mapping:** We must take along the private sector to ensure a collaborative surveillance method to obtain malaria's exact burden. For this we need to foster a healthy partnership between the private and public sector for mapping the disease in a holistic manner. If such a mechanism for gathering data is implemented and the true burden is identified, then India will be well-placed to end the disease.

**Effective partnerships:** Collaboration between various stakeholders is the key to success. To cite an example, an NGO, Malaria No More, launched a Malaria Action Coalition (MAC) in September 2019. The MAC acts as a multi-sectoral coordination platform, chaired by the malaria State of Odisha, with representation from non-Government technical, research and implementation agencies as well as the private sector, donors, investors and media partners to support the National Vector Borne Disease Control

Programme.

**Creating awareness:** Creating awareness has been one of the major catalysts to reduce, if not completely eliminate, a disease. Advocacy, awareness and on-ground programmes go hand in hand and the public and private sector have an equal role in it. To reduce the burden of malaria it is important to empower communities by educating them. An individual has to first learn to recognise and then prevent the disease. To further this effort, it is important that the individual spread information on malaria in his/her area. This empowerment will only come with education and self-awareness.

**Government's commitments:** Modi and the Health Minister have echoed India's seriousness to end malaria by 2030 on national and international platforms, including during last year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, when 52 leaders committed to halve malaria by 2023. With more Government

funding still needed, the Central Government nearly trebled the outlay for the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP) over the last two years.

Ensuring adequate investment in malaria is imperative to achieving India's elimination goals. Implementing the Five Year Plan for malaria elimination shall require ₹10,653.16 crore. While the Government has increased its funding for the NVBDCP, the Central Government-allocated funds for it get divided for disease control programmes/interventions for six diseases, malaria, dengue, chikungunya, kala-azar, lymphatic filariasis and Japanese encephalitis, creating a paucity of resources. This makes private sector contributions extremely critical to bolster the Government's efforts but there is a lack of funding from it. However, sustained focus and increased funding are crucial to boost the fight against malaria. Its elimination in India is important from a glob-

al and regional perspective because the country has the highest malaria burden outside sub-Saharan Africa. Some 1.26 billion Indians are at risk of malaria and the country shares its borders with several nations aiming for malaria elimination, including Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal. Sri Lanka, which eliminated malaria in 2016, is separated by only a small stretch of sea, with frequent air travel occurring between the two neighbours. India also shares borders with Myanmar where a drug-resistant malaria parasite has been reported. Successful malaria control in India will enhance elimination efforts across the region and the world.

The challenges for the mammoth task — private sector partnership, increased domestic funding, surveillance mechanism, impact on the vulnerable population — need to be addressed. Till then there's no room for complacency.

(The writer is Co-Founder, Smile Foundation)

# Markets crash as virus alarm spreads globally

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Indian stock benchmark **Sensex** on Monday sank nearly 807 points, the second biggest single-day fall this year, tracking sell-offs in global markets as coronavirus cases rose exponentially outside China. Starting off on a weaker note, the BSE gauge plunged to a day's low of 40,366.36 after being caught in a panic selling as investors kept fretting over reporting of a large number of new virus cases in South Korea, Italy and Iran.

The 30-share index finally settled at 40,363.23, dropping 806.89 points or 1.96 per cent — the second biggest one-day fall in 2020. The Sensex had plunged over 987 points on February 1 this year — the day the Union Budget was presented. While, the broader NSE Nifty sank 251.45 points or 2.08 per cent to 11,829.40.

All Sensex components ended in the red, with Tata Steel cracking 6.39 per cent, followed by ONGC, Maruti, HDFC, Titan and ICICI Bank. Sectorally, BSE metal index tumbled nearly 6 per cent, auto 3.39 per cent and telecom 3.33 per cent. All sectoral indices closed in the red.

In the broader market, BSE midcap and smallcap indices sank up to 1.60 per cent. Globally, equities bore the brunt of worsening trading sentiment in the wake of rising virus cases on new regions other than China.

South Korea went on high alert on Sunday following a sharp jump in coronavirus cases, and Italy and Iran took their own drastic containment steps. "Demand for safe-haven assets spiked as fresh coronavirus cases in South Korea and Italy indicated that business impact could be higher than thought earlier. The Trump-Modi meet is not providing clues to the market regarding trade deal but market is hoping for some hint in the future," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Further, the IMF also warned that the deadly epidemic could put an already fragile global economy recovery at risk. Chinese President Xi Jinping on Sunday said the coronavirus epidemic is the country's "largest public health emergency". The death toll from the deadly virus climbed to 2,592 in China on Monday. Seoul stocks ended in deep red after South Korea reported 161 more coron-

avirus cases on Monday, taking the overall virus cases to 763 and making it the world's largest total outside China. Bourses in Shanghai, Tokyo and Hong Kong also closed with significant losses.

Stock exchanges in Europe sank in opening trade with Milan's FTSE MIB plunging over 4 per cent after Italy reported its fourth death from the virus as the number of people contracting the virus continued to mount. Brent crude oil futures dropped over 4 per cent to USD 56.10 per barrel. On the domestic front, investors were eyeing US President Donald Trump's two-day visit to India for further cues on trade front. He reached Ahmedabad earlier in the day.

On the currency front, the Indian rupee was down 30 paise to 71.94 per US dollar. Indian markets, which were relatively resilient till now have also started pricing in the impact of economic loss due to the spread of coronavirus with a steep fall in equity markets, experts said.

Indian corporates are expected to witness a disruption in supply chain as the manufacturing activities in China slows down considerably, they added.

# Govt extends time till March 6 for bidders to pose queries on AI sale

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has extended the time till March 6 for bidders to pose additional queries regarding sale of its 100 per cent stake in Air India. The government has issued the first set of clarification on Air India disinvestment answering queries of interested bidders on the 'confidentiality undertaking' listed out in the Preliminary Information Memorandum (PIM) issued on January 27.

The last date for submission of written queries on PIM and Share Purchase Agreement (SPA) was originally set at February 11, following which the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) on February 21 issued a set of 20 clarifications on the queries raised. The additional time period for submission of written queries on PIM and SPA is till March 6, 2020, the DIPAM said.

The government in January restarted the divestment process of Air India and invited bids for selling 100 per cent of its equity in the state-owned airline, including Air India's 100 per cent shareholding in AI Express Limited

and 50 per cent in Air India SATS Airport Services Private Ltd. The last date for putting bids is March 17 and interested bidders for Air India should have a net worth of Rs 3,500 crore. After its unsuccessful bid to sell Air India in 2018, the government this time has decided to offload its entire stake. In 2018, the government had offered to sell its 76 per cent stake in the airline.

Of the total debt of Rs 60,074 crore as of March 31, 2019, the buyer would be required to absorb Rs 23,286.5 crore, while the rest would be transferred to Air India Assets Holding Ltd (AIAHL), the special purpose vehicle. As a precursor to Air India sale, the Cabinet in February 2019 approved setting up AIAHL to transfer Rs 29,464 crore worth loans of the national carrier and its four subsidiaries— Air India Air Transport Services (AIATSL), Airline Allied Services (AASL), Air India Engineering Services Ltd (AIESL) and Hotel Corporation of India (HCI).

Also non-core assets - painting and artefacts - as well as other non-operational assets of the national carrier too will be transferred to the SPV.

# DoT seeks ₹7,608 cr from GAIL in dues for FY18 ₹1.83 lakh cr assessment not being pressed

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The DoT has sought Rs 7,608 crore in dues from GAIL India for 2017-18 as the department appeared to be not pressing for immediate payment of Rs 1.83 lakh crore in past dues it had previously assessed from the state-owned gas utility. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) sent a notice to GAIL soon after the February 14 hearing in the Supreme Court on dues owned by telecom companies such as Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea, sources privy to the development said. The dues now being sought from GAIL include a penalty for late payment, they said.

The Supreme Court's original ruling in October last year led the DoT to demand Rs 1.47 lakh crore in unpaid dues on licence fees and spectrum usage charges from telecom companies such as Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea.

Its demand related to a 14-year-old dispute regarding the definition of adjusted gross revenue (AGR), which the Supreme Court agreed should include all kinds of income generated by the telcos.

Alongside, the DoT also raised a demand of over Rs 3

lakh crore from non-telecom PSUs such as GAIL, Oil India and PowerGrid for telecom licences these firms had primarily acquired for internal communication purposes.

For GAIL, the DoT assessed an outstanding of Rs 1,83,076 crore towards annual licence fee in respect of IP-II Licence. This included interests and penalty, sources said. GAIL and other non-telecom firms felt the October 2019 ruling of the Supreme Court did not apply to them and filed petitions seeking clarification from the apex court. On February 14, the Supreme Court rejected telcos' petition regarding relaxation in the payments. To non-telecom firms, it asked to approach appropriate forums for redressal of their grievance. Refusing to comment on the DoT demand, GAIL Chairman and Managing Director Manoj Jain said the Supreme Court on February 14 allowing the non-telecom firms to withdraw their petition is indicative enough that "our case is different" than telcos'.

"We are working on what appropriate forum should we go to for an appeal against the DoT order," he said. "We have already paid whatever was due

and according to us there is no outstanding." On the Rs 1.83 lakh crore assessment by the DoT, GAIL had previously in a regulatory filing stated that these were unrelated to the terms and conditions of its IP-II Licence. "Based on the legal option sought in this regard and facts of the case, the company is of the view, that the amount assessed in provisional assessment orders is legally not tenable," it had said. The DoT had computed dues of non-telecom PSUs by simply taking all their revenues earned such as oil and gas operations and levying licence fees.

Sources said while the DoT had sought Rs 48,489 crore in past dues from Oil India on the surplus bandwidth capacity it had leased to third parties, Power Grid Corp was slapped with Rs 21,953.65 crore liability. Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertilizers & Chemicals faces a payout of Rs 15,019.97 crore. On February 14, the Supreme Court had pulled the DoT for not enforcing its October 2019 order that gave telcos three months' time to pay dues. Hours later, the DoT sent notices to Airtel and Vodafone Idea asking them to clear dues immediately.

## NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	12012.55	12012.55	11813.40	11838.60	-242.25
KOTAKBANK	1672.00	1683.75	1662.30	1679.40	-6.55
HDFCBANK	1208.95	1214.75	1200.00	1210.25	-6.85
ULTRACEMCO	4415.00	4455.00	4320.00	4402.00	-26.10
WIPRO	245.00	247.80	242.40	244.05	-1.65
YESBANK	35.50	35.90	34.15	35.20	-0.25
TECHM	828.95	843.90	815.75	822.00	-7.60
INDUSINDBK	1170.00	1189.50	1146.55	1171.00	-11.20
BRITANNIA	3059.00	3065.00	3005.00	3026.00	-33.40
NESTLEIND	16499.00	16576.75	16317.00	16560.00	-179.50
ASIANPAINT	1845.25	1853.00	1814.00	1820.20	-22.05
NTPC	110.75	110.75	108.85	109.90	-1.45
BAIFINANCE	4840.00	4876.00	4751.20	4816.00	-64.45
HINDUNILVR	2236.80	2262.00	2210.10	2217.00	-31.25
BPCCL	471.00	475.70	463.00	465.00	-6.75
SBIN	325.75	331.30	321.85	322.80	-4.85
UPL	586.90	590.75	570.10	575.00	-9.35
LI	1271.90	1271.90	1252.65	1259.90	-20.70
IOC	112.80	113.10	110.15	110.30	-2.00
CIPLA	436.00	436.70	426.55	428.00	-7.75
POWERGRID	189.00	189.20	185.05	185.70	-3.55
SUNPHARMA	406.50	414.65	395.80	397.30	-7.65
GAIL	118.00	119.00	116.30	117.00	-2.30
Maruti	522.00	522.00	511.10	514.50	-10.70
ITC	207.00	207.45	201.80	203.15	-4.30
TCS	2156.00	2178.95	2106.70	2112.00	-44.80
ADANIPORTS	367.65	371.40	361.50	362.30	-8.55
BAIJAHNTRY	9680.00	9680.00	9448.30	9475.00	-234.70
DREDDY	3250.00	3257.00	3166.35	3175.00	-80.30
AXISBANK	737.95	738.40	723.00	725.50	-18.80
ZEEL	257.00	257.30	248.15	250.20	-6.60
HEROMOTOCO	2220.00	2220.00	2175.00	2181.95	-58.30
HCLTECH	680.00	680.00	591.50	592.15	-15.90
RELIANCE	1467.75	1477.00	1439.55	1447.10	-38.85
HDFC	2355.00	2365.20	2280.10	2303.85	-65.65
BAIJ-AUTO	3077.00	3084.65	2970.05	2978.00	-87.50
BHARTIARTL	542.00	542.05	527.10	529.95	-15.85
COALINDIA	178.75	178.90	173.30	174.15	-5.20
ICICIBANK	539.50	541.85	527.55	530.55	-16.45
TITAN	731.00	731.80	723.85	728.00	-44.85
GRASIM	148.00	148.00	142.20	143.55	-27.75
Maruti	671.00	671.00	643.80	647.50	-282.60
INFRAEEL	242.00	242.00	230.50	236.40	-9.80
EICHERMOT	1870.00	1870.00	1780.10	1795.00	-853.65
ONGC	102.50	102.50	97.20	97.85	-4.95
TATAMOTORS	154.00	155.90	149.60	150.60	-7.90
HINDALCO	186.90	186.90	177.90	179.40	-10.55
TATASTEEL	434.85	434.85	413.35	415.70	-27.85
VEDL	139.85	139.95	132.30	133.15	-9.20
JSWSTEEL	277.95	277.95	256.00	261.10	-20.70

## NIFTY NEXT 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	28473.80	28599.25	28011.10	28074.80	-595.00
AMBUJACEM	206.85	212.70	202.00	209.35	3.95
HAVELLS	619.95	633.95	614.00	613.00	8.25
NHPC	21.50	21.80	21.20	21.60	0.15
PGHL	11176.00	11293.45	11000.00	11200.00	49.15
SRTANSFIN	1340.00	1367.00	1314.25	1345.00	3.70
ASHOKLEY	83.00	86.20	82.60	84.50	0.20
BAIJAHLDNG	3691.60	3740.00	3660.20	3680.10	-0.20
PAGEIND	23090.00	23384.80	22934.25	23000.10	-75.10
VIDYASAB	2171.90	2184.80	2147.30	2160.00	-9.35
HINDZINC	181.50	183.20	179.50	181.00	-1.35
CONCOR	549.00	563.95	545.25	549.00	-4.15
BERGEPAINT	570.00	575.60	564.55	568.15	-4.45
COLPAL	1342.00	1361.90	1326.00	1332.95	-10.55
SBILIFE	923.60	941.50	910.00	921.00	-7.75
OFSS	2810.65	2851.45	2762.05	2788.00	-24.45
BIOCON	306.00	323.30	303.30	312.30	-2.75
PETRONET	266.50	270.45	264.00	265.00	-2.50
DABUR	503.55	513.40	498.50	501.00	-5.15
ACC	1419.90	1438.00	1401.50	1409.00	-14.45
PIDILITIND	1576.00	1583.95	1551.50	1557.80	-17.50
MARICO	307.00	308.10	302.20	302.70	-3.50
PEC	131.65	133.15	129.00	129.80	-2.45
BANDHANBNK	414.70	424.50	406.25	408.20	-7.75
ICICISPRUL	335.00	350.80	326.00	331.70	-6.50
ICICIBANK	489.00	501.00	483.45	485.45	-9.55
CADILAH	277.00	280.45	272.55	273.70	-5.55
LI	1586.50	1599.05	1547.90	1568.00	-32.10
HDCLIFE	572.25	578.40	556.00	561.50	-12.00
INDIGO	1458.00	1478.00	1418.00	1432.00	-32.85
UBL	1266.95	1283.10	1232.05	1238.50	-28.50
ICICIGI	1346.00	1350.95	1315.00	1320.35	-30.45
SREERCEP	24100.00	24576.10	23684.05	23706.00	-591.40
GODREJCP	629.00	634.00	613.00	615.55	-15.50
MCDOWELLN	719.95	723.90	698.05	704.10	-19.05
BANKBARODA	80.90	82.10	79.70	80.05	-2.20
HDFCAMC	3360.00	3389.95	3262.10	3289.00	-94.80
SIEMENS	1405.00	1419.25	1368.15	1372.20	-40.50
DMART	2448.80	2448.80	2370.00	2389.75	-72.90
NMDC	104.00	105.00	101.05	101.60	-3.40
HINDPETRO	222.20	222.60	213.90	214.70	-7.70
DLF	215.00	219.00	211.25	212.40	-7.70
BOSCHLTD	14434.60	14540.50	14001.00	14040.00	-512.95
NIACL	132.00	133.50	128.60	129.20	-5.00
LUPIN	695.00	697.00	669.00	672.75	-26.85
L&T	122.50	122.50	117.95	118.15	-4.95
GNB	210.00	212.90	199.00	200.00	-10.45
PIC	51.85	51.85	50.10	50.15	-2.70
MOTHERSUMI	121.50	121.50	113.95	114.25	-8.70
IDEA	4.80	5.05	3.80	3.85	-0.55
AUROPHARMA	539.80	539.80	489.40	506.65	-93.10

## BSE 500

SCRIP	Open	High	Low	LTP
VBTL	809.75	820.00	805.10	808.00
IBULHSGFIN	335.40	350.75	326.00	330.80
MARUTI	6749.00	6749.00	6443.00	6482.00
RELIANCE	1477.00	1477.00	1439.60	1441.80
HDFCBANK	1214.00	1214.00	1200.30	1210.00
SBIN	325.95	331.20	321.95	322.90
IDEA	4.84	5.01	3.82	3.88
TATASTEEL	436.00	436.00	413.30	415.35
LI	1275.65	1275.65	1253.00	1259.55
AUROPHARMA	539.60	539.60	491.90	503.85
TATAMOTORS	154.40	155.40	149.55	150.60
HDFC	2357.00	2363.05	2281.00	2292.85
YESBANK	35.60	35.95	34.15	34.95
INFY	798.00	811.20	792.30	795.25
MPSL	550.00	609.40	549.45	

# S Korea on frontline as coronavirus spreads

AFP ■ DAEGU (SOUTH KOREA)

The deadly coronavirus epidemic spread further outside China on Monday with a surge of infections in South Korea making it the biggest hotspot abroad, while authorities in Europe and the Middle East battled worsening outbreaks.

The number of fatalities in China also continued to soar, with 150 more confirmed deaths taking the official death toll to nearly 2,600.

A rising number of new cases and deaths in other parts of the world have deepened fears about a potential pandemic, with South Korea, Italy and Iran emerging over the past week on the frontlines.

Bahrain and Kuwait also announced on Monday their first cases of the virus, as authorities in the Middle East sought to clamp down on people travelling and spreading the disease following eight deaths in Iran.

South Korea has seen a rapid surge in infections since a cluster emerged from a religious sect in the southern city of Daegu last week.

Another 161 infections and two more deaths were reported in South Korea on Monday, bringing the total cases to more than 700 people - the most outside China.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in over the weekend raised the country's virus alert to the highest "red" level, as kindergarten and school holidays were extended nationally.

The start of the new K-league football season, scheduled for this weekend, was also postponed on Monday.

At the main high-speed train station in Daegu, a normally bustling city of 2.5 million people, just a small trickle of commuters were seen.

A long line of cabs waited for passengers outside the station, and the streets were eerily still, with masks and gloves standard for the few out and about.

In Italy, where more than 150 people have been infected and three have died, several Serie A football games were postponed while the Venice Carnival was cut short and some runway shows were cancelled at Milan Fashion Week.

More than 50,000 people in about a dozen northern Italian towns have been told to stay home, and police set up checkpoints to enforce a blockade.

In Iran, authorities ordered the closure of schools, universities and cultural centres across 14 provinces following eight deaths - the most outside East Asia.

The outbreak in the Islamic Republic surfaced on Wednesday last week and quickly grew to 43 confirmed infections, prompting neighbouring countries to close their borders. Nearly 30 people outside of China have been confirmed to have died after contracting the virus. Nearly 30 countries have reported infections. The virus is taking an increasingly heavy toll on the global economy, with many fac-



A tourist from South Korea wears protective mask while waiting for a flight back to South Korea at the Ben Gurion airport near Tel Aviv in Israel on Monday

## DEATH TOLL REACHES 2,592

# Coronavirus-hit Wuhan partially lifts curbs on public movement

PTI ■ BEIJING

China has partially eased restrictions in coronavirus-hit Wuhan, permitting people who are infected with the virus or stranded to leave for the first time after a month as the death toll climbed to 2,592 while the number of confirmed cases increased to more than 77,000, officials said Monday.

People who are not quarantined and seeking special treatment or stranded in Wuhan can leave in batches, according to the local authority in Wuhan, the city of 11 million, which is the epicentre of the virus.

China locked down the city on January 23, followed by the entire Hubei province with over 50 million people. Wuhan is the provincial capital of Hubei.

Over 18 cities from the province have been sealed in the lockdown.

No residents were allowed to leave the city since then, including several hundred foreigners, mainly students.

India has evacuated 647 Indians and seven Maldivians by operating two special flights. India is awaiting permission to airlift over 100 more.

A number of countries have evacuated their nationals. Pakistan, which has over 1,000 nationals stuck there, is yet to respond positively to their pleas to evacuate them.

Meanwhile, the death toll climbed to 2,592 with 150 new fatalities while the total number of confirmed cases increased to over 77,000, health officials said on Monday.

The country's National Health Commission (NHC) said it received reports of 409 new confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus infection and 150 deaths from 31 provincial-level regions on Sunday.

The overall confirmed cases on the Chinese mainland has reached 77,150 with a total of 2,592 fatalities by the end of Sunday, the NHC said.

Hubei province and its provincial capital Wuhan, the ground zero of the virus, continued to bear the brunt with 149 deaths while one person died in Hainan Province, it said.

The NHC also highlighted that recovered coronavirus patients have outnumbered new infections for the sixth

consecutive day, indicating stabilisation of the virus situation in China.

Sunday saw 1,846 people walk out of hospital after recovery, much higher than the number of the same day's new confirmed infections which was 409, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

A total of 24,734 patients infected with the coronavirus have been discharged from hospital after recovery by the end of Sunday, the NHC said.

Meanwhile, the China-World Health Organisation (WHO) joint expert team visited Hubei Province, epicentre of the 'COVID-19' outbreak over the weekend to conduct field investigations, the NHC said.

The experts visited Tongji Hospital, the Wuhan Sports Centre that was converted into a temporary hospital, and the provincial centre for disease control and prevention to learn about the epidemic prevention and control as well as medical treatment, it said.

They also talked to the officials and experts in the province and briefed NHC director Ma Xiaowei on their findings and suggestions, it said.

President Xi Jinping presided over a high-level meeting of officials on Sunday to review the progress of his government's efforts to contain the virus.

He warned that China's coronavirus epidemic is still "grim and complex" and called for more efforts to tackle the country's "largest public health emergency".

President Xi, who attended a meeting here to double efforts in coordinating the prevention and control of the COVID-19 outbreak, said the epidemic "has the fastest transmission, widest range of infection and has been the most difficult to prevent and control".

"This is a crisis for us and it is a big test," he said.

The meeting, in the form of tele-conference, was presided over by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang.

Xi acknowledged that the epidemic will "inevitably have a large impact on the economy and society" but the effects will be "short-term" and controllable.

"The epidemic situation remains grim and complex, and it is now a most crucial moment to curb the spread," Xi added.

# Indian, Chinese officials talk over delay in rescue flight

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Monday said Indian and Chinese officials were in "communication" over the delay in grant of permission to India's special flight carrying medical supplies to Wuhan and to evacuate over 100 Indians stuck in the city worst affected by the novel coronavirus outbreak that has claimed over 2,500 lives.

India has announced its plan to send Indian Air Force's biggest C-17 Globemaster with medical supplies to China and to evacuate remaining Indians numbering over 100 from China's coronavirus-hit Hubei province.

It has also offered to evacuate nationals from the neighbouring countries, depending on the space availability. "Competent authorities of the two countries have maintained communication and coordination on this matter," Chinese Foreign Ministry said in reply to question from PTI over the delay in granting the clearance for the plane.

The brief reply did not say when the flight will be cleared.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry's fresh statement came

after the two countries were locked in a verbal spat over the delay for the special flight from India to bring the stranded Indians home.

The plane is carrying medical supplies to China for relief operations to Wuhan as well as to evacuate remaining Indians.

Indian officials earlier said the flight was delayed as it had not received permissions from the Chinese government.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang in his online media briefing last Friday denied any delay but did not provide any reason for China not granting the required permission for the flight to Wuhan.

On Sunday, the Chinese embassy in New Delhi said "Chinese side always attaches great importance to the health and safety of Indian nationals in China, and provided assistance and convenience for the return of Indian citizens".

"The current epidemic situation in Hubei province is complicated, and the prevention and control of COVID-19 has entered into a critical stage. We are carefully assessing ground situation, as prevention work requires. Competent

departments of the two countries are keeping communication and coordination in this regard. There is no such thing as China deliberately delaying granting flight permission," it said.

Meanwhile, over 100 Indians stuck in China's central Hubei province have been anxiously waiting for the arrival of the special flight from India to evacuate them.

The Indian embassy in Beijing has informed them that the delay is due to lack of clearance from the Chinese government for the plane. India has operated two Air India special flights to Wuhan, the provincial capital of Hubei, the epicentre of the COVID-19 early this month and evacuated 647 Indians and seven Maldivians. The death toll in China's novel coronavirus has gone up to 2,592 while the number of confirmed cases increased to more than 77,000, officials said on Monday.

Hubei province and its provincial capital Wuhan, the ground zero of the virus, continued to bear the brunt with 149 deaths while one person died in Hainan Province, it said.

# China postpones annual Parliament session

PTI ■ BEIJING

In an unprecedented move, China on Monday postponed the annual session of Parliament from March 5 due to the coronavirus outbreak, state media reported as the country grapples with the deadly virus that has claimed over 2,500 lives and infected more than 77,000 people.

The ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) showcases its political clout in the annual Parliament session.

The country's top legislature, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), met here and approved a draft decision on postponing the NPC's annual session due to coronavirus, China Global Television Network TV reported.

The third annual session of the 13th NPC, one of China's biggest political events, was originally planned to open on March 5 in Beijing.

The death toll climbed to 2,592 with 150 new fatalities while the total number of confirmed cases increased to over 77,000, health officials

said on Monday.

Meanwhile, the China-World Health Organisation (WHO) joint expert team visited Hubei Province, epicentre of the 'COVID-19' outbreak over the weekend to conduct field investigations, health officials said.

Every year, the NPC and the top advisory body Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), which together have over 5,000 members in their ranks, meet during March to approve the government's annual agenda including the budget.

But the coronavirus outbreak continues to be a major concern.

The NPC and CPPCC together constitute the biggest political event in China.

Though Chinese officials claim that the intensity of the epidemic is coming down, the ruling CPC is averse to expose thousands of its top cadre to the virus which has not been brought under control.

The postponement of the NPC, which is often viewed as a rubber-stamp parliament for its routine approval of the CPC proposals, is regarded as an

unprecedented move.

The CPC considers the two sessions as a significant political events to adopt its national agenda, including the annual budgets and formulate new laws.

Chinese analysts said the postponement of the two sessions is very unusual in the history of the Party, which has not been seen since the country's reform and opening-up, state-run Global Times reported.

It's also unknown when the two sessions will be rescheduled as it depends on how the epidemic prevention and control work evolves, especially when there has been no inflection point of the epidemic in sight yet, Zhuang Deshui, deputy director of the Research Centre for Government Integrity-Building at Peking University, told the paper.

The proposal to delay the sessions indicates that the central government puts epidemic prevention and control work as its top priority, showing its highly responsible stance not only to the Chinese people but also to the world, Zhuang told the daily earlier.

# Italy reports fourth coronavirus death as infections mount

AFP ■ CASAPUSTERLENGO (ITALY)

Italy reported Monday its fourth death from the new coronavirus, an 84-year old man in the northern Lombardy region, as the number of people contracting the virus continued to mount.

It was the third death in Lombardy, where villages have been put in lockdown and security measures enforced in a bid to stem the spread of the disease, the region's health department said.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has said that residents could face weeks of lockdown in an effort to sit out the virus. The president of the Lombardy region Attilio Fontana said 165 people had now tested positive in the region, the worst-hit zone in Italy. The country now has the most confirmed cases in Europe.

"The number is still rising, but we are sure that the measures taken will prevent it spreading further," Fontana said.

Eleven towns - 10 in Lombardy and one in neighbouring Veneto - are under lockdown, with some 50,000 residents prohibited from leaving.

Regional authorities have ordered gathering spots, such as bars, restaurants and discos to close. The spread of the virus has disrupted high profile events including Milan Fashion Week and the Venice Carnival while Serie A football matches have been postponed. Operas have also had to be cancelled at Milan's famed La Scala. Churches are being kept open but all masses have been cancelled.

The stock market in Milan was down more than 4.0 percent on Monday morning in a broad-based sell-off.

Most of the cases in Italy are in Lombardy, a prosperous region in the country's north, and can be traced back to a 38-year-old man whom authorities have called "patient one".

Investigators are reconstructing minute by minute the man's movements over the past few weeks - where he slept, ate, walked - in a bid to trace everyone he could have come into contact with.

"We had the most unfortunate situation possible; the outbreak of an epidemic in a hospital," infectious disease expert Massimo Galli told the Corriere della Sera daily. "Unfortunately, in these cases, a hospital can turn into a frightening amplifier of contagion," he said.

The 38-year old had not travelled to China and doctors failed to treat him with the necessary precautions.

The man initially believed to have given him the virus after returning from Shanghai later tested negative.

"We still do not know who brought the coronavirus to Codogno," Galli said, referring to another small town. Fontana urged residents to stay calm and stop panic buying, saying "rushing to stock up on food doesn't make any sense. There are enough supplies".

Schools have been closed as a precaution in Lombardy, Veneto, Piedmont, Emilia Romagna and Friuli Venezia Giulia.

# Most small firms in China yet to reopen after virus outbreak

AFP ■ BEIJING

Most small businesses in China are yet to reopen and are struggling with supply chain obstructions after the new coronavirus epidemic triggered a national shutdown, officials said on Monday.

Authorities extended January's Lunar New Year holiday and ordered the closure of schools, factories and railways to try and halt the spread of the outbreak, which has killed more than 2,500 people.

Some industries have since resumed operations but only around three in 10 small and medium-sized enterprises were back to work, industry ministry spokesman Tian Yulong said Monday. Ongoing transport disruptions make it hard for workers to travel and has prevented the shipment of raw materials, he added. Officials pledged finance and aid for smaller enterprises on Monday, including preferential tax treatment for transport, catering and tourism businesses.

Key industries dominated by larger firms appeared to be in stronger shape.

Cong Liang, an official at China's top economic planning agency, said the steel industry was operating at nearly 70 percent capacity while rail freight had almost returned to normal.

Small and medium-sized businesses account for around 60 per cent of China's economy, and the crucial sector is reeling from the impact of the global public health crisis. At least six in 10 small firms risked running out of cash to cover regular payments in the next two months, the Economic Daily state media outlet reported last week, citing a survey by a national representative body for small business.

# 'No one cares': Locked-in Wuhan residents adapt to find food

AFP ■ BEIJING

The lockdown of Guo Jing's neighbourhood in Wuhan - the city at the heart of China's new coronavirus epidemic - came suddenly and without warning.

Unable to go out, the 29-year-old is now sealed inside her compound where she has to depend on online group-buying services to get food.

"Living for at least another month isn't an issue," Guo told AFP, explaining that she had her own stash of pickled vegetables and salted eggs.

But what scares her most is the lack of control - first, the entire city was sealed off, and then residents were limited to exiting their compound once every three days.

Now even that has been taken away.

Guo is among some 11 million residents in Wuhan, a city in central Hubei province that has been under effective quarantine since January 23 as Chinese authorities race to contain the epidemic.

Since then, its people have faced a number of tightening controls over daily life as the death toll from the virus swelled to over 2,500 in China alone.

But the new rules this

month barring residents from leaving their neighbourhoods are the most restrictive yet - and for some, threaten their livelihoods.

"I still don't know where to buy things once we've finished eating what we have at home," said Pan Hongsheng, who lives with his wife and two children.

Some neighbourhoods have organised group-buying services, where supermarkets deliver orders in bulk.

But in Pan's community, "no one cares".

"The three-year-old doesn't even have any milk powder left," Pan told AFP, adding that he has been unable to send medicine to his in-laws - both in their eighties - as they live in a different area.

"I feel like a refugee."

The "closed management of neighbourhoods is bound to bring some inconvenience to the lives of the people", Qian Yuankun, vice secretary of Hubei's Communist Party committee, said at a press briefing last week.

Authorities on Monday allowed healthy non-residents of the city to leave if they never had contact with patients, but restrictions remained on those who live in Wuhan.

Demand for group-buying food delivery services has

rocketed with the new restrictions, with supermarkets and neighbourhood committees scrambling to fill orders.

Most group-buying services operate through Chinese messaging app WeChat, which has ad-hoc chat groups for meat, vegetables, milk - even "hot dry noodles", a famous Wuhan dish.

More sophisticated shops and compounds have their own mini-app inside WeChat, where residents can choose packages priced by weight before orders are sent in bulk to grocery stores.

In Guo's neighbourhood, for instance, a 6.5-kilogramme (14.3-pound) set of five vegetables, including potatoes and baby cabbage, costs 50 yuan (\$7.11).

"You have no way to choose what you like to eat," Guo said. "You cannot have personal preferences anymore." The group-buying model is also more difficult for smaller communities to adopt, as supermarkets have minimum order requirements for delivery.

"To be honest, there's nothing we can do," said Yang Nan, manager of Lao Cun Zhang supermarket, which requires a minimum of 30 orders.

"We only have four cars," she said, explaining that the

store did not have the staff to handle smaller orders.

Another supermarket told AFP it capped its daily delivery load to 1,000 orders per day.

"Hiring staff is difficult," said Wang Xiwen, who works at the store's logistics division, adding that they are wary about hiring too many outsiders for fear of infection.

Closing off communities has split the city into silos, with different neighbourhoods rolling out controls of varying intensity.

In some compounds, residents have easier access to food - albeit a smaller selection than normal - and one woman said her family pays delivery drivers to run grocery errands.

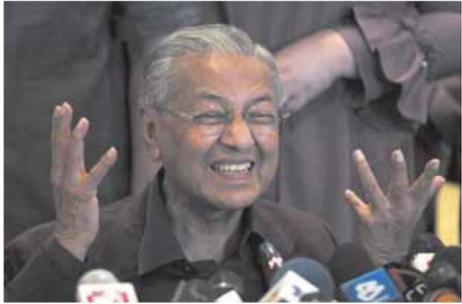
Her compound has not been sealed off either, the 24-year-old told AFP under condition of anonymity, though they are limited to one person leaving at a time.

Some districts have implemented their own rules, such as prohibiting supermarkets from selling to individuals, forcing neighbourhoods to buy in bulk or not at all.

"In the neighbourhood where I live, the reality is really terrible," said David Dai, who is based on the outskirts of Wuhan.

# Turmoil in Malaysia as PM Mahathir resigns

AFF ■ LUALA LUMPUR



Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad resigned on Monday in a move analysts said appeared to be an effort to form a new coalition and block the succession of leader-in-waiting Anwar Ibrahim.

The shock move followed weekend political drama that saw an attempt by Anwar's rivals within his own "Pact of Hope" coalition — which stormed to a historic election victory in 2018 — and opposition politicians to form a new government.

That coalition would reportedly have excluded Anwar, Mahathir's presumptive successor and a former opposition icon who was jailed for years on questionable sodomy charges, blocking his ascent to the premiership.

Anwar and Mahathir — the world's oldest leader, aged 94 — have a notoriously stormy relationship but joined forces to oust a corruption-plagued government at the 2018 polls.

Mahathir, who previously served as premier from 1981 to 2003, had made a pre-election pledge to hand power to Anwar but has repeatedly refused to fix a date. The weekend push to form a new government appeared to have fizzled out by early Monday, but then Mahathir's office made the surprise announcement that he had "sent a resignation letter as prime minister of Malaysia" to the king at 1:00

pm (0500 GMT).

Shortly before, Mahathir's Bersatu party announced it was leaving the ruling coalition and 11 lawmakers resigned from Anwar's party, leaving the Pact of Hope in tatters and fuelling speculation efforts could be under way to form a new alliance.

Anwar was due to see the king Monday, with speculation mounting that he would try to convince him that he had the backing of enough MPs to form a government.

While his role is largely ceremonial, the monarch approves the appointment of the prime minister, who must have the backing of most MPs in parliament.

"If he has the majority then Anwar is the next prime minister," Azmi Hassan, political analyst with University Technology Malaysia, told AFP.

But he added that "with Bersatu out of (the ruling coalition)... most probably Anwar

over how to respond to a financial crisis.

Anwar was arrested and thrown in jail after being convicted of sodomy and corruption in a case critics said was trumped up, but he emerged from prison to unify a ragtag political opposition into a potent force against the long-ruling government.

Tensions had risen in the Pact of Hope coalition after Mahathir refused to fix a date to hand power to Anwar.

The government's popularity had also been falling and they lost a string of local polls, as they faced accusations of failing to protect the country's ethnic Malay Muslim majority and not moving fast enough on reforms.

Their opponents also argued the party was becoming dominated by ethnic Chinese politicians.

Race is a highly sensitive issue in Malaysia, which is about 60 per cent Muslim but also home to substantial ethnic Chinese and Indian minorities.

Many were angry, however, that the democratically elected government, which came to power partly on a pledge to push through much-needed reforms, could be replaced without an election.

The people "will not agree to or cooperate with any 'backdoor' government formed out of the selfish, self-preservation agenda of certain MPs," said a statement from a group of leading activists and academics.

won't have the numbers".

Mahathir's party may now join hands with the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) — the lynchpin of the forming ruling coalition, and party of scandal-tainted ex-leader Najib Razak — and other groups to try to form a government, he said.

Anwar had teamed up with former nemesis Mahathir ahead of the 2018 elections to oust the government of Najib, who had become embroiled in the massive 1MDB graft scandal, and they led their alliance to victory against a coalition that had ruled Malaysia for six decades.

The pair's difficult relationship has dominated Malaysia's political landscape for over two decades.

As finance minister and a powerful UMNO figure in the 1990s, Anwar had been tipped as Mahathir's successor for the premiership, but his boss sacked him after they fell out

# Thailand denies PM aided Malaysia 1MDB graft scandal

AFF ■ BANGKOK

Thailand's government threatened legal action on Monday against a banned opposition party which claimed Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha aided in the cover-up of Malaysia's 1MDB graft scandal by harbouring a fugitive financier.

The stridently anti-military Future Forward Party, the third largest in parliament, was dissolved Friday by a court and its key members banned from politics for a decade.

On Sunday Future Forward's spokeswoman Pannika Wanich held a public conference and accused Prayut of allowing fugitive financier Low Taek Jho — commonly known as Jho Low — and his associates to pass through Thailand.

Low is wanted by several governments for his alleged mastermind role in plundering billions of dollars from Malaysia's sovereign wealth fund 1MDB.

A Thai government spokeswoman hit back Monday at Pannika, saying her accusations were "not true".

"This accusation ... confuses the public," Narumon Pinyosinwat said on Twitter. "Concerned ministries are considering legal action and ... will hold a formal presser."

Walking to government house on Monday morning, ex-general-turned-premier Prayut appeared jovial when asked about Pannika's accusations.

"The ministries are investigating and if it's not true, they can sue," he told reporters.

Since 2016, a "red notice" was issued by Interpol at

Singapore's request to flag Low's travels.

Countries receiving flagged individuals would typically inform requesting governments about the fugitive's whereabouts, executing an extradition process.

But Pannika claimed that Thailand's immigration records showed Low passing through the country five times from 2016 to 2018.

She also said two of his associates — Tang Keng Chee and Jasmine Loo — had irregularities in their records, and she accused Prayut's government of "obstructing international justice".

The gruff former army chief masterminded a coup against the government in 2014, and was head of a junta regime until 2019.

He was voted in during last

year's election as a civilian premier under a new military-scripted constitution which critics said tilted victory to his party.

Future Forward has been a thorn on the conservative establishment's side since it scooped up 6.3 million votes.

The party's radical anti-military agenda appealed to mostly to millennials or those weary of the conservative royalist army's central role in Thai society.

But the party was undone by a \$6 million loan from its billionaire founder, which breached the limit on party donations from an individual.

Dissolution of the Future Forward Party came ahead of a censure debate beginning in parliament Monday against Prayut.

# Britain starts hearing US case for extraditing Assange

AFF ■ LONDON

Britain on Monday starts hearing Washington's extradition request for WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange in a test case of media freedoms in the digital age and the limits of US justice.

A ruling against Assange in the case could see the 48-year-old Australian jailed for 175 years if convicted on all 17 US Espionage Act charges and one count of computer hacking he faces. Each stems from his site's release in 2010 of a trove of classified State Department and Pentagon files detailing the realities of the US campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq.

One video from 2007 showed an Apache helicopter attack in which US soldiers gunned down two Reuters reporters and nine Iraqi civilians in broad daylight in Baghdad.

The files also disclosed the secret identities of diplomats and government agents in hostile environments — as well as locals who risked their lives by cooperating with the United States.

These names were redacted by the Western newspapers with which WikiLeaks initially worked.

But a falling out with their editors prompted Assange to release hundreds of thousands of files in their original form.

The US Justice Department said last May that the "human resources" compromised by Assange "included local Afghans and Iraqis, journalists, religious leaders, human rights advocates, and political dissidents from repressive regimes".

His supporters argue that Assange's prosecution was political — and personal — from the start.

"For the sake of press freedom, Julian Assange must be defended," the Committee to Protect Journalists said in December. The case was injected with still more intrigue when the defence claimed US President Donald Trump promised to issue a pardon if Assange denied Russia leaked the emails of his 2016 election rival's campaign.

"In August 2017, Donald Trump's administration tried to

pressure Julian Assange into saying things that would be favourable to President Trump himself," Assange's defence team coordinator Baltasar Garzon said on Thursday.

"When Julian Assange refused, he was charged and an extradition request was issued alongside an international arrest warrant." The White House called the allegation "another never-ending hoax and total lie" but a judge agreed to add it to the case file.

Assange is additionally shadowed by a rape allegation and a sexual assault claim that stem from his 2010 visit to Sweden.

He denied everything and called the case a legal pretext for Sweden to extradite him to the United States.

Assange agreed to attend hearings into the charges in London and his legal battles crossed borders yet again.

A UK court ruled in February 2011 that Assange could be extradited back to Sweden to stand trial.

He secured political asylum in Ecuador's London embassy

instead and became international fugitive by breaching his UK bail conditions in 2012.

Yet his campaigning continued in full.

Assange struck a deal with Russia's state broadcaster RT in 2012 and began airing Skype interviews with anti-Western figures such as Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah that further infuriated Washington.

A political realignment in Ecuador toward the United States saw Assange fall out of favour and begin losing his embassy privileges in 2018.

The last protections were lifted last April and Assange was dragged kicking and screaming out of the embassy and locked up in a high-security prison next to London's Woolwich Crown Court where the case will be heard in two sessions this week and in May.

The sex charges no longer apply because of the statute of limitations and Swedish investigators' inability to question Assange about what a top prosecutor lamented in November remained a "credible" claim.

# Former French PM, wife face trial

AP ■ PARIS

He could have been president of France. Instead, former Prime Minister Francois Fillon is going on trial to face fraud charges after he used public funds to richly pay his wife and children for work they allegedly never performed.

The trial beginning Monday is scheduled to last until March 11, but it may be quickly suspended until Wednesday on request from Fillon's defence team out of solidarity with a lawyers' strike against French President Emmanuel Macron's controversial pension reform.

Fillon is suspected of having given jobs as parliamentary aides, involving no sustained work, to his wife and two of their children from 1998 to 2013. Altogether, the aide work brought the family more than 1 million euros (USD 1.08 million).

Once the front-runner in the 2017 presidential election, Fillon, 65, has denied wrongdoing.

The scandal, which made headline in the French media just three months before the 2017 vote, crushed the conservative candidate's campaign and allowed centrist candidate Macron to gain momentum.

Fillon has been charged with the misuse of public funds, receiving money from the misuse of public funds and the

misappropriation of company assets. He faces up to ten years in prison and a 1 million euro fine. His wife, Penelope Fillon, has been charged mostly as an accomplice.

A former lawmaker, Marc Joulaud, also goes on trial for misuse of public funds after he allegedly gave her a fake job as an aide from 2002 to 2007, while her husband was prime minister.

Fillon and Joulaud both had other parliamentary assistants.

In addition, charges also cover a contract that allowed Penelope Fillon to earn 135,000 euros in 2012-2013 as a consultant for a literary magazine owned by a friend of her husband — also an alleged fake job.

The magazine owner, Marc de Lacharriere, pled guilty and was given a suspended eight-month prison sentence and fined 375,000 euros in 2018.

Fillon said last month on France 2 television that his wife's job was not fake. "She was my first and most important aide," he said. "Evidence will be produced during the trial."

In a 151-page document seen by The Associated Press ordering the case to trial, investigative judges said the probe showed that Penelope Fillon's activities were in line with the traditional role of an elected official's partner — but in no way equivalent to the tasks of a parliamentary assistant.

# Harvey Weinstein found guilty in #MeToo moment

AP ■ NEW YORK

Harvey Weinstein was convicted Monday at his sexual assault trial, sealing his dizzying fall from powerful Hollywood studio boss to archvillain of the #MeToo movement.

He was found guilty of criminal sex act for assaulting production assistant Mimi Haley at his apartment in 2006 and third-degree rape of a woman in 2013. The jury found him not guilty on the most serious charge, predatory sexual assault, that could have resulted in a life sentence.

The verdict followed weeks of often harrowing and excruciatingly graphic testimony from a string of accusers who told of rapes, forced oral sex, groping, masturbation, lewd propositions and that's-Hollywood excuses from Weinstein about how the casting couch works.

The conviction was seen as a long-overdue reckoning for Weinstein after years of whispers about his behavior turned into a torrent of accusations in 2017 that destroyed his career and gave rise to #MeToo, the global movement to encourage women to come forward and hold powerful men accountable for their sexual misconduct.

The jury of seven men and five women took five days to find him guilty.

The case against the once-feared producer was essentially built on three allegations: that he raped an aspiring actress in a New York City hotel room in 2013, that he forcibly performed oral sex on "Sopranos" actress Annabella Sciorra in her apartment in the mid-1990s.

Three additional women who said they, too, were attacked by Weinstein also testified as part of an effort by prosecutors to show a pattern of brutish behavior on his part.

The Associated Press does not typically identify people who say they are victims of sex crimes unless they grant permission, as Haley and Sciorra did.

Jurors signaled their struggles with the Sciorra charges four days into deliberations. On Friday, after reviewing sections of her testimony and related evidence, they sent a note to the judge indicating they were deadlocked on the counts but had reached a unanimous verdict on the others.

After some debate in the courtroom, the judge ordered jurors to keep deliberating.

# Scientists gather to study risk from microplastic pollution

AP ■ PORTLAND (US)

Tiny bits of broken-down plastic smaller than a fraction of a grain of rice are turning up everywhere in oceans, from the water to the guts of fish and the poop of sea otters and giant killer whales.

Yet little is known about the effects of these "microplastics" — on sea creatures or humans.

"It's such a huge endeavor to know how bad it is," said Shawn Larson, curator of conservation research at the Seattle Aquarium. "We're just starting to get a finger on the pulse."

This week, a group of five-dozen microplastics researchers from major universities, government agencies, tribes, aquariums, environmental groups and even water sanitation districts across the US West is gathering in Bremerton, Washington, to tackle the issue.

The goal is to create a mathematical risk assessment for microplastic pollution in the

region similar to predictions used to gauge out responses to major natural disasters such as earthquakes.

The largest of these plastic bits are 5 millimeters long, roughly the size of a kernel of corn, and many are much smaller and invisible to the naked eye.

They enter the environment in many ways. Some slough off of car tires and wash into streams — and eventually the ocean — during rainstorms. Others detach from fleeces and spandex clothing in washing machines and are mixed in with the soiled water that drains from the machine.

Some come from abandoned fishing gear, and still more are the result of the eventual breakdown of the millions of straws, cups, water bottles, plastic bags and other single-use plastics thrown out each day.

Research into their potential impact on everything from tiny single-celled organisms to

larger mammals like sea otters is just getting underway.

"This is an alarm bell that's going to ring loud and strong," said Stacey Harper, an associate professor at Oregon State University who helped organise the conference.

"We're first going to prioritise who it is that we're concerned about protecting: what organisms, what endangered species, what regions. And that will help us hone in ... and determine the data we need to do a risk assessment."

A study published last year by Portland State University found an average of 11 microplastic pieces per oyster and nine per razor clam in the samples taken from the Oregon coast. Nearly all were from microfibers from fleece or other synthetic clothing or from abandoned fishing gear, said Elise Granek, study co-author.

Scientists at the San Francisco Estuary Institute found significant amounts of

microplastic washing into the San Francisco Bay from storm runoff over a three-year sampling period that ended last year. Researchers believe the black, rubbery bits no bigger than a grain of sand are likely from car tires, said Rebecca Sutton, senior scientist at the institute. They will present their findings at the conference.

Those studying the phenomenon are worried about the health of creatures living in the ocean — but also, possibly, the health of humans.

Some of the concern stems from an unusual twist unique to plastic pollution. Because plastic is made from fossil fuels and contains hydrocarbons, it attracts and absorbs other pollutants in the water, such as PCBs and pesticides, said Andrew Mason, the Pacific Northwest regional coordinator for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's marine debris program.

"There's a lot of research

that still needs to be done, but these plastics have the ability to mine harmful chemicals that are in the environment. They can accumulate them," said Mason.

"Everything, as it goes up toward the top, it just gets more and more and the umbrella gets wider. And who sits at the top of the food chain? We do. That's why these researchers are coming together, because this is a growing problem, and we need to understand those effects."

Researchers say bans on plastic bags, Styrofoam carry-out containers and single-use items like straws and plastic utensils will help when it comes to the tiniest plastic pollution. Some jurisdictions have also recently begun taking a closer look at the smaller plastic bits that have the scientific community so concerned.

California lawmakers in 2018 passed legislation that will ultimately require the state to adopt a method for testing

for microplastics in drinking water and to perform that testing for four years, with the results reported to the public. The first key deadline for the law — simply defining what qualifies as a micro-plastic — is July 1.

And federal lawmakers, including Sen. Jeff Merkley, an Oregon Democrat, and Sen. Lindsey Graham, a South Carolina Republican, last week introduced bipartisan legislation to establish a pilot research program at the US Environmental Protection Agency to study how to curb the "crisis" of microplastic pollution.

Larson, the conservationist at the Seattle Aquarium, said a year of studies at her institution found 200 to 300 microfibers in each 100-liter sample of seawater the aquarium sucks in from the Puget Sound for its exhibits. Larson, who is chairing a session at Wednesday's consortium, said those results are alarming.

# Netanyahu banks on Trump plan to drive up votes

AP ■ ATERET (WEST BANK)

With Israel's prime minister eager to court the votes of the country's influential West Bank settlers, President Donald Trump's Mideast plan seemed to be the key to ramping up their support ahead of critical elections next week.

The plan envisions Israel's eventual annexation of its scores of West Bank settlements — a longtime settler dream. But in the weeks since it was unveiled, Benjamin Netanyahu has stumbled over his promises to quickly carry out the annexation, sparking an outcry from settler leaders and threatening any goodwill he hoped to gain from the plan.

"If there is something that undermines the stability of the campaign in Netanyahu's eyes, it is attacks from the right," the columnist Mati Tuchfeld wrote in the pro-Netanyahu daily Israel Hayom. "It is not only the fate of Judea and Samaria that is on the line. His political fate is as well."

Judea and Samaria is the biblical name for the West Bank. Israel heads to the polls for the third time in less than a year on next Monday. The previous two rounds ended in deadlock, with neither Netanyahu nor his challenger Benny Gantz able to secure a 61-seat parliamentary majority. Pre-election polls show a similar impasse emerging from the next vote.

Facing a corruption trial two weeks after the election, Netanyahu is desperate to remain prime minister, a position he can use to rally public support as he fights the charges.

In a bid to move the needle in his favor, Netanyahu has spent the final weeks of the campaign handing out political gifts to different constituents. The Trump plan has been the centerpiece of that strategy.

The plan, announced at the White House in late January with much fanfare, sides with Israel on most of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict's main sticking points. Beyond granting Israel sovereignty over large parts of the occupied West Bank, it falls far short of the Palestinian dream of an independent state.

Instead, it calls for giving them limited autonomy over a disjointed archipelago of land, and only if they meet a stringent set of demands.

Seeing the plan as a green light, Netanyahu quickly pledged to steam ahead with annexation. But a Cabinet meeting announced by his office never convened, with Netanyahu apparently reined in by officials at the White House who balked at his premature zeal.

Netanyahu has since tempered expectations on his annexation vow, fending off attacks from hard-liners by saying he must first map the territory with the Americans beforehand.

"We don't want to risk this. We are working responsibly and rationally," Netanyahu told his Cabinet earlier this month. "To all those chirping in from outside and even from within the government: We did the work, we will complete the work." Israel captured the West Bank, along with east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, in the 1967 Mideast war. The international community, including a string of US presidents, has long opposed Israel's settlements, seeing them as obstacles to peace that gobble up Israeli-occupied land sought by the Palestinians for an independent state.



ReduceStroke

Different types of food are linked to risks of different types of stroke, say researchers, adding that higher intakes of fruit, vegetables and dairy products is linked to a lower risk of ischaemic stroke. However, greater consumption of eggs was associated with a higher risk of haemorrhagic stroke

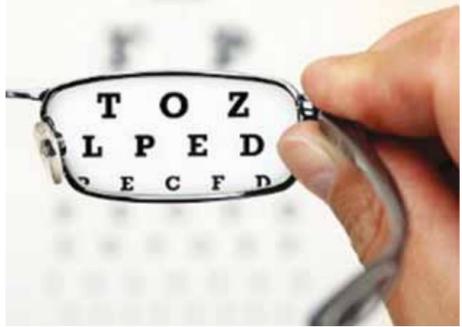


DOCYARD

DR KINSHUK BISWAS

MBBS, MS (Ophthalmology)

APOLLO SPECTRA, NEW DELHI



Keep a check on eyes

Beginning in the early to mid-40s, many adults may start to have problems seeing clearly at close distances, especially when reading and working on the computer. This is among the most common problems adults develop between ages 41 to 60. This normal change in the eye's focusing ability, called presbyopia, will continue to progress over time.

Initially, you may need to hold reading materials farther away to see them clearly. Or you may need to remove your glasses to see better up close. Print in the newspaper or on a restaurant menu may appear blurred, especially under dim lighting.

If you already wear prescription glasses or contact lenses to see clearly in the distance, these changes in your near vision can be corrected by switching to bifocal or multifocal lenses. Fortunately, people with presbyopia now have many options to improve their vision.

During these years, schedule a comprehensive eye examination with your optometrist at least every two years to check for developing eye and vision problems. Don't rely on the limited driver's license vision test or other insufficient vision screenings to determine if you have an eye or vision problem.

Adults over 40 who have the following health or work issues may be particularly at risk for developing eye and vision problems:

- Chronic, systemic conditions such as diabetes or high blood pressure.
A family history of glaucoma or macular degeneration.
A highly visually demanding job or work in an eye-hazardous occupation.
Health conditions related to high cholesterol, thyroid, anxiety or depression, and arthritis for which you take medications. Many medications, even antihistamines, have vision side effects.

Just like your body, your eyes and vision change over time. While not everyone will experience the same symptoms, the following are common age-related vision changes:

- Need for more light. As you age, you need more light to see as well as you used to. Brighter lights in your work area or next to your reading chair will help make reading and other close-up tasks easier.

Difficulty reading and doing close work. Printed materials can become less clear, in part because the lens in your eye becomes less flexible over time. This makes it harder for your eyes to focus on near objects than when you were younger.

Problems with glare. When driving, you may notice additional glare from headlights at night or sun reflecting off windshields or pavement during the day. Changes in your lenses in your eyes cause light entering the eye to be scattered rather than focused precisely on the retina. This creates more glare.

Changes in colour perception. The normally clear lens located inside your eye may start to discolour. This makes it harder to see and distinguish between certain colour shades.

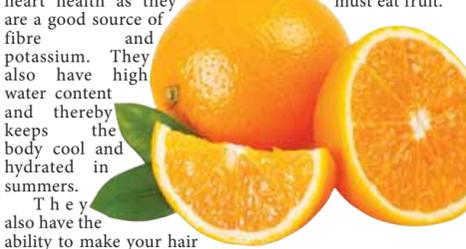
Reduced tear production. With age, the tear glands in your eyes will produce fewer tears. This is particularly true for women experiencing hormone changes. As a result, your eyes may feel dry and irritated. Having an adequate amount of tears is essential for keeping your eyes healthy and for maintaining clear sight.

SUMMER COOLERS

ORANGE: Oranges are a type of low calorie, highly nutritious citrus fruit. As they are rich in Vitamin C they help in maintaining clear glowing skin. They also help in maintaining the blood pressure levels as they contain no sodium. Oranges also support heart health as they are a good source of fibre and potassium. They also have high water content and thereby keeps the body cool and hydrated in summers. They also have the ability to make your hair

look shiny, bouncy and voluminous and at the same time also imparts hair growth. Oranges are full of nutrition and therefore they also help in alleviating stress. They are also said to help fight cancer. In all, oranges makes for a must eat fruit.

Oranges are full of nutrition and therefore they also help in alleviating stress. They are also said to help fight cancer. In all, oranges makes for a must eat fruit.



LISTEN TO SKIN CALL

India accounts for 58% of total leprosy patients around the world. The reason being lack of awareness of the disease. DR RITUPURNA DASH tells you ways to identify and treat it



Leprosy is an infectious disease which is also known as Hansen's Disease. It is caused by a bacteria called Mycobacterium leprae and mainly affects the skin, peripheral nerves and the eyes. The initial symptoms usually are loss of sensation on the affected area of the skin along with discolored patches on the body or painless ulcers which if left untreated can lead to permanent disability like disfigurement of hands and feet, loss of sensation and blindness.

Leprosy is still one of the most misunderstood diseases in the world and hence poses many unique challenges in controlling and eliminating it. Leprosy was declared as 'eradicated disease' in 2005, but India still accounts for the maximum number of people to be affected by leprosy in the world; 58 per cent of the total people globally suffering from leprosy are in India. The disease is still widespread in many parts of the country due to lack of awareness, the socio-economic myths and beliefs and associated stigma. These commonly lead to delayed care seeking and treatment completion. Further major concerns include prevalence of leprosy among children, undetected new cases and problems with leprosy integration.

In India, people with leprosy frequently present in late stages of disease progression and usually with eye complications leading to blindness.

Symptoms One of the initial symptoms can be excessive nose bleeding and a stuffy nose without reason. Numbness, loss of temperature/touch sensation, pins and needles sensations, joint pain, decreased or lost deep pressure sensations, nerve injury, weight loss, blisters and/or rashes, large ulcers (relatively painless), discoloured skin patches, eye damage (dryness, reduced blinking), loss of eyebrows, loss of digits and disability, and facial disfigurement are some of the other commonly



Treatment

It is important to understand the symptoms and immediately consult the skin specialist for diagnosis. Based on the level of disease progression, the doctor will prescribe the appropriate treatment. The medication and condition varies from person to person and can only be planned with the initial diagnosis.

Treatment is quite effective if started in the initial stages, and hence timely diagnosis and treatment is important. Steroids may be given to minimise pain and acute inflammation. Majority of the cases can be treated with antibiotics only.

Depending on the stage, the dosage of the medication may vary. According to WHO, Leprosy is classified into two types — paucibacillary and multibacillary, and hence the medications also differ. The course of the medication is usually for six to 12 months to completely cure the condition.

Upon successful course completion, the bacteria is completely eliminated from the person's body and further disease progression and damage is averted. But, the damage undergone already is not reversible with medications. In such conditions, surgical intervention may be helpful to restore functions like movement related issues, neurological problems, and cosmetic repair. Surgery is usually individualised and can restore the limb and neural functions lost in the course of the ailment.

encountered problems. The complications of leprosy depend on how early it is detected and effectively treated. Very few complications occur if treatment is initiated early enough. However, if treatment is delayed or discontinued mid way, complications may manifest. Sensory loss (usually beginning in the extremities), permanent nerve damage (usually, again, in the extremities), muscle weakness and progressive disfigurement (for example, eyebrows lost, disfigurement of the toes, fingers, and nose) are some common complications. In addition, the sensory loss causes people to injure body parts without the individual being aware that there is an injury. This can lead to further problems such as infections, poor wound healing and ulcers. A condition called erythema nodosum leprosum (tender skin nodules accompanied by other symptoms like fever, joint pain, neuritis, and edema) is also encountered as a complication needing immediate attention.

Risks of transmission Leprosy has low transmission rate. However, people of all age groups and gender are susceptible to develop leprosy. Transmission occurs only with close contact with the one suffering from leprosy. The risks also are raised to up to 10 times to develop and spread leprosy. The major concerns of developing and transmitting new cases of leprosy especially in India include — reduced functioning of the immune system due to malnutrition, related illness or ailments and at times, due to genetic conditions.

It is very crucial to develop a comprehensive approach to combat Leprosy. Some of these include educating public through awareness campaigns, programmes on sustainable livelihood and skill training for the affected people (economic mainstreaming), interventions to counter social stigma (social mainstreaming).

The writer is MBBS MD (Dermatology, Leprosy & Venereology)

MEDITATE TO FIGHT STRESS



DR PRAKRITI PODDAR

While much needs to be done to transform our education system to meet the needs of all, it is equally important to teach our children ways to manage stress, says

Data compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) shows that almost 28 student suicides were reported in India in 2018, translating into one suicide every hour. It is a tremendously worrying indicator for a country to lose its valuable young resource to suicides emanating from pressure of education. Critics have time and again pointed out that our education system tends to judge widely different students on single line parameters, which is unfair. While much needs to be done to transform our education system to meet the needs of all types of students, it is equally important to teach our children the art of taking stress in their strides. It is also important for parents to not impose the burden of unreasonable expectations on their children.

Steps have been taken over the past decade to make Board examinations less daunting for students. These include more focus on conceptual questions rather than long descriptive ones and making Class X Boards optional for students. Yet, children preparing for Boards examination often end up getting overwhelmed ahead of the examination season. Some students tend to experience episodes of anxiety and sleeplessness and even nervous breakdowns. This condition is compounded by constant scrutiny by parents, teachers and inquisitive relatives as well as constant comparisons with peers.

If you are a student preparing for Boards examination, here is a list of useful suggestions to help you cope with the pressure:

- Treat Boards like any other exams. Board exams are just another exam based on the syllabus you have already studied. Train your mind to internalise the fact that these are just another exams. You have been there, done that.
Avoid comparisons with peers.
Give your mind an outlet. It is recommended that you must give yourself short breaks every now and then to indulge in activities that divert your mind from studies and helps it to unwind.
Learn meditation and mind calming exercises to manage stress.

Here are a few such techniques that can help invoke a relaxation response:

- Breathing exercises: Taking slow, deep and long breaths works in two ways. Firstly, it counters the shallow breathing that comes with stressful state of mind and helps oxygen fill your lungs. Secondly, it helps divert your mind from the stressful thoughts and helps usher in a more relaxed state of mind.
Mindfulness: Practicing mindfulness is another very useful way to beat the stress response. Mindfulness implies focusing every moment on what you are doing, rather than letting stray thoughts creep into your mind. So, if you are eating, concrete on every bite; if you are bathing, focus on every exercise during the bath. However, this doesn't happen overnight. You have to train your mind into practicing mindfulness every minute of the day.
Meditation: Meditation is another widely used technique to fight off stress. If you start your day by meditating for a few minutes, you will see that your mind is less distracted, less anxious and better focused on the job. Sit on your table every morning, close your eyes and just concentrate on a random point in space-time.

The writer is Councilor in Education, HR and Business Upliftment, Mental Health Expert, Director, Poddar Wellness Ltd

DadiKaKehna

Dry, flaky and rough skin are a part and parcel of summers. ROSHNI DEVI shares home remedies that will help keep your skin hydrated during the season



Keeping your skin hydrated and smooth during the hot summer months can be very challenging. The scorching heat leaves no stone unturned to make you feel dehydrated, retaining moisture becomes a tedious task. Here are a few ways to retain your skin's moisture without spending a bomb on several cosmetics. Make water your best friend. Make sure to drink at least eight to 10 glasses of water everyday if not more. This will help in retaining moisture and will keep your body hydrated thereby locking in the skin's moisture to avoid dryness.

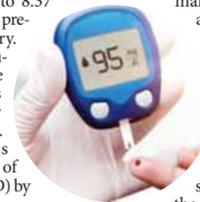
Fruits and fresh juices can help. Make sure to have ample of citrus fruits in your diet. One can also drink fresh fruit juices to avoid dehydration. Skipping sunscreen is a big 'no-no'. Many of us tend to ignore sunscreen and directly apply make-up. This is a strict no. Sunscreens help to lock moisture and avoid the damage caused by UV rays. Use glycerin. One can directly dab a cotton ball into glycerin and apply it all over the face during night. It will help to keep your skin hydrated. If you have oily skin, you can also add few drops of lemon juice into it to avoid making your skin look extra oily.



TIPTOP

The latest findings of India Diabetes Care Index unveiled that the average HbA1c level decreased to 8.47 from 8.76 during October to December 2019 as compared to the preceding quarter in Delhi. The overall HbA1c level decreased to 8.37 from 8.52 as compared to the preceding quarter in the country. The average postprandial glucose level, i.e. the average 'post-meal' glucose level was recorded at an alarmingly high 246.69 mg/dL. Uncontrolled diabetes is known to increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases (CVD) by 2 to 4 times. The India Diabetes Care Index, a part of the 'Impact India: 1000-Day Challenge' programme by Novo Nordisk Education Foundation studies the blood glucose levels across cities through various parameters.

Speaking about the status of Diabetes control in Delhi, Dr Ambrish Mithal, Chairman and Head of Endocrinology and Diabetes at Max Healthcare Hospitals, Delhi said: "We are happy that there is a marginal dip in the Hb1Ac level as compared to the last quarter. However, this marginal reduction in HbA1c can be further improved if we avoid the intake of high refined carbohydrate. This high carbohydrate content leads to high post meal sugar values. Post-meal spikes are known to increase the chances of cardiovascular diseases. We need to concentrate on addressing both fasting and post-meal glucose levels across all HbA1c levels. For this, people with diabetes should follow the right diet, exercise daily and doregular consultation with their doctors."



SLIMLINE

Firoza Sarwari, a 70 year-old resident of Afghanistan who was suffering from rare form of tumour in the chest, was successfully treated by Dr Suresh Singh Naruka, Consultant, ENT, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals along with his team of doctors who performed a highly complicated retro sternal hemi thyroidectomy surgery to remove the tumour from her chest. Sarwari was presented with a history of swelling in the neck accompanied by difficulty in breathing and swallowing. Post-

evaluation it was revealed that she had developed a massive tumour in the chest, which seemed to be arising from the thyroid gland. After thorough evaluation, a multidisciplinary effort was adopted for treatment with team of doctors from various specialties. Dr Ameet Kishore, senior consultant surgeon, ENT, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals said: "This was a case of rare tumour and required the combined efforts of multidisciplinary team of doctors."

STUDYCENTRE

E-cigarette users are exposed to increased concentrations of potentially harmful levels of metals that are linked to elevated oxidative DNA damage, a new study has found.

For the study, published in the journal BMJ Open Respiratory Research, researchers found that the biomarkers, which reflect exposure, effect, and potential harm, are both elevated in e-cigarette users compared to the other groups and linked to metal exposure and oxidative DNA damage. "Our study found e-cigarette users are exposed to increased concentrations of potentially harmful levels of metals — especially zinc — that are correlated to elevated oxidative DNA damage," said the study's lead researcher Prue Talbot from University of California in the US.

Zinc, a dietary nutrient, plays key roles in growth, immune function, and wound healing. Too little of this essential trace element can cause death; too much of it can cause disease. Its deficiency, as well as its excess, cause cellular oxidative stress, which, if unchecked, can lead to diseases such as atherosclerosis, coronary heart disease, pulmonary fibrosis, acute lymphoblastic leukemia, and lung cancer. For the study, researchers have examined and quantified urinary biomarkers of effect and potential harm in relation to metals in e-cigarette users. "Excess of zinc in their bodies can lead to nausea and diarrhea," Talbot added.

Trend Slazer

Deepika receives flak over '83 tweet

Bollywood actor DEEPIKA PADUKONE faced a backlash over her tweet on the role of Romi Dev in the forthcoming film '83.

The actor posted her look as Romi on February 19. It was the tweet that accompanied the post that didn't go down well with social media users.

"To be able to play a small 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," she captioned the image.



'Some stories really encompass life. The story of two youngsters falling in love in Chhaju Ke Dahi Bhalle, the dark reality of a married couple in Sleeping Partner or Pinni or Thappad

really show some real moments of life. While Thappad is a story of children, Pinni is the story of an elderly lady. That is the power of a short story.'

—Guneet Monga

Actor HRITHIK ROSHAN came in support of an individual who was asked to not to give a presentation in class due to stuttering issue. The actor said that stuttering should never hold him back from dreaming big.



A social media user wrote: "My cousin was giving a presentation in his class when the HOD/lecturer told him 'if u cannot speak properly you shouldn't study.' He hasn't come out of his room since this incident."

Hrithik took to Twitter and wrote: "Please tell your cousin that that professor and his judgement both are irrelevant."

Chris to visit India in March

Hollywood star CHRIS HEMSWORTH is all set to visit India for the promotional tour of his forthcoming action film Extraction.

He will visit Mumbai along with director Sam Hargrave, on March 16. The film also stars Indian actors Randeep Hooda and Pankaj Tripathi.

Hemsworth shot for the Netflix film in India in 2018.

It revolves around Tyler Rake (Chris Hemsworth), a fearless, black market mercenary, who embarks on the most deadly extraction of his career when he's enlisted to rescue the kidnapped son of an imprisoned international crime lord.

Where's the audience?

Armani holds runway show in an empty theatre due to virus

In a last-minute change, Giorgio Armani is holding his Milan Fashion Week runway show behind closed doors due to concerns raised by the coronavirus and instead stream the event from inside the empty showroom.

The fashion house said "the decision was taken to safeguard the well-being of all his invited guests by not having them attend crowded spaces."

A dozen towns in northern Italy have gone on effective lockdown after the deaths of two people infected with the new virus from China. Milan is the capital of Italy's Lombardy region, which reported 54 confirmed cases. It's mayor recently shuttered public offices. But runway shows continued apace for their fourth day, with most of the fashion crowd taking an analytical attitude to the rapidly spiking infections. "For the moment the situation is under control," said the president of the Italian National Fashion



Chamber, Carlo Capasa. He added it was up to government officials or fashion houses themselves to decide if additional measures were needed.

Armani was forced to show behind closed doors one other time, in Paris in 1998, when officials said there were insufficient safety exits inside a huge tent

being used as the venue to allow the public to attend. Only his team and one video camera was present, and a video of the show was later distributed to fashion editors. Armani later showed the entire collection in New York in protest, claiming that fashion world politics and not just safety concerns had led to the officials' call.

On Saturday, Mido, eyewear industry fair, announced that it would postpone the gathering scheduled for February 29 to March 2 until June due to concerns over the virus. "The evolution of this health crisis under way in our country does not leave any doubt over our decision," MIDO president Giovanni Vitaloni said in a statement. —AP



PASSION NEVER FAILS YOU

Actor-director RENUKA SHAHANE's web series Starting Troubles shatters the myth of focussing only on one aspect of career and asks people to pursue their passion they dreamt of as kids. By TEAM VIVA

Have your childhood dreams turned into a reality today? Do you think you have been able to accomplish most of what you had imagined as a kid? Has your passion of being a football player or a contemporary dancer fulfilled?

Starting Troubles, a medical humour by stand-up comedian, author and doctor Jagdish Chaturvedi, aims to shatter the myth that 'if we want to be successful, we should focus on only one thing in life', a mindset that has restricted millions from living their dreams while they continue their jobs. People usually stop acting, dancing or singing and sacrifice their interests they dreamt about as children or even if they pursue their passion, they are judged and called unfocussed and confused.

From Pooja Bhabhi of Hum Aapke Hain Kaun to Dr Kavita Gowda, actor Renuka Shahane shares about her long gap, the digital wave and her latest web series.

Medical dramas are usually serious. We mostly look at it as something about health and serious issues and never through a humouristic point of view...

Yes. This is the most common mindset when there's anything related to doctors or a medical series. And this is exactly what we wanted to break through our series. Even the script doesn't have a linear narrative, the story keeps going back and forth, which made it more interesting. It was all fun. The atmosphere on the set was very relaxed, we were mostly laughing on something or the other. And I think that as actors it is important to enjoy your script.

What would you say about your character in the series? How challenging was it to carve yourself into Dr Kavita?

I play a very strict doctor and expect a certain level of professionalism from my interns and resident officers. But as the story moves forward one will see that the doctor is the guiding force of all the students who want to do something different in life.

The challenge in playing this role was to have a command over the medical jargon. When you watch international series like Grey's Anatomy and others, you will notice that the actors are very fluent with medical terms. But here that's not the case as we don't have too many medical dramas. Dr Chaturvedi is a practising surgeon, so he made sure that we got the terms right. After the rehearsals he even said that I sound like his mentor. That genuinely made me happy.

If there is a remake of Hum Aapke Hain Kaun, would like to play Pooja again?



I will always cherish this role but I don't see myself playing Pooja in the remake. However, I would love to see Alia Bhatt playing Madhuri's character.

The market for bold content on digital space is growing. Will we see you in

any such shows?

Yes, there is a growing market for erotic content now but I don't see myself doing it, though I don't mind if other actors from the same show are comfortable doing it. It also depends on what the story demands. I am very old-school, a lot of people are



THE CHALLENGE WAS TO HAVE A COMMAND OVER THE MEDICAL JARGON. IN INTERNATIONAL SERIES LIKE GREY'S ANATOMY, YOU WILL NOTICE THAT THE ACTORS ARE VERY FLUENT WITH MEDICAL TERMS. BUT HERE, THAT'S NOT THE CASE AS WE DON'T HAVE TOO MANY MEDICAL DRAMAS'

comfortable doing it but not me.

Your last directorial Rita released 10 years ago and there have been intervals between your acting projects. People have been wondering about this long gap...

For me, it is very important to balance everything, both home and work. That's why this gap. I am not the kind of person who can do too many things simultaneously. It's important for me to be there for my kids. And it's not something imposed on me or I feel bad about, this is a choice I made when I had kids and I'm happy about it. Now that they are grown ups so I will find more time to do things. Though, it's very difficult to maintain a balance.

We haven't seen you playing a comic role before. How was it exploring the genre?

It's nice to explore that part of you because as an actor you are not offered such roles quite often. I like playing characters which have a little bit of humour in it. Whether it's What the Folks (2018) or Starting Troubles, you are catering to the youth so it has to be catchy and funny.

How do you find web stories different from theatres?

The biggest difference between theatres and web series is the freedom that the latter offers. It doesn't confine you and gives the freedom to express as many stories and emotions you want to. There is a lot of scope too. Also, if you decide to make something slightly unconventional, people have to decide whether they want to take the risk or not.

A literary escape

Bestselling young adult authors are aiming at older readers



After gaining millions of young readers for her Divergent fantasy series, Veronica Roth decided she and her characters were ready for the next phase — a novel for adults.

"I grew up on stories like Dune, Harry Potter, and Ender's Game about people who shoulder burdens when they're too young to bear them," says Roth, who tells the story of Sloane Andrews and her fellow fighters against the havoc of the Dark One in Chosen Ones, scheduled for April. "So the question of what comes after those stories just kept nagging me. Chosen Ones is about that after — about a group of 30-somethings who saved the world when they were younger, and they're still dealing

with the repercussions of it." Roth, Tochi Onyebuchi and Sarah J Maas are among several writers popular with young people who have books out this year intended for older readers. Some have never written for adults, while others move freely among teens and older readers. All are navigating one of the more complicated paths in publishing — how to consciously appeal to different audience for different books, from the use or absence of profanity to the choice of subject matter and how to present it. The histo-

ry is mixed: Judy Blume and Neil Gaiman are among those who have succeeded well, while others, including Daniel Handler and Stephanie Meyer, never fully caught on with adults. Roth's first Divergent book came out in 2011, and she reasons that enough of her original readers have reached an age that they'll be open to a mature approach. She considers her new work a "pretty natural" moment in her career, when you "get curious about other genres, other types of writing," Onyebuchi had published



Beasts Made of Night and Crown of Thunder before completing his first book for adults, Riot Baby. It is set in part around the 1992 Los Angeles riots following the acquittal of policemen who beat Rodney King. Riot Baby is a dystopian fantasy about Kev, who has been jailed in Rikers Island, and his sister Ella, who holds the power and the horror of seeing the future.

A graduate of Yale University and Columbia Law School, among other schools, Onyebuchi has worked in private and government law and thought a long time about

a book that could draw upon his education and background. He considers adult books his first passion but he found that writing for young people strengthened his storytelling, forcing him to write clearly and not "to obfuscate." For Riot Baby, he was able to expand upon that discipline. "I could be straightforward and short and concise, and I could have a lyrical style that abounded in subjunctive clauses," he said. "I didn't just have to be Hemingway. I didn't just have to be Faulkner. I could be both."

Maas, whose bestsellers for young people include the Throne of Glass fantasy series, has her debut adult book out in March. Her Crescent City series begins with House of Earth and Blood, in which protagonist Bryce Quinlan — with the help of a fallen angel — seeks to track down the killers of her closest friends.

Maas said that the new series had been a secret "passion project" for years, an idea came to her when she was on a plane during a book tour, listening to the soundtrack from Gravity. The epic scene that came to her became the ending of House of Earth and Blood. Bryce's age compelled Maas to think about a different readership.

"The moment Bryce Quinlan walked into my head, I knew she was in her early to mid-20s — an age that placed her story firmly in the adult range," says Maas, adding that the main difference between writing for younger and older people is in the language. "I will admit that I can now get away with quite a bit more swearing!"

VE Schwab, who writes adult and young adult novels, says she doesn't change her style or vocabulary: The difference is in her mindset. For her Monsters of Verity duology, she inhabits her 17-year-old self, a pretty angry teenager. For The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue, an adult story coming in October about a woman who endures and is forgotten for centuries, she is closer to the person she is now.

"One of the primary themes in the book is this concept of 30 as a threshold for true adulthood, the feeling like you look down for a moment, and when you look back up, everyone else has raced ahead, and you're still trying to get your bearings," she said. "I wrote it essentially for a version of myself who never found writing. If I hadn't become an author, these are the questions I'd be facing, this is how lost I would feel." —AP

PTI ■ PERTH

Leg-spinner Poonam Yadav delivered yet again with timely dismissals to lead India to a comfortable 18-run win over Bangladesh in their ICC Women's T20 World Cup match, here on Monday.

Invited to bat, a substantial partnership eluded them after a fiery start but India still managed to post a competitive 142 for six at the WACA ground.

India were off to a flying start with opener Shafali Verma (39 of 17 balls) coming out all guns blazing in the Group A game.

However, the Indian innings never got the impetus after the departure of the 16-year-old, who hit four sixes and two fours in her entertaining knock. Later, Veda Krishnamurthy (20 off 11) hit few lusty blows to help India post a fighting total.

Bangladesh fought through Murshida Khatun (30) and Nigar Sultana (35) but Poonam rattled the middle and lower order with her strikes.

In the end, Bangladesh could manage 124 for eight, giving India their second straight win in the tournament.

The way Shafali and Richa played today, they showed how capable they are for the team. Veda's innings was turning point. We needed boundaries at that point and she did a great job," India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur said.

Poonam, who had helped India halt Australia's chase in their opening game as well, was the top bowler again. She

# SPIN THE WHEEL

Shafali, Poonam, shine bright in India's 18-run win against Bangladesh



Indian players celebrate after win against B'desh during ICC Women's World Cup match T20WC/Twitter

scalped Sanjida Islam (10), Fahima Khatun (17) and Jahanara Alam (10) to make it tough for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh needed 49 runs from last five overs but they failed to negotiate Poonam's flighted deliveries.

The Indian spinner had Fahima caught by Shafali in the first ball of the 16th

over while Rajeshwari Gaekwad saw the back of well-set Nigar Sultana.

Poonam then returned to dismiss Jahanara, who stepped out looking for a big hit only to be stumped by Taniya.

The runs dried up and Bangladesh now needed 22 off the final over.

Pacer Shikha Pandey clean bowled

Rumana Ahmed with a perfect yorker and writing was clear on the wall.

Earlier, Shafali punished the rival attack with her fluent stroke-making.

Attempting a big one, Shafali skied one off veteran Panna Ghosh and was dismissed, caught by wicket-keeper Shamima Sultana.

This was after fellow opener Taniya Bhatia (2) was sent back by Salma Khatun.

Shafali turned out to be the best scorer in India's innings.

Jemimah Rodrigues played a sedate yet crucial 34-run knock since hard-hitting skipper Harmanpreet Kaur was already dismissed by Ghosh.

With both Shafali and Harmanpreet cooling their heels back in the dug out, India's run-rate took a dip.

Jemimah erred in judgement while calling Deepti for a single and was run out.

Richa Ghosh, who replaced Smriti Mandhana in the playing XI, hit two splendid boundaries before holing out to Nahida Akter off Salma Khatun.

The slide continued with Deepti Sharma (11) running herself out following a mix up with Veda Krishnamurthy (20 off 11).



Meg Lanning and Rachael Haynes T20WC/Twitter

## Haynes saves Aus blushes

PTI ■ PERTH

Rachael Haynes hit a classy fifty to help Redefining champions Australia overcome a fighting Sri Lanka by five wickets in their second Group A match.

Chamari Athapaththu (50 off 38 balls) struck a quick half-century but Nicola Carey (2/18), who missed the India game, and Molly Strano (2/23) helped Australia restrict Sri Lanka to a modest 122 for six.

Chasing the target, the Australian hearts were racing when Alyssa Healy, Ashleigh Gardner and Beth Mooney — all fell within four overs before Haynes and captain Meg Lanning (41 not out) stitched a 95-run fourth-wicket stand to take the hosts out of trouble.

## SINGLES

### OPELKA WINS ATP DELRAY BEACH TITLE

**MIAMI:** Fourth seed Reilly Opelka won twice on Sunday to capture the ATP Delray Beach Open title, outlasting Yoshihito Nishioka 7-5, 6-7 (4/7), 6-2 in the championship match. It was a second career ATP crown for the 22-year-old American, whose other title came at last year's New York Open, and he won after he played a morning semi-final at the rain-hit Florida venue. Opelka battled back to eliminate second seed Milos Raonic 4-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-3 in the semis to book a date with the world number 63.

### GARIN BEATS MAGER IN RIO FINAL

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Third seed Cristian Garin stretched his win streak to 10 matches with two victories on Sunday, including a 7-6 (7/3), 7-5 triumph over Gianluca Mager in the ATP Rio Open final. It was the second title in a row for Garin, who lifted the trophy two weeks ago at Cordoba, and the fourth of his career after the 23-year-old took crowns last year at Munich and Houston. Garin topped fifth seed Borna Coric 6-4, 7-5 in an early Sunday finish of their rain-halted semi-final to advance on the Brazil clay while Mager outlasted lucky loser Attila Balazs 7-6 (7/4), 4-6, 7-6 (7/2).

### HARDIK TO PLAY IN DY PATIL T20 TOURNAMENT

**NAVI MUMBAI:** Fit-again India all-rounder Hardik Pandya is set to play in the D Y Patil T20 tournament. Hardik suffered a bad lower back injury five months ago and underwent a surgery in London. The 26-year-old all-rounder, who hasn't played int'l cricket since then, has been recovering at the NCA in Bengaluru. "The Reliance 1 (team) would be represented by players like Hardik Pandya, Bhuvaneshwar Kumar, Shikhar Dhawan," said Dr Vijay Patil, Pres. DY Patil Sports Academy & also MCA Pres. Dhawan and Bhuvni are also on their road to recovery after sustaining injuries.

### STAR SPORTS LAUNCHES 'KHEL BOLEGA' TVC

**MUMBAI:** IPL fever has caught on early this year with fan expectations and chatter pouring in much ahead of the start of the tournament, triggered further with the announcement of the schedule last week. In response to the social media chatter, Star Sports has launched *Khel Bolega*, a TVC along with the BCCI. *Khel Bolega* indicates that the coming season will clearly end the response to all the chatter (#BolBakar) surrounding the IPL when the player performances will speak for themselves with the hashtag #KhelBolega, translated in English as *The game will do the talking*. The TVC highlights the non-stop fan chatter and features plenty of colourful motifs and pop culture references symbolising the pan India nature of the IPL.

### RKFC STAY IN TOP HALF WITH NARROW WIN

**SRINAGAR:** Real Kashmir bounced back from two consecutive defeats as they beat Indian Arrows by a solitary goal to remain in the top half of the I-League points table. Ivorian midfielder Bazie Armand scored the all-important goal in the 70th minute to the celebration of over 10,000 home team supporters at the picturesque TRC Ground. Real Kashmir, who lost to Punjab FC and Churchill Brothers — both away games — in their previous two matches, now have 18 points from 12 games to occupy the fifth spot in the 11-team league table. The Indian Arrows, the developmental side of the All India Football Federation, remained at the bottom of the pile with eight points from 13 games. AGENCIES



Daryl Mitchell, third left, is helped to his feet by New Zealand teammates after taking the catch to dismiss India's Jasprit Bumrah for no score on fourth day of 1st Test AP

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Indian batsmen's inadequacies in adverse conditions were laid bare as they crashed to an embarrassing 10-wicket defeat against a ruthless New Zealand side that wrapped up the opening Test in just over three days here at Basin Reserve on Monday.

Starting the day on 144 for four, India were all out for 191

in 81 overs in their second innings. This was a shade better than their dismal 165 in the first innings, which eventually proved to be decisive.

Trent Boult (4/39 in 22 overs) and Tim Southee (5/61 in 21 overs), one of the finest but most under-rated new ball pairs in world cricket, showed that when it boils down to playing incisive seam and swing bowling, this batting line-up is

# Flushed at 'The Basin'

Southee takes fifer to sweep India's tail as Kiwis reach century of Tests win with 10 wicket triumph

still a work in progress.

The required target of nine runs was knocked off by New Zealand without much ado for their 100th Test win.

India's last defeat was against Australia at Perth during the 2018-19 series but the loss at the Basin Reserve would hurt them more because the visitors have not surrendered in such fashion of late.

There was no resistance from a star-studded line-up and more than intent, the failure was due to poor technique on a track that had something on the third and fourth day.

This is a team that plays fast bowling much better than their predecessors, the reason for their success on the bouncy Australian tracks.

But when it comes to facing conventional seam and swing bowling in testing conditions, they are yet to learn the art of saving a Test match.

India had lost the mental battle on the first day itself when they saw the moisture on the wicket.

The toss became a factor and not for one session did they look comfortable. Mayank Agarwal was the only batsman

"I am absolutely fine. I am batting really well. I feel that sometimes scores don't reflect the way you are batting and that's what can happen when you don't execute what you want to well."  
—VIRAT KOHLI (on his personal form)

"New Zealand got into the mind of the batsmen and make the batsmen do something that they don't want to. There's a very thin line and a very delicate balance of when to attack and when to put bowlers under pressure which we failed to do in this match and there is no harm in accepting that."  
—VIRAT KOHLI

who felt at home, albeit in patches, as New Zealand showed what a Test match strategy is all about.

If the first innings was about mixing back of length deliveries with fuller length balls, the second saw the pacers coming from round the wicket and targeting the ribcage. The line was disconcerting and it stifled them for good. It affected their mindset

and when Ajinkya Rahane and Hanuma Vihari stepped out on the fourth morning, defeat was written all over as both looked ill-equipped to handle such high quality seam bowling.

Rahane (29 off 75 balls) and Vihari (15 off 79 balls) are players who only play long-form cricket at the international level and both are known for their patience.

But little did the Indian vice-captain apprehend that he would get a delivery from Boult, which, instead of moving away after pitching, held its line. With the ball doing exactly the opposite of what Rahane had thought, he had no option but to jab at it, and

all he got was an edge.

Southee, who bowls lovely classical outswinger then bowled an off-cutter from the other end and before Vihari could comprehend, it came back sharply to peg the stumps back.

Within first 20 minutes, the two seasoned practitioners of swing had knocked the stuffing out of India's resistance.

"A really brilliant all round game for us. It is also a step in the right direction as well," Kane Williamson said.

Southee, who had a terrific match, deservingly completed his 10th five-wicket haul, and all it took was 16 overs to end the India innings.

# Gowtham's 7 helps Karnataka seal semis spot

**JAMMU:** Krishnappa Gowtham snapped seven wickets as Karnataka sealed their place in the semifinals after thrashing Jammu and Kashmir by 167 runs on the final day of their Ranji Trophy quarterfinal, here on Monday.

Resuming the day at 245 for four, Karnataka added another 71 runs before folding for 316 in their second innings, setting the hosts a target of 331.

Jammu and Kashmir were bundled out for 163, courtesy off-spinner Gowtham's (7/54) seven-wicket haul.

Earlier, Abid Mushtaq (6/83) claimed six wickets, Parvez Rasool (3/88) took three and Mujtaba Yousuf (1/44) dis-

missed one Karnataka batsman. Overnight batsman Krishnamurthy Siddharth (98) missed out on a well-deserved century, dismissed by Mushtaq in the 80th over.

His wicket triggered a collapse as Karnataka kept losing wickets regularly. Srinivas Sharath (34) held on to one end and took the team across the 300-mark before departing in the 105th over.

**SAURASHTRA IN LAST 4 ONGOLE:** Saurashtra booked their spot in the semifinals on the basis of the first innings after their quarterfinal tie against Andhra ended in a draw on the final day.

Resuming at the overnight score of 375 for 9, the visitors were dismissed for 426 in 138 overs in the second innings, setting an improbable target of 710 runs for Andhra.

After being bowled out for 136 in the first innings, Andhra finished at 149 for 4 in 51 overs in their second essay before play was called off.

A strokeful half-century by Andhra captain K S Bharat (55, 69 balls, 6 fours, 1 six) was the bright spot in the host team's second innings.

The wicketkeeper-batsman, who is on the fringes of national selection and has been part of various India A teams in the recent past, showed why he is

rated highly, playing some delightful shots during his knock.

In Tangi, Bengal stormed into the last four by virtue of their first innings lead over Odisha after only one session was possible on the final day which was interrupted by bad light.

Resuming on 361 for seven, Bengal lost their remaining three wickets for 12 runs inside six overs to set Odisha an improbable 456.

In reply, Odisha were 39 for no loss in 10 overs when bad light stopped play as both the teams agreed upon a draw with two more sessions left on the final day.

# One defeat can't define team's character: Kohli

**WELLINGTON:** Captain Virat Kohli had no qualms in admitting that India were outplayed by New Zealand in the opening Test but said they "can't help it" if a few want to make a "big deal" out of one loss.

"We know we haven't played well, but if people want to make a big deal out of it, make a mountain out of it, we can't help it as we don't think like that," the India skipper said at the post-match interaction.

"Some people might want it to be the end of the world but it's not. For us, it's a game of cricket we lost and we move on and keep our heads high," Kohli said.

It is the acceptance of defeat that defines the character of a side, the world's premier batsman said.

"We understand that we need to play well to win, also at home. There's no cakewalk at international level as teams will come and beat you. You accept it and that defines our character as a side."

If he had given credence to the "outside chatter", he said the team wouldn't have been where it is now.

"That's why we have been

able to play this kind of cricket. If we would have paid attention to the outside chatter, we would again be at No 7 or 8 in the rankings. We don't really bother about what people are saying on the outside."

One defeat can't make a team, which has been winning games of Test cricket, "bad overnight." "If we have lost then we have no shame in accepting that. It means we didn't play this game well. It doesn't mean that we have become a bad team overnight. People might want to change our thoughts, but it doesn't work like that." PTI

# Rahim's double ton corner Zimbabwe



Mushfiqur Rahim reacts after completing 200 runs ICC/Twitter

AFP ■ DHAKA

Mushfiqur Rahim who became the highest run-scorer for Bangladesh in Tests, hit an unbeaten 203, while skipper Mominul Haque made 132, after the hosts resumed on 240 for three.

Mushfiqur and Mominul added 222 for the fourth wicket, while wicketkeeper-batsman Liton Das made 53 to give the hosts their highest-ever total against Zimbabwe.

Mominul declared the innings soon after Mushfiqur reached the 200-run mark after Ainsley Ndlovu past extra cover for a boundary.

# Bouncing back isn't a term we use: Williamson

**WELLINGTON:** The perfect execution of plans against India has pleased New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson but he refused to term his team's 10-wicket win as "bouncing back" from their 0-3 debacle against Australia.

New Zealand came into the series after their nightmare in Australia and put up a splendid performance to outclass India in just over three days.

"Bouncing back isn't a term that we use within our group. You can get carried away thinking about results (especially) when you have a number of poor ones and sometimes the want (urge) for a good one can be a distraction towards getting (achieving) it," Williamson said.

The Kiwi skipper, who also was the top-scorer for his side with a well-made 89, seemed satisfied with the performances of each and every player of his team.



"So it's about focussing on things that are important. The roles that give us the best chance of success and if we do that, the result manifests and I think that's what we saw in this game and that was what was pleasing," Williamson said.

"It was a really brilliant all-round game for us. Guys were really committed to their roles on a surface that offered enough to create a good balance between bat and ball. It's a really important

lesson moving forward to Christchurch," he added.

But Williamson also wants to guard his team against complacency as he expects India to come hard in the second Test, starting February 29. "The challenge is there in front of us because we know come Christchurch we will need to be on our game again. India is the number one in the world for a reason and they have had success all around the world," he said.

# Fernandes lifted mood at Man Utd: Ole

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer says Bruno Fernandes has lifted the mood at Old Trafford, comparing the January signing to a mix between former Manchester United players Paul Scholes and Juan Sebastian Veron.

Fernandes arrived for an initial 55 million euros (£46 million) and, while that could rise to 80 million euros if a variety of targets are reached, United look to have struck a good deal.

The Portugal international has impressed in all three United starts to date, following up fine displays against Wolves and Chelsea with a goal and an assist against Watford.

Successive wins have lifted United into fifth place in the Premier League table as they push for Champions League qualification.

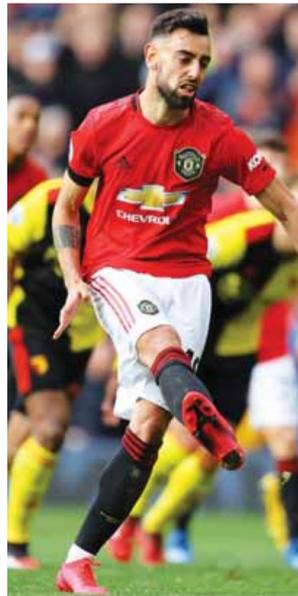
"He's given everyone a boost," Solskjaer said of the 25-year-old Fernandes. "It means more than just getting a player in. You can see the supporters, they're used to players with that personality, mentality and quality so he's been a big plus."

"He's come in from day one, the first minute, and felt like a presence in the group. First training session, demanding the ball."

"Some players take some time in warming up but he felt confident straight away."

"He's a bit of a mix between (Paul) Scholes and (Juan Sebastian) Veron, to be fair. He's got the temperament maybe of Veron and a lot of the quality of him and Scholes."

Solskjaer said Fernandes was a "big piece" in the team that United are looking to build, while Anthony Martial has shown that he too can be a key component of the attack. Monday's header at Chelsea was fol-



Bruno Fernandes scores from penalty spot AP

# Stimac "impressed" by talent on display in I-League

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian football team head coach Igor Stimac is "impressed" by the talent on display in the I-League after he watched two matches earlier this month.

He said he's looking forward to watching more matches.

"It was fantastic to witness 2 @ILeagueOfficial matches in Mumbai and Goa and I'm really impressed with the talents," Stimac tweeted.

"Looking forward to see more action in coming days," he added.

The Croatian was in the stands in Mumbai earlier this month when the Indian Arrows played Kolkata giants East Bengal (February 17) at the Cooperage Stadium. He also witnessed the match between Mohun Bagan and Churchill Brothers in Margao (February 22).

The former Croatia World Cupper handed the Hero of the Match award to Fran Gonzalez as the Mariners extended their lead at the top of the I-League table with a 3-0 win.

During the launch of the I-League 2019-20 in November last year, Stimac had said "every Indian player in the Hero I-League is a potential candidate for a place in the senior team."

"I will keep coming to watch the matches whenever I can. The players need to know that each player in the Hero I-League with an Indian passport is one of the possible future candidates for the national team. It's up to them how they perform for their respective teams," he had said.

India, already out of contention for a FIFA 2022 World Cup berth, play Asian champions Qatar in Bhubaneswar on March 26.



FC Barcelona posts picture collage of Lionel Messi & Diego Maradona via Twitter

## Messi 'greatest' ahead of Maradona: Gattuso

AFP ■ NAPLES

Napoli vs Barcelona  
Live from 1:30am IST  
SONY TEN 2 NETWORK

Lionel Messi is the "greatest" footballer of all time, ahead of even Diego Maradona, Napoli coach Gennaro Gattuso said on Monday ahead of his side's Champions League clash with Barcelona.

The 32-year-old Messi scored four goals at the weekend in Barcelona's 5-0 win over Eibar and has now been involved in more than 1,000 goals in his career, scoring 696 and assisting another 306.

Gattuso was quick to praise Messi, comparing the Barca star to Napoli legend Maradona.

"He's the greatest and an example for everyone," said Gattuso ahead of the sides' last-16 first leg today.

"He never says anything inappropriate. He does things that only exist on the Playstation, unthinkable things."

"But I saw him (Maradona) on VHS, or DVD. I never saw him up close, at a stadium."

"I know the champion he was and I know I missed something wonderful. I regret it. Today I see Messi doing things that Maradona was doing."

Napoli captain Lorenzo Insigne was not so keen to accept that Messi has reached greater heights than 1986 World Cup winner Maradona.

"Messi is the best in the world today," said Insigne. "But for us Neapolitans, Maradona is

everything and I don't want to compare them. Maradona is sacred."

But Insigne and Gattuso agreed that their team have to be careful not to focus only on trying to stop Messi.

"We have to be careful with their whole team, because it's not just Messi," said Gattuso.

Napoli are enjoying a recent upturn in form after a dreadful start to the Serie A season which culminated in the sack of Carlo Ancelotti following a 4-0 win over Genk that sent them into the Champions League knockout stage.

Last season's Serie A runners-up have won six of their last seven games. "Tomorrow (Tuesday), I want a Napoli side that are not afraid," added Gattuso.

"I want to see a team that knows how to battle... You need to stand up to Barcelona — you can't worry."

"I want to see a lively team that plays with joy until the end. Can Napoli win the Champions League? Never say never."

It is the first time Napoli have reached the knockout rounds since a last-16 loss to Real Madrid in 2017, while Barcelona are bidding to make the quarter-finals for a 13th consecutive season.

AFP ■ PARIS

Edinson Cavani scored his 200th Paris Saint-Germain goal and Marquinhos netted twice as the Ligue 1 leaders bounced back from their Champions League defeat by Borussia Dortmund to beat Bordeaux 4-3 on Sunday, but their victory was marred by Neymar's late sending-off.

After losing 2-1 in Germany in their Champions League last 16 first leg in midweek, PSG's defensive weaknesses were again exposed as South Korean international Hwang Ui-jo gave Bordeaux the lead at the Parc des Princes.

PSG turned it around thanks to goals by Cavani and Kylian Mbappe either side of a Marquinhos brace, but at the other end there was a bizarre goal credited to the Brazilian defender Pablo and a Ruben Pardo strike had the home side hanging on at the finish.

The evening concluded with Neymar being sent off in stoppage time for a second yellow card for grappling with Bordeaux's Yacine Adli, leaving the world's most expensive player facing a suspension.

Along with the shortcomings at the back, it is another problem for coach Thomas Tuchel to think about, even if his team are now 13 points clear atop Ligue 1 from Marseille, who lost 3-1 to Nantes on Saturday.

Tuchel's men endured a bad start against mid-table Bordeaux, with skipper Thiago Silva going off hurt just before Hwang put the away side in front on 18 minutes, heading in a corner for his sixth Ligue 1 goal.

PSG were level in the 25th minute, though, as Di Maria's cross was headed in by Cavani, allowing the Uruguayan to reach a double century of PSG goals.

He then hit the post from close range before Marquinhos put Paris in



PSG's Edinson Cavani, left, celebrates after his teammate Marquinhos scores against Bordeaux during League One match at Parc des Princes

## 200 & COUNTING

Cavani becomes first player to complete double century of goals for PSG

front in first-half stoppage time, using his shoulder to convert Di Maria's free-kick.

Nevertheless, there was still time for Bordeaux to equalise at 2-2 before the interval.

Selected ahead of Keylor Navas in goal, Sergio Rico's clearance from a Marco Verratti back-pass struck Pablo and the Spaniard looked on in horror as the ball ricocheted back into the net.

However, Marquinhos netted from close range for his second of the night in the 63rd minute to make it 3-2. Then, when Ruben Pardo lost possession, Cavani set up Mbappe to score PSG's fourth, and his 16th in the league this season.

Pardo made some amends with a stunning strike for Bordeaux's third, and the ninth goal Paris have conceded in three games altogether.

Icardi then had another goal dis-

allowed before Neymar was sent off for his second yellow at the death.

"They have had quite a difficult week in terms of results and their confidence has taken a knock too," said Bordeaux's Laurent Koscielny of PSG.

"When you lose points and games then your confidence can quickly disappear but they are great players and they are capable of overcoming that."

## Felix back with bang

MADRID: Atletico Madrid followed up their surprise win over Liverpool by beating Villarreal in La Liga on Sunday as Joao Felix marked his return from injury with a first league goal since September.

Felix came off the bench at the Wanda Metropolitano after almost a month out with an ankle problem and the 20-year-old looked refreshed as he drove in Atletico's third in an impressive 3-1 victory.

Kieran Trippier was also back after recovering from a groin injury and he was involved in Atletico's second goal as Koke headed in.

Angel Correa had earlier cancelled out Paco Alcacer's strike for Villarreal.

Atletico's inconsistency this season means they are out of the title race, 12 points adrift of leaders Barcelona, who thrashed Eibar 5-0 on Saturday.

But momentum would be timely as Atleti bid to consolidate their place in the top four and capitalise on their 1-0 advantage against Liverpool in the Champions League last 16 next month.

Diego Simeone's side move up to third in La Liga, level on points with Sevilla, who earlier struck a superb 3-0 win away at fellow top-four rivals Getafe.



PTI ■ LONDON

## India to host Commonwealth shooting, archery events

India will host the Commonwealth shooting and archery championships in January 2022 and the medals from the two events will be counted in the final tally of the Birmingham Games, an unprecedented move approved by the CGF.

However, the medals will be added one week after the conclusion of the multi-disciplinary sporting event in Birmingham, the

Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) announced on Monday.

The decision was made at the CGF's Executive Board meeting here from February 21 to 23.

It can be considered a big win for India since it had threatened to boycott the Birmingham edition of the Games for dropping shooting, an optional sport, from the

roster. Archery is also another optional sport.

A Commonwealth Archery and Shooting Championships is set to take place in India in 2022 after a proposal to stage the event was approved by the CGF Executive Board," the CGF said in a release.

The two events will be held in Chandigarh in January 2022 while the Birmingham

Commonwealth Games are scheduled from July 27 to August 7, 2022.

"The decision confirmed that Chandigarh 2022 and Birmingham 2022 will be two separately organised and funded Commonwealth Sport events. "One week following the Closing Ceremony of Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, the CGF shall issue a medal table

that includes results from the Chandigarh 2022 Commonwealth Archery and Shooting Championships, as a further and final legitimate ranking of competing nations and territories from the respective competitions," the CGF added.

Rarely the sporting world has seen such an arrangement that the medals of championships held outside major

Games are counted in the final tally (of the main event).

National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) President Raminder Singh, who mooted the idea of the Commonwealth Shooting Championships, admitted that CGF's decision was a "unique and unprecedented development" as well as "truly a game changing methodology."

He was also candid in calling NRAI and IOA's proposal as "admittedly against the grain".

the pioneer

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