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Bid to paint 26/11 as Hindu terror

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

PNS/AGENCY ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

"Ramesh Mahale, Prashant Marde and Dinesh Kadam



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

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

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

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

"As the Joint CP in charge of the Crime Branch, Kasab

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

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

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

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

In one of the most horrific terrorist attacks in the country's history, 166 people were killed and over 300 injured as 10 heavily-armed terrorists from Pakistan created mayhem in Mumbai on November 26, 2008.

Kasab, the lone terrorist captured alive, was hanged to death on November 21, 2012.

UK MP's visa revoked for anti-India activities

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

Justifying the decision to cancel the visa and deporting the MP, sources said Abrahams was issued an e-Business visa on October 7 last year for attending business meetings. The visa was valid till October 5, 2020.

"Her e-Business visa was revoked on February 14, 2020 on account of her indulging in activities which went against India's national interest. The rejection of the e-Business visa



was intimated to her on February 14," they said. Sources also asserted the grant, rejection or revocation of a visa or electronic travel authorisation is the sovereign right of a country.

Abrahams was not in the possession of a valid visa at the time of her arrival at the IGI Airport here on Monday and she was asked to return, the sources said.

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

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

The Labour Party MP had said despite having a valid visa she was denied entry into India after she landed at the airport here about 8.50 am from Dubai. She was among a group of British MPs who issued formal letters expressing concerns over the revocation of Jammu & Kashmir's special status under Article 370 in August last year.

"We are gravely concerned at the announcement by Indian Home Minister, Amit Shah, that Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which grants special status to Jammu & Kashmir, has been removed by Presidential Order," the Opposition MP had noted in her letter to UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab.

Abrahams reacted on Twitter, "Very disappointing that a friend can't respectfully criticise another friend."

CAPSULE

SUNIL WINS GOLD IN ASIAN WRESTLING

New Delhi: Sunil Kumar on Tuesday overpowered Azat Salidinov of Kyrgyzstan 5-0 in the 87 kg summit bout to win India's first Greco-Roman gold medal in Asian Wrestling Championships in 27 years.

PK QUESTIONS NITISH'S DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Patna: Election strategist-turned-politician Prashant Kishor on Tuesday questioned the Nitish Kumar Government's development model, even as he sneered at the chief minister for making ideological compromises to stay in an alliance with the BJP.

BYPOLLS TO PANCHAYATS IN J&K POSTPONED: CEO

Jammu: The bypolls to panchayats scheduled for March 5 in Jammu & Kashmir has been postponed due to security reasons, J&K Chief Electoral Officer Shailendra Kumar said on Tuesday.

COBRA COMMANDO MARTYRED IN ENCOUNTER

Raipur: A CRPF commando was martyred while another injured in a gunfight with Maoists in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh on Tuesday, officials said.

C-17 TO EVACUATE INDIANS FROM WUHAN

New Delhi: India will send a C-17 military aircraft to Wuhan on February 20 to evacuate more Indians from the coronavirus-hit Chinese city and also provide medical supplies to China, military sources said on Tuesday. The C-17 Globemaster, the biggest military aircraft in the Air Force, will carry a large consignment of medical supplies to China and bring back more Indians from Wuhan.

Ayodhya, Jewar airports get ₹2,500 crore in UP Budget

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

To develop Ayodhya as a tourist attraction, the Uttar Pradesh Government in its Budget for 2020-21 has made a special provision of ₹500 crore. The UP Government will spend ₹85 crore on the development of a high-class infrastructure in Ayodhya, and ₹10 crore has been kept for the renovation of Tulsi Smarak Bhawan in the pilgrim city.

The UP Budget also earmarked ₹200 crore for the beautification of Varanasi's Kashi Vishwanath temple.

The Budget also provides ₹2,000 crore for the new airport project at Jewar near Delhi with special focus on road and metro rail projects.

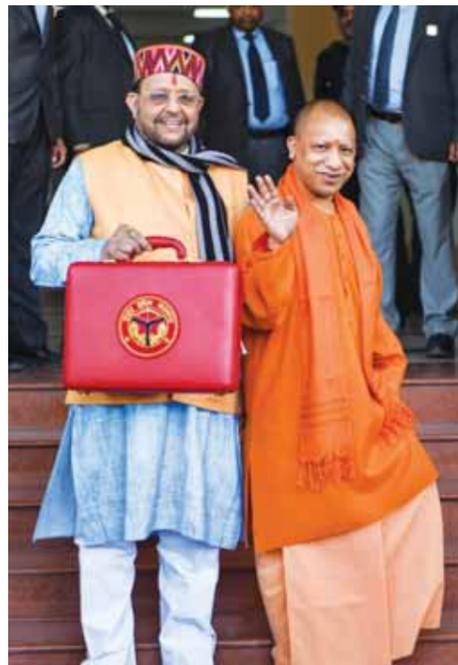
Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna presented the Budget in the State Assembly.

The Kanpur Metro Rail Project has been granted ₹358 crore and ₹286 crore has been allocated for the metro rail in Agra. The 2020-21 Budget sets a target for the construction of four lakh houses for the weaker sections within a year and lists schemes to help the youth to make a living.

Addressing reporters later, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath called the Budget — the fourth presented by his Government — "historic", "growth-oriented" and "people-friendly".

Opposition parties, however, termed it "directionless" and a "farce".

The ₹5.12 lakh crore Budget is bigger than the one presented last year by ₹33,159



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

crore. It has provisions for new schemes worth ₹10,967 crore, Khanna said.

Among the major allocations is ₹500 crore for an airport at Ayodhya, where the construction of a Ram temple

is expected to begin in the next few months.

In addition, the State Government will spend Rs 85 crore for the development of the pilgrim city as a tourist spot.

Sharjeel Imam chargesheeted as instigator of Jamia violence

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Tuesday sent Sharjeel Imam, named as an "instigator" by the Delhi Police in its chargesheet for violent protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) at New Friends' Colony here last year, to judicial custody till March 3.

It stated that it had attached CCTV footage, call detail records and statements of over 100 witnesses as evidence in the chargesheet. Imam was arrested on sedition charges last month in a separate case.

Earlier on Monday, the court had sent Imam to one-day custody of the Delhi Police in the case as it wanted to quiz him because an accused — Furkan — in the December 15, 2019 violence case has alleged in his disclosure that he was provoked by Imam's speeches.

The police had earlier told the court that Furkan was arrested on the basis of a CCTV footage which showed him carrying a container allegedly containing petrol. Four people were arrested in the case on December 16 and sent to judicial custody. Furkan was arrested later.

Imam, who came into the limelight during the ongoing protests at Shaheen Bagh against the CAA and the NRC, was arrested from Bihar's Jehanabad on January 28 in a separate case for allegedly making inflammatory speeches at Jamia Millia Islamia here and in Aligarh.

IDSA renamed after Manohar Parrikar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

Parrikar was Defence Minister from November 9, 2014 to March 14, 2017. He died last year due to pancreatic cancer. He steered the Defence Ministry "through the tough challenges of attacks like Pathankot and Uri and responded to these with exemplary boldness," said a Government statement on Tuesday while announcing the decision to rename the IDSA.

"An epitome of integrity and dedication in public life, throughout his career, late Parrikar showed a tremendous fighting spirit, taking on the odds with fearlessness," the statement noted.

When Parrikar was the Defence Minister, India witnessed a series of decisions that



"enhanced its security capacities, boosted indigenous defence production and bettered the lives of ex-servicemen", it said.

His biggest contribution was towards the implementation of long-standing One Rank One Pension (OROP) demand for the Armed forces, the statement said.

The renaming of the IDSA will align the vision and aspiration of the premier defence institute with the contribution of the former Raksha Mantri, said the statement.

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

Continued on Page 4

FATF subgroup wants to keep Pak in Grey List

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

(2013-14 to 2017-18) average production of foodgrain.

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

Total production of rice during 2019-20 is estimated at record 117.47 million tonnes.

Continued on Page 4

AAP MLA to hold Sundar Kaand recital every month

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

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA from Greater Kailash Saurabh Bhardwaj has said recitation of "Sunder Kaand" (a chapter in Tulsiidas' Ramcharitmanas, which talks about Lord Hanuman's visit to Lanka) will be held on the first Tuesday of every month in different areas of his constituency to seek the blessings of Lord Hanuman and Lord Ram.

Bhardwaj said advance bookings have been made and sponsors are ready for the scheduled programmes.



Speaking to PTI on the issue, Bhardwaj said he has the freedom to practise his religion. "I am a Hindu. Arvind

Kejriwal is a Hindu. Nobody can deny this fact. I have religious freedom. If I am getting Sunder Kaand recital done, it

does not make me less progressive. Being progressive does not mean you are an atheist," he said.

The AAP leader said he was "just following his faith" and has been doing it for long. "Today there is no election so it should not be seen as a political thing. The controversy was started after the BJP questioned the Chief Minister's visit to Hanuman mandir, although the temple priest came on record to say he (Kejriwal) has been visiting the temple for years," he said.

Also, Bhardwaj targeted the BJP and Congress leaders, saying they may be fuming but should be happy to be a part of "Sunder Kaand Paath" irrespective of their religion. Meanwhile, Delhi BJP

spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor hit out at the AAP, saying its attachment towards Lord Hanuman was not a matter of religious faith, but a "political melodrama".

"We expect that the Aam Aadmi Party which used to play politics in favour of a particular religious community will now work for all the religious communities of the society during the next five years," said another BJP spokesperson Ashok Goel Devraha.

Former Delhi Government media adviser Nagendar Sharma also termed Bhardwaj's announcement as "disappointing". "Disappointed to see a competent legislator with progressive outlook fall into the fallacious trap of trying to outdo BJP in its game," he tweeted.

No more PGDM, MBA courses at one go

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EC makes fresh push for electoral reforms with Law Ministry

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Cong slams Govt for hiding data

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

"Those talking about the Gujarat



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

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

Vallabh said poverty increases when consumption is low and claimed that UNDP data for 2005-2015 shows that during this period the highest eradication of poverty (271 million people) has taken place in the country and the credit for this goes to MNREGA.

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

100 people quarantined in ITBP facility discharged

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

This comes a day after a batch of about 200 people were discharged from the ITBP facility, which housed a total of 406 people, including seven Malaysians.

So far, 302 people out of total 406, have left the ITBP centre after being declared free of novel coronavirus by the doctors.

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

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

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

CORONAVIRUS

100 people quarantined in ITBP facility discharged



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

due procedures and protocols.

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

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

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

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

SC comes to rescue of Indian bustard, lesser florican

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BJP observers to select House leaders in Delhi, Jharkhand Assemblies

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

Mahadeshwara sanctuary to be tiger reserve

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Severe summer in store this yr: IMD

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

● Mumbai recorded 39 degree Celsius temperature, the third highest in February since 1966



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

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

As per the advisory issued

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

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

INSHORT

FADNAVIS REQUESTS SC TO RECONSIDER HIS TRIAL

New Delhi: Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday requested the Supreme Court



to reconsider its verdict asking him to face trial for allegedly failing to furnish details of two pending criminal cases against him in his 2014 poll affidavit saying it will have "far reaching consequences" for candidates. The SC reserved its verdict.

AMIT SHAH WILL VISIT ARUNACHAL TOMORROW

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

Minister warns against any laxity in paddy procurement

Tomorrow is the last day for procurement of paddy on support price

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Amid mismanagement prevailed due to unavailability of gunny bags at some of the paddy procurement centers in the state, Food Minister Amarjeet Bhagat on Tuesday gave strict instructions to the Food Secretary that any laxity in procurement process would cost dear to the officials.

He instructed the official to find immediate solution to the problems of farmers and asked to review the situation across the state.

Notable, with only two days remain for the last date



On Tuesday farmers of villages Hathwa, Dhalo, Nawagarh, Andirakhori in Bemetara and Village Bundeli in Mungeli districts reportedly staged protest against the mismanagement in the procurement centers and resorted to 'chakka jam'

of paddy procurement on support price, farmers who are yet to sale their produce are anxious over their turn to come and are staging protest at certain places in the state. The last day of paddy procurement is Thursday and farmers are still in queue to sale their products.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday once again farmers of villages Hathwa, Dhalo, Nawagarh, Andirakhori in Bemetara and Village Bundeli in Mungeli districts reportedly staged protest against the mismanagement in the procurement centers and resorted to 'chakka jam'.

Branch Manager suspended over substandard PDS rice

RAIPUR: Food and Civil Supplies department has suspended a branch manager of Balrampur district for distributing substandard rice, unfit for human consumption, under Public Distribution System. Official sources informed that after finding the complaint in this regard to be true, Branch Manager of Chhattisgarh State Warehousing Corporation, Wadrafnagar was suspended with immediate effect. At the same time, the District Manager of Nagrik Apurti Nigam (NAN), Balrampur was transferred to another district while a quality inspector has been served show-cause notice, they added. The complaint about supply of insect-infested 16,000 bags of inedible rice was actually found to be true and hence the action was taken, sources said. It was due to dampness and moisture in the storehouse that the rice got damaged, sources said.

CRPF jawan killed in Naxal attack

STAFF REPORTER ■ SUKMA

One CRPF commando was killed while another was injured on Tuesday in an encounter with Naxals in insurgency-hit Sukma district, police said.

The exchange of fire took place around 4 pm in the forest near Palodi village under Kistaram police station area when security forces were out on a counter-insurgency operation, Inspector General of Police (Bastar range) Sundarraj P said.

Two personnel belonging to 208th battalion of CRPF's elite unit Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) sustained injuries in the gunfight, he said adding Kanai Manjhi hailing from Odisha was seriously injured and succumbed to injuries later.

The exchange of fire took place around 4 pm in the forest near Palodi village under Kistaram police station area when security forces were out on a counter-insurgency operation

Indrajeet Singh the injured jawan was evacuated from the jungles and was shifted to a hospital, he said.

Female wild buffalo dies at Udanti sanctuary



STAFF REPORTER ■ GARIABAND

A wild buffalo, the Chhattisgarh's state animal that was kept in an enclosure at Udanti wildlife sanctuary was found dead, officials informed here on Tuesday.

Aasha the female wild buffalo was kept in the enclosure constructed by state forest department for breeding purpose, forest officials said. As per information received from the office of Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF)

Atul Shukla, the buffalo was found dead on Monday late evening.

She was about 17-year old and died of natural cause. The post-mortem of Aasha's body was performed in presence of four veterinary doctors and nothing abnormal was found, officials claimed.

Notably, in the month of May last year the last free ranging (born in jungle) wild buffalo 'Jugadu' had died at Udanti. He was injured by another wild buffalo.

Wild buffalo is one of the endangered species that are currently found in Chhattisgarh. Udanti sanctuary is home to last few remaining buffalos in Central India.

It may also be mentioned that Chhattisgarh government has planned to bring female wild buffaloes from Assam so that the population of wild buffaloes in Chhattisgarh could be increased.

Food Secy instructs to control inflow of illegal paddy on closing days

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Keeping in view the possibility of inflow of illegal paddy from the miscrants, the Food Secretary of the state Dr Kamalpreet Singh on Tuesday instructed all the district collectors across the state to control any mismanagement at the paddy procurement centers during the last two days.

Singh later also conducted a review meeting here at Mahanadi Bhawan and collected information about situation across the state. He instructed the concerned officials to arrange adequate numbers



of gunny bags where shortage was reported.

The officials informed that 97,000 new bags were sent to Kawardha district, 25,000 to Bilaspur and 81,000 in Bemetara.

Whereas in Kondagaon districts gunny bags are being arranged from nearby places, they informed.

He also wrote a letter to all the divisional commissioners, district collectors

and managing director of Apex Bank to maintain the normalcy in the procurement centers in last two days of procurement. He instructed to issue tokens for Kharif crop season

2019-20 till Wednesday. He also instructed nodal officials of districts to inspect the procurement centers on Thursday and do physical verification of total procurement done.



Players of Hockey Haryana in action against SAI, Bhopal at the Mahant Sarveshwar Das Memorial All India Hockey Tournament played at the international hockey stadium, Rajnandgaon on Tuesday. Pioneer Photo

Paddy procurement process a sham, claims BJP state Chief

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh State BJP president Vikram Usendi has termed the claims being made by the state government and Congress leaders on paddy procurement at minimum support price as 'white lies'.

Usendi claimed that Congress leaders should understand the basic fact



that it was during the BJP-led state government, the maximum work for welfare of farmers were undertaken.

Congress leaders should cite a single incident during the 15 years of the BJP rule when farmers came to roads to agitate while trying to sell their produce, the BJP leader said.

"So, they should refrain from telling lies before raising any point against BJP on paddy procurement," he said.

BJP leader said party will continue to support the fight against injustice towards farmers by backing their agitations against the government.

Farmers' did not ever think that they would get this kind of government when they gave massive

mandate to the Congress to bring it to power, the BJP leader claimed, adding at least the Congress should respect the mandate instead of "insulting" farmers.

The state government has shown total insensitivity towards farmers and failed on issue of paddy procurement, he alleged.

With just two days left for procurement, lakhs of farmers across the state still have not sold their produce as they have been denied token.

It is most unfortunate that farmers are contemplating to go on hunger-strike or commit suicide on the procurement issue, he added.

Colleges in C'garh to get e-library facilities: Patel

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Higher education, sports and youth welfare minister Umesh Patel said from next academic session e-library facilities would be provided to all the colleges in the state and for which budget provision has been made.

He was addressing the annual function of Durga College in the capital city.

Patel added with e-library facilities, the students can access higher level, reference and other books which will help in further studies. Additional to the library facilities in college, students at their residence can also access the



books for studies through their mobile phones. This will reduce their time for withdrawal and submission of books from library.

Higher education minister said based on the feedback and suggestions from the students, the e-library facilities would be

enhanced. Raipur Rural MLA Satyanarayan Sharma also addressed the event.

Different meritorious faculties of colleges, meritorious students, cadets of NCC and volunteers of NSS service were also felicitated for performance at national level.

C'garh's favourable environment lauded at UN headquarters

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel along with Chhattisgarh Vidhan Sabha Speaker Dr Charan Das Mahant and other members of his entourage on Tuesday visited United Nations headquarters.

Chief Minister attended the programme organised by Permanent Mission of India to the UNHQ, New York. On the occasion, Indian Ambassador and India's permanent representative in UN Saiyyad Akbaruddin welcomed them and discussed in detail about the economic-industrial activities being conducted in the state.

Baghel in his address to the programme provided information about the various public welfare schemes and innovations that are being



implemented in Chhattisgarh by the state government.

Chief Minister invited investments in Information Technology, Digital Technology and non-core sectors of Chhattisgarh. Investors present in the programme appreciated the favourable environment in Chhattisgarh and expressed

interest to invest in various sectors in the state.

Chief Minister said that when Chhattisgarh was formed in 2000 its budget was Rs 6000 crore. Today, the size of Chhattisgarh's budget is more than Rs 1 lakh crore. But when per capita income is taken into consideration, a huge gap can be noticed.

Nearly 40% of the population lives below poverty line. He further said that former prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru had established Bhilai Steel Plant in year 1955. Later, steel plants of private sector were set up at several places including Raipur, Raigarh and others. Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Jharkhand are three such

states of India, where iron, coal and bauxite are found. Chhattisgarh has a diamond mine as well, however mining has not been started.

Baghel said that Chhattisgarh is abundant in mineral resources and has a number of industries in the core sector. Electricity production has increased from 4 thousand MW to 22 thousand MW. Chhattisgarh supplies electricity to Goa, Telangana, Delhi, Gujarat, Maharashtra and other states of India. Chhattisgarh has cement plant as well. But so many industries in the core sector, there is a major difference in living standards of people living here. Coal block situated in Korba district of Chhattisgarh has the production capacity of 10 thousand MW. Chhattisgarh also has an aluminum plant.

Record rice...

From Page 1
It is higher by 9.67 million tonnes than the five years' average production of 107.80 million tonnes.

lion tonnes. Total Pulses production during 2019-20 is estimated at 23.02 million tonnes which is higher by 2.76 million tonnes than the five years' average production of 20.26 million tonnes.

कार्यालय, कार्यपालन अभियंता, ग्रामीण यांत्रिकी सेवा, रायपुर संभाग, रायपुर (छ.ग.)

आनलाईन प्रथम निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना क्रमांक -326
क्रमांक 1938/निविदा/ग्रा.या.सेवा/2019-20 रायपुर, दिनांक 12/02/2020

छत्तीसगढ़ के राज्यपाल को और से एकीकृत पंचायत प्रणाली के अंतर्गत (लोक निर्माण विभाग में) 'द' एवं उच्च श्रेणी में यंत्रिकी उद्देश्यों से प्रयत्न. 'अ' पर दर्शित बिजली कार्य हेतु निविदा दर प्राप्त करने आनलाईन ई-निविदा दिनांक 28.02.2020 तक आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

Table with 4 columns: कार्य का विवरण, अनुमानित लागत (प्रत्येक लाख में), मैन्युअल दस्तावेज कार्यालय में पहुंचने की अंतिम तिथि 02.03.2020 सायं 5.00 तक, अनुमानित लागत (प्रत्येक लाख में), मैन्युअल दस्तावेज कार्यालय में पहुंचने की अंतिम तिथि 02.03.2020 सायं 5.00 तक

उपरोक्त कार्यों की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, धरोहर राशि, विस्तृत निविदा, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेब पोर्टल http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in में दिनांक 13.02.2020 से देखी जा सकती है।

कार्यपालन अभियंता
ग्रामीण यांत्रिकी सेवा
रायपुर संभाग रायपुर (छ.ग.)
G- 77022/2 Ryp/Dtd 18.2.20

TATA CAPITAL FINANCIAL SERVICES LTD.
Regd. Office: 11th Floor, Tower A, Peninsula Business Park, Ganpatrao Kadam Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai 400013. CIN No. U67190MH2008PLC187552.

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
(Under Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002)
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the below Borrower/Co-Borrower that the below described immovable property mortgaged to Tata Capital Financial Services Ltd. (Secured Creditor), the Physical Possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Tata Capital Financial Services Ltd. (Secured Creditor), will be sold on 11th March, 2020 'As is where is' & 'As is what is' and 'Whatever there is' for recovery of total sum of Rs. 1,28,82,594.78 (Rupees One Crore Twenty Eight Laks Eighty Two Thousand Five Hundred Ninety Four and Seventy Eight Paise Only) as on July 13, 2018 from Mr. Tejprakash Chandrakar, S/o. Bhusan Lal Chandrakar, D.No. 67, Pandit Ravishankar Shukla, Ward 15, Mahasamund, Mahasamund 493445 Chattisgarh 2. Mr. Tejprakash Chandrakar S/o. Bhusan Lal Chandrakar, D.No. 167/1-11 167/1-11 167/1-2 Ph No. 89/42, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Ward 12, Near Tiarmurti Colony, Mouja Mahasamund, Mahasamund 493445, Chattisgarh. 3) Mahamaya Agrotech Rep By It's Partner Mr. Tejprakash Chandrakar, Village Saradhi, Raipur Road, Mahasamund, Mahasamund 493445, Chattisgarh 4) M/s. Sai Krupa Rice Mill Rep By It's Proprietor Mr. Tejprakash Chandrakar Village Saradhi, Raipur Road, Mahasamund, Mahasamund 493445, Chattisgarh 5) Mrs. Ratna Chandrakar, W/o. Tejprakash Chandrakar H. No. 67, Pandit Ravishankar Shukla, Ward 15, Mahasamund, Mahasamund 493445 Chattisgarh 6) Mrs. Ratna Chandrakar, W/o. Tejprakash Chandrakar D.No.167/1-11 167/1-2 Ph No. 89/42 Dr. Rajendra Prasad Ward 12, Near Tiarmurti Colony Mouja Mahasamund, Mahasamund 493445. Chattisgarh. 7) Mahamaya Agrotech, Rep By It's Partner Mrs. Ratna Chandrakar, D.No.167/1-11 167/1-8, 167/1-2 Ph No. 89/42, Village Saradhi, Raipur Road, Mahasamund 493445 Chattisgarh. The Reserve Price and the Earnest Money Deposit is mentioned below.

Whereas the sale of secured asset is to be made to recover the secured debt and whereas there is a due of sum of Rs. 1,28,82,594.78 (Rupees One Crore Twenty Eight Laks Eighty Two Thousand Five Hundred Ninety Four and Seventy Eight Paise Only) including all costs, interest etc. as on July 13, 2018 Notice is hereby given that, in the absence of any post-ponement/discontinuance of the sale, the said property shall be sold by E-Auction on 2 P.M. on the said 11th March, 2020 at 11TH FLOOR, PS SRIJAN TECHPARK, DN-52, SECTOR-5, SALT LAKE, KOLKATA-700091. The sealed E-Auction for the purchase of the property along with EMD Demand Draft shall be received by the Authorized Officer of the TATA CAPITAL FINANCIAL SERVICES LTD till 5 P.M. on the said 10th March 2020. The sale of the property will be 'as is where is condition' and the liabilities and claims attaching to the said property, so far as they have been ascertained, are specified in the Schedule.

Table with 4 columns: Description of Secured Asset, Type of Possession Symbolic/Physical, Reserve Price (Rs), Earnest Money (Rs)

- 1. The particulars specified in the Schedule herein below have been stated to the best of the information of the undersigned, but the undersigned shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission in this proclamation. In the event of any dispute arising as to the amount bid, or as to the order of the lot shall be put up to auction.
2. The property shall not be sold below the Reserve Price.
3. Bid Increment Amount will be Rs. 10,000/-
4. All the Bids submitted for the purchase of the property shall be accompanied by Earnest Money as mentioned above by way of a Demand Draft favoring the "TATA CAPITAL FINANCIAL SERVICES LTD." payable at KOLKATA. The Demand Drafts will be returned to the unsuccessful bidders.
5. The highest bidder shall be declared to be the purchaser of any lot provided always that he is legally qualified to bid and provided further that the amount bid by him is not less than the reserve price. It shall be in the discretion of the "Authorized Officer" to decline acceptance of the highest bid when the price offered appears so clearly inadequate as to make it inadvisable to do so.
6. For reasons recorded, it shall be in the discretion of the "Authorized Officer" to adjourn/discontinue the sale.
7. Inspection of the property may be done on 9th March, 2020 between 12 PM to 4.00 PM.
8. The person declared to be the purchaser shall, immediately after such declaration, deposit twenty-five per cent of the amount of purchase money to the "Authorized Officer" and, in default of such deposit, the property shall forthwith be put up again and resold.
9. In case the initial deposit is made as above said, the balance amount of the purchase money payable shall be paid by the purchaser to the "Authorized Officer" on or before the 15th day from the date of confirmation of the sale of the property, exclusive of such day, or if the 15th day is a Sunday or other holiday, then on the first office day after the 15th day. In default of payment within the period mentioned above, the property shall be resold, after the issue of a fresh proclamation of sale and all amounts deposited in this regard shall stand forfeited to the TATA CAPITAL FINANCIAL SERVICES LTD and the defaulting purchaser shall forfeit all claims to the property or to any part of the sum for which it may be subsequently sold. The property shall be resold at the discretion of the Authorized Officer.
10. Details of any encumbrances, known to the TATA CAPITAL FINANCIAL SERVICES LTD, to which the property is liable Nil. Claims, if any, which have been put forward to the property and any other known particulars bearing on its nature and value: Nil Nothing other than the above
11. For details, help, procedure and online training on e-auction prospective bidders may contact the Service Provider, M/s NexGen Solutions Private Limited, Name: Client Service Delivery (CSD) of our Sales Partner through E-mail ID: csd@disposalhub.com, Tel. No. +91 124 4233 833, Mobile No. +91 99109 29926.
12. Note: The intending bidders may contact the Authorized Officer Mr. Arvind Singh, Email ID: Arvind.Singh@tatacapital.com and Mobile No. 8336 93 94 83.
13. For detailed terms and conditions of the Sale, please refer to the link provided in secured creditor's website i.e. https://www.tatacapital.com/tcfsl.html

Sd/- Mr. Arvind Singh
Authorized Officer
Tata Capital Financial Services Ltd.
Dated: Kolkata
Date : 19.02.2020
Mob. No. 8336939483

MARIA'S REVELATIONS
Was saffron terror plot joint project of Cong & ISI: BJP

New Delhi: The BJP on Tuesday slammed the Congress over ex-Mumbai police commissioner Rakesh Maria's claim that Lashkar-e-Taiba planned to project the 26/11 terror attack as a case of Hindu terror, saying it raised questions whether the 'saffron terror plot was the combined project of the Congress and Pakistan's ISI'.

In his memoir 'Let Me Say It Now' released on Monday, Maria who helmed the investigation in 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, claimed that the LeT had planned to project the attack as a case of "Hindu terror" and Pakistani terrorist Mohammed Ajmal Kasab was to die as Bengaluru's Samir Chaudhari.

Taking on the Congress over the claim, BJP spokesperson GVL Narasimha Rao said that for the first time in the history of Islamic terrorism the perpetrators have attempted to mislead people about their identity.

"This raises serious questions, if the saffron terror plot was the combined project of the Congress and Pakistan's spy agency ISI. Around the same time, the UPA coined the saffron terror tag and Rahul Gandhi told US diplomats that India's homegrown groups are a greater threat to the country than Islamic terror groups," he said.

Rao alleged that Rahul Gandhi's comments seemed to have joint sponsorship of terror groups across the Line of Control and added that Kasab's fake ID proof and fake claims of the Congress not just have a coincidental resonance but also seem to be part of a larger conspiracy.

He demanded answers from the Congress, saying the party should come clean on this and should clarify whether ISI was also extended part of the Congress-led UPA. PTI

79% Indian birds on decline, but peafowls increase, says report

Gandhinagar: There has been a decline in Population of 79 per cent of Indian species of birds as per the assessment of current trends, but there is also some good news as the number of Indian peafowls (national bird peacock) has shown a dramatic rise, says a report.

Besides, the number of house sparrows has remained "roughly stable" across the country. Its population has gone up in rural areas, although declining in metropolitan cities, according to the State of India's Birds Report 2020.

The report was released here on sidelines of the 13th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP 13) on Monday.

It said that while assessing the status of 867 Indian birds, 79 per cent, for which current trends could be assessed, and 50 per cent, for which long-term trend could be assessed, have shown a decline.

In all, 101 species have been classified as of 'high conservation concern'.

As for the Indian peafowl, the abundance trend is that of a general increase, both in long-term and currently, the report said.

"Some parts of the country report greater levels of crop damage by peafowl, a trend that calls for careful conflict assessment and management," it mentioned.

As for the house sparrows, despite the widespread notion that it is declining in India, the analysis suggests that the species has been "fairly stable overall during the past 25 plus years," it said.

However, data from the six largest metro cities (Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi,

IDSAs ...

From Page 1
Parrikar's son Utpal termed the renaming of the IDSA after his late father as a "proud moment." He said naming of such a prestigious and important institute (IDSA) of the country after a Goan is a "proud moment for every one of us."

He also said only avid followers of Indian defence will get a hint about the magnitude of the Central Government's accomplishment in the field of defence adding, "I am happy that my father played a significant role in this in his short stint as the raksha mantri (Union Defence Minister)."

An autonomous body under Ministry of Defence, IDSA was established as a registered society in New Delhi in 1965, dedicated to objective research and policy relevant studies on all aspects of defence and security.

Its aim is to promote national and international security through the generation and dissemination of knowledge on defence and security-related issues.

To achieve its goals, the institute undertakes scholarly research, policy-oriented research, dissemination of research findings, training and capacity building and public education.

The assessment is based on three indices - two of which long-term trends could be determined, 52 per cent have declined since the year 2000, with 22 per cent declining strongly. In all, 43 per cent of species showed a long-term trend that was stable and five per cent showed an increasing trend," the report said.

"Of the 261 species for which long-term trends could be determined, 52 per cent have declined since the year 2000, with 22 per cent declining strongly. In all, 43 per cent of species showed a long-term trend that was stable and five per cent showed an increasing trend," the report said.

The current annual trends could be estimated for 146 species. Of these, nearly 80 per cent are declining, with almost 50 per cent declining strongly, it said. "Just over six per cent are stable and 14 per cent are increasing. The range size of all but six species were estimated," it added. PTI

C-17 aircraft to evacuate Indians from Wuhan

New Delhi: India will send a C-17 military aircraft to Wuhan on February 20 to evacuate more Indians from the coronavirus-hit Chinese city and also provide medical supplies to China, military sources said on Tuesday.

The C-17 Globemaster, the biggest military aircraft in the Air Force, will carry a large consignment of medical supplies to China and bring back more Indians from Wuhan, the epicentre of the coronavirus epidemic, the sources told PTI.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the government till now has evacuated 640 Indians from China by sending to Air India planes.

Last week, India had announced that it will send medicines as well as other medical supplies to China.

Meanwhile, Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong has appreciated India for extending solidarity and expressing readiness to assist China to deal with the epidemic. He also said there is no case of infection as of today among the remaining Indians in Hubei province, the epicentre of the epidemic, and authorities are taking "good care" of them. China's National Health Commission on Tuesday said the death toll due to the outbreak climbed to 1,868 on Monday while the total number of confirmed cases jumped to 72,436. PTI

एन एम डी सी लिमिटेड (भारत सरकार का उद्यम)
वैलाडीला आयनन और माइन, किरतल कॉम्प्लेक्स
किरतल-494556, जिला-दक्षिण बस्तर दंतवाड़ा (छ.ग.)
ग्राम : आयननओर, फैसम : 07857-255226, 255227, 255225
CIN - L13100AP1958G01001674
दिनांक 16.02.2020
प्रेस अधिसूचना
वोआईओएफ, किरतल काम्प्लेक्स, किरतल निम्नलिखित कार्यों के लिए एनएमडीसी, राज्य पीडब्ल्यूडी, सार्वजनिक उपकरण, रेलवे अथवा एन.ई.एस. में यंत्रिकी, बिजलीकरण से सम्बंधित अनुभवी इंजीनियरों से दो बिड प्रणाली में मूलभूत निविदा आमंत्रित करता है। निविदा दस्तावेज उप महाप्रबंधक (बिज) एनएमडीसी लिमिटेड, किरतल काम्प्लेक्स, किरतल से किसी भी कार्य दिवस में कार्यालय समय में प्राप्त किये जा सकते हैं। (बुधवार साप्ताहिक विश्राम का दिन है)। निविदा दस्तावेजों की बिक्री केवल किरतल में ही होगी। तथापि इन दस्तावेजों की निम्नलिखित वेब साईट से डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है।

Bank of Baroda
Regional Office, Jeevan Prakash L.I.C. Building, Pandri, Raipur (C.G.)
PH: 0771-4222611, 4222612, E-mail: recovery.raipur@bankofbaroda.com

(Publication in the Newspapers in case of return/failure of service of 60 day's Notice U/s 13 (2) of SARFAESI Act, 2002.)
The Authorized Officer, Bank of Baroda has issued 60 day's Notices to under mentioned borrowers / Guarantors U/s 13(2) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 by Registered Ad/Speed notice. But these Notices were returned by the Postal authorities due to the reason of refusal to take delivery/wrong address/person left the place/city. These borrowers/guarantors have given their under mentioned movable/immovable assets by way of hypothecation / mortgage as security to secure various credit limits granted by the Bank to the borrower(s).

Table with 5 columns: Sl. No., Name of the Bank Branch & Phone No., Name of the Borrower & address, Name and address of guarantor(s), Notice No. and date, Amount due inclusive of interest upto (date mentioned), Details of secured assets

Date: 18.02.2020, Place: Raipur (C.G.)
Authorized Officer, Bank of Baroda

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(erstwhile Capital First Home Finance Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited)
CIN : L65110TN2014PLC097792
Registered Office: KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai-600031. TEL: +91 44 4564 4000 | FAX: +91 44 4564 4022.
APPENDIX IV [Rule 8(1)]
POSSESSION NOTICE (For immovable property)
Whereas the undersigned being the authorised officer of the IDFC First Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Home Finance Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited) under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 04.09.2019 calling upon the borrower, co-borrowers and guarantors 1. Jassinder Singh, 2.Paramjeet Kaur, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs.28,52,343.74/- (Rupees Twenty Eight Lakh Fifty Two Thousand Three Hundred Forty Three And Paise Seventy Four Only) as on 27.09.2019 within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(erstwhile Capital First Home Finance Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited)
CIN : L65110TN2014PLC097792
Registered Office: KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai-600031. TEL: +91 44 4564 4000 | FAX: +91 44 4564 4022.
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IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(erstwhile Capital First Home Finance Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited)
CIN : L65110TN2014PLC097792
Registered Office: KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai-600031. TEL: +91 44 4564 4000 | FAX: +91 44 4564 4022.
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CORONAVIRUS

Senior doctor dies in China, toll reaches 1,868

Beijing: The head of a hospital in China's coronavirus-hit Wuhan city died of the epidemic amid criticism that a number of medical staff were infected due to official attempts to conceal the key findings of human-to-human transmission of the virus, as the death toll from the disease on Tuesday soared to 1,868.

Hubei province and its capital Wuhan, from where the virus originated, continued to bear the brunt as 93 more people died on Monday while five deaths were reported from Henan, Hebei and Hunan provinces.

China's National Health Commission on Tuesday said the death toll due to the outbreak climbed to 1,868 on Monday while the total number of confirmed cases jumped to 72,436.

A top Chinese health official said the daily death toll has come down below 100 for the first time since the virus outbreak came to light in January.

The daily number of newly confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) reported across China Monday dropped to under 2,000 for the first time, Mi Feng, an official with the National Health Commission (NHC) said

Tuesday. Monday also saw the new confirmed infections of COVID-19 outside Hubei reduced to a number lower than 100 for the first time, Mi told the media.

Comparing the statistics in the peak period, Mi said the first appearance of these noteworthy decreasing numbers demonstrate that the epidemic situation is improving.

While officials claimed that the virus is stabilising, one of Wuhan's senior doctors has died after contracting the coronavirus, used.

Activist who criticised Xi over virus held: Rights group

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

Anti-corruption activist Xu Zhiyong was arrested on Saturday after being on the run since December, according to Amnesty International. China's ruling Communist Party has severely curtailed civil liberties since Xi took power in 2012, rounding up rights lawyers, labour activists and even Marxist students.

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New virus poses 'enormous' risks: UN chief

Lahore: The UN secretary general said on Tuesday that the virus outbreak that began in China poses "a very dangerous situation" for the world, but "is not out of control."

Speaking in an interview with The Associated Press, Antonio Guterres said that "the risks are enormous and we need to be prepared worldwide for that." Guterres said his greatest worry was a spread of the virus to areas with "less capacity in their health service," particularly some African countries. The World Health Organization is looking into how to help handle such a development, he added.

Bloomberg makes debate stage, facing Dem rivals for 1st time

Washington: Billionaire Mike Bloomberg has qualified for the upcoming Democratic presidential debate, marking the first time he'll stand alongside the rivals he has so far avoided by bypassing the early voting states and using his personal fortune to define himself through television ads.

A new NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist poll published on Tuesday shows Bloomberg with 19 per cent support nationally in the Democratic nominating contest.

The former New York City mayor, who launched his presidential campaign in November, will appear in Wednesday's debate in Las Vegas alongside former Vice President Joe Biden, Sens. Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren and Amy Klobuchar and former South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg. Fellow billionaire and philanthropist Tom Steyer is still hoping to qualify.

Bloomberg's campaign said that it was seeing "a groundswell of support across the country" and that qualifying for Wednesday's debate "is the latest sign that Mike's plan and ability to defeat Donald Trump is resonating with more Americans."

joining the other Democratic candidates on stage and making the case for why he's the best candidate to defeat Donald Trump and unite the country," Bloomberg campaign manager Kevin Sheekey said in a statement.

The Democratic National Committee recently changed its rules for how a candidate qualifies for the debate, opening the door for Bloomberg to be on stage and drawing the ire of some candidates who dropped out of the race for failing to make prior stages.

The candidates were previously required to receive a certain number of campaign contributions to qualify, but Bloomberg, who is worth an estimated USD 60 billion, is not taking donations. The prime-time event will be a stark departure from Bloomberg's highly choreographed campaign. He's poured more than USD 300 million into television advertising, a way to define himself for voters without facing criticism. While he's campaigned in more than two dozen states, he does not take questions from voters and delivers a standard stump speech that lasts less than 15 minutes, often reading from a teleprompter.

Iran sentences alleged US spies to up to 10 yrs in prison

Tehran: Iran sentenced eight environmental activists, including an Iranian who reportedly also has British and American citizenship, to prison sentences ranging from four to 10 years on charges of spying for the United States and acting against Iran's national security, the judiciary said on Tuesday.

According to the judiciary spokesman, Gholamhossein Esmaili, an appeals court issued the final verdicts. Two of the activists, Morad Tahbaz and Niloufar Bayani, got 10 years each and were ordered to return the money they allegedly received from the U.S. Government for their services.

Tahbaz is an Iranian who also holds U.S. and British citizenship. Iran does not recognize dual or multiple nationalities, meaning Iranians it detains cannot receive consular assistance from their other countries. In most cases, dual nationals have faced secret charges in closed-door hearings before Iran's Revolutionary Court, which handles cases involving alleged attempts to overthrow the government.

Netanyahu graft trial to begin in March: Court

Jerusalem: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's corruption trial will begin on March 17, an Israeli court said Tuesday, just two weeks after national elections are held.

Netanyahu is charged with bribery, fraud and breach of trust under a number of cases in which he is alleged to have accepted lavish gifts from billionaire friends and exchanged regulatory favors for more positive media coverage.

In a brief statement, the court said Netanyahu is expected to attend the initial hearing. Israel will hold parliamentary elections on March 2, its third vote in less than a year.

The first two elections were largely a referendum on Netanyahu, and the third is expected to be no different. AP

Around 500 to leave quarantined Japan ship today: Official

AFP TOKYO

Around 500 passengers will leave a cruise ship quarantined off Japan on Wednesday after testing negative for the new coronavirus that has infected hundreds on board, a health ministry official said on Tuesday.

The number (who will leave Wednesday) is changing, largely because it is up to passengers (if they get off), the official told reporters. "But it will be around 500 people."

Only those who have tested negative and have not been in close contact with a person infected with the virus will be allowed off on Wednesday and many disembarking will be Japanese passengers, the official said.

"They will go home on public transport but they will be taken by bus to places such as stations," he added. Those who leave the ship will not face any restrictions, the official said. "They won't be forbidden to go out."

VIRUS-HIT PROVINCE REWARDS DOCS' CHILDREN WITH EXTRA EXAM POINTS

Beijing: Children of China's frontline medical workers battling the deadly coronavirus will be awarded extra exam points when applying for schools and higher education, local officials said on Tuesday.

Doctors and nurses in Hubei province — where the outbreak originated and which has reported the majority of deaths — have been lionised online and by state media. China's schooling system

places a major emphasis on exams, and even younger children face extreme competition to get into top schools that parents believe will raise their chances of getting into a good university.

The measures will "further care for the province's frontline medical staff" and encourage them to be more "resolute" in their fight to contain the virus, the province said in a statement.

BARE-FACED ROBBERY: THIEVES STEAL 6,000 HYGIENE MASKS IN JAPAN

Tokyo: Thieves in Japan have made off with some 6,000 surgical masks from a hospital, with the country facing a mass shortage and a huge price hike online due to the coronavirus.

Four boxes containing the face masks disappeared from a locked storage facility at the Japanese Red Cross hospital in the western port city of Kobe, a hospital official said on Tuesday. "We still have a large number of masks — enough to

continue our daily operations at the hospital, but this is so deplorable," the official told AFP. Police have launched an investigation as they suspect the thieves intend to resell the masks. Masks have sold out at many drug and discount stores across the nation as the number of infections have increased in Japan — one of the most affected countries after China where the death toll from the virus has hit 1,800.

Ashraf Ghani secures second term as Afghan Prez: Results

Kabul: Ashraf Ghani has secured a second term as president of Afghanistan, according to final results of the September 28, 2019 poll released on Tuesday by the country's election commission.

"The election commission... Declares Mr Ashraf Ghani, who has won 50.64 per cent of the votes, as the president of Afghanistan," election commission chief Hawa Alam Nuristan told a press conference in Kabul.

"May God help him in serving the people of Afghanistan... I also pray that peace comes to our country," she added. The results had been delayed for nearly five months after allegations of

vote-rigging from Ghani's main rival, Afghanistan's Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, forced a recount.

The delay left Afghanistan facing a political crisis just as the US seeks a deal with the Taliban which would allow it to withdraw troops in return for various security guarantees and a promise that the militants would hold peace talks with the Afghan government.

If all goes well, then Ghani is likely to be the man sitting across from the Taliban at the negotiating table in a bid to chart Afghanistan's future. Earlier this week, Abdullah's team said they would not accept fraudulent results.

Mysterious toxic gas kills 14 in Pak

Karachi: A mysterious toxic gas has killed at least 14 people and sickened several others in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi, police said on Tuesday.

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

The source of a toxic gas leak remained unclear on Tuesday. Officials said 14 people have been killed so far, Dawn newspaper reported.

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

According to the police, two other deaths were reported at the Kutiyana Hospital.

Dozens of others have been hospitalised in various medical facilities across the city. "We are still clueless about the possible cause of the incident," Karachi police chief Ghulam Nabi Memon said.

Iran Guards member killed in Syria's Aleppo: Report

Tehran: A member of Iran's Revolutionary Guards was killed in bombardment in Syria's Aleppo on Tuesday, Fars news agency reported.

"Hamidreza Babelkhani... Was martyred this morning in a rocket strike," said the Iranian news agency, which is close to ultra-conservatives in the Islamic republic.

Babelkhani was also known by his nom de guerre Haj Ebrahim, Fars added, without giving his rank.

The brief report also showed a picture of Babelkhani in a forest area wearing tan fatigues with the Guards' insignia and a dark green beanie. Iran, alongside Russia, has strongly backed the government of President Bashar al-Assad in Syria's civil war.

Turkey seeks 695 arrests over links to US-based cleric

Ankara: Turkish prosecutors have issued detention warrants against 695 people suspected of links to the US-based Muslim cleric blamed by Turkey for a failed coup attempt in 2016, state media reported on Tuesday.

Anadolu Agency said prosecutors were seeking the arrests of 467 people suspected of cheating in a police promotion examination in 2009.

Warrants were also issued against 157 military officers — 101 of them still on active duty — and 71 Justice Ministry personnel. On July 15, 2016, a group of officers attempted a coup to overthrow Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Some 250 people were killed and more than 2,000 were injured during the failed attempt.

Some 77,000 people have been arrested and around 130,000 others, including military personnel, have been dismissed from state jobs in a crackdown on Gulen's network since the coup. Gulen, who has lived in self-imposed exile in the United States since 1999, denies involvement in the coup attempt.

WESTERN RAILWAY E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE No.S/05/2020 Date 18/02/2020. Table with columns: S.N., Short Description of items, Quantity, T.O.D.

FORM A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT (Under Regulation 6 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016) FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE CREDITORS OF M/S H. L. TECH FABRICS LTD.

WESTERN RAILWAY UPDATING, RECONCILING, CERTIFICATION AND COMPUTERISATION OF LAND PLANS 1. Executive: DEN/East/BCT. Tender Notice No.: BCT/19-20/413 Dated: 17.02.2020.

Public Notice Shri Ram Dev Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd. House No.125, 1st Floor, Phase-4, Bharat Nagar, Ashok Vihar, New Delhi-110052

PUBLIC NOTICE Honble court of LD SHRI PRASHANT SHARMA, ADJ/THC/Delhi vide order dated 15.02.2020 has appointed Sh. Himanshu Singhal as local commissioner for auctioning the articles of Fitzone Gym located at A-51, 2nd Floor, Dwarka Road, Dabri Chowk, A Sitapuri Part 1, New Delhi -110045.

NOTICE TATA STEEL LIMITED Registered Office: Bombay House, 24, Horni Momi Street, Fort, Mumbai - 400001

Modification & re-alignment of 220 KV (D/C) etc E-Tender Notice No. DY.CEE/CON/MLG/04/2020; Dated: 17-02-2020. Work tender through e-Tendering system are invited from valid electrical licensed contractor for the following work: S/N-1; Tender No. EL/CON/MLG/19/2019-20/INQ-via RNY.

WESTERN RAILWAY EARTH & MISCELLANEOUS CONSTRUCTION WORKS Deputy Chief Engineer (Const.) II, Western Railway, 8th floor, station building, Churchgate, Mumbai - 400 020 invites offer through E-tender portal

Message of Shaheen Bagh

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



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

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

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

Too little to charge

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



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

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

mon agenda too: To challenge a rising and aggressive China and create a new rules-based order in East Asia. Challenges faced by both are entirely different in nature and it's difficult to find common ground. Yet, both nations must unite and plan the way forward strategically. A "mini trade" deal may not help iron out differences but is of utmost importance for India, given its economy is in the midst of a slowdown at the moment.

Now, a green fund

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



VK BAHUGUNA

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

However, the actual spending on forests by States, after the 14th Finance Commission grants, has not been very encouraging when compared to the intention of the criterion to strengthen forest cover base. The State of Forest Report 2019 released by the Forest Survey of India recorded a marginal increase of 5,188 sq km in total forest and tree cover in the country. However, it gave a dismal picture in tribal areas (where the forest cover has gone down by 741 sq km). With regard to the disappearance of higher girth class trees in forests due to poor regeneration and protection, the report, if examined critically, indicates the urgent need to spend money on natural forests. Yet another important issue that needs to be dealt with is to address the concern of States, which have less forest cover. We need to step up efforts to cover more areas through agroforestry, farm forestry, block plantations, urban and peri-urban forestry among other efforts.

Efficient fiscal management goals of the Commission cannot be achieved unless we have an effective monitoring system in place. The 15th Finance Commission should follow the pattern of the 13th Finance Commission, which recommend *inter alia* that a portion of the divisible pool of tax within the forest criterion should be retained with the Government of India to be sanctioned by the Ministry of Finance and Environment, Forest and Climate Change, for the maintenance of forests. It would be appropriate to ensure third-party monitoring of the use of the grant to States so that misuse or arbitrary or unauthorised use of the funds can be checked. Further, for monitoring and evaluation of the works undertaken through the Finance Commission Awards, States should opt for certification of forests. This can help promote sustainable forest management and at the same time provide space for international markets for procurement of forest products.

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

SOUNDBITE

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



Political strategist —Prashant Kishor

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



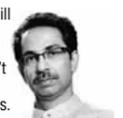
Actor —Vicky Kaushal

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



Indian Envoy —Syed Akbaruddin

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



Maharashtra CM —Uddhav Thackeray

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Together, we can

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

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

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

Wall to hide misdeeds and guilt

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

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



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

G David Milton Maruthancode

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

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

Bal Govind Noida

Shameful incident

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

Shashi Via email

Better late than never

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

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

What lies ahead for social sector

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



URVASHI PRASAD SARAH IYPE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



KALYANI SHANKAR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

POINT COUNTERPOINT

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



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

Use AI to fight pandemics

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



ABHINAV VERMA YUKTI SHARMA

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

at present these discussions are nascent.

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

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

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

emergence altogether.

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

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

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

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

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

Don't write the Congress off yet

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



INVEST IN POOR NATIONS

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

(The writer is a senior journalist)

Budget historic, to help make UP \$1 trillion economy: Yogi

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath here on Tuesday termed the Uttar Pradesh Budget for 2020-21 "historic" and said it will play a big role in making the State a trillion dollar economy.

The Chief Minister said though it focused on the overall development of the State, special attention has been paid to the growth of the youth and boost employment.

"The Budget will play a major role in achieving the goal of one trillion dollar economy for the State and meet the target of making India a dollar five trillion economy," the CM said, adding that it was a "historic" Budget.

The Budget is focused on the development of the youth. Though a number of programmes are already in place for them, the Government has started a scheme for every educated unemployed individual. A provision has been made to boost employment in every district," he added.

The BJP Government on Tuesday presented a ₹ 5,12,860.72 crore Budget,



which was its fourth under the leadership of Adityanath.

"Our first budget was based on farmers, the second was on industrial development and the third for women empowerment. Today's fourth budget is for the development of youth," the Chief Minister said.

The CM also claimed that provisions have been made to improve education in Uttar Pradesh.

This budget focused on higher education as the State government is setting up new universities in Saharanpur, Azamgarh and Aligarh, he said.

Setting up of Atal Medical University in Lucknow has also been included in the bud-

get, he said, adding that the government has proposed national law and ayush universities.

An apprenticeship scheme for every educated unemployed youth who wants to become self-reliant has also been started, the CM said, adding that every youth will be connected to an enterprise and till the completion of the apprenticeship, the government will provide a cash support of Rs 2,500 per month.

By next year, the government will be able to carry forward the work of establishing a medical college in all 75 districts of the state, the CM said.

"These colleges will be built either by the government

or on PPP mode," he said, stressing that from 1947 to 2016, only 12 medical colleges were set up in the state.

The chief minister also exuded confidence that investors from all over the world wanted to invest in Uttar Pradesh.

The state had received investment proposals worth Rs 50,000 crore in the Defence Expo-2020, he said.

About road projects, Adityanath said the Purvanchal Expressway would be opened to the public by the year-end.

In addition, the foundation stone of the Bundelkhand Expressway will be laid this month, he said, adding that funds had been allocated for the Ganga Expressway and efforts would be made to lay its foundation by year-end.

Speaking on the farming sector, Adityanath said insurance has been provided for sharecroppers and an arrangement has been made for modernisation.

A provision had been made to get rid of potable water problems in Bundelkhand and Vindhya regions, he said.

Akhilesh dares BJP to take back his security cover

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party supreme Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday said he does not need any security cover and dared the BJP to take it back.

He said this when asked about the security risk to him as the leader had claimed that he had received a threat call from a ruling party leader.

He made the allegations recently after a youth disrupted a meeting addressed by him, shouting a religious slogan.

"I don't need security. I want to live free. This is not a matter of security, I want to ask how can a local intelligence inspector come to my press conference. How can someone come in a pro-

gramme in the party office," Akhilesh said. "Why my NSG was removed? They (BJP) have taken back my house and vehicle. They are free to take back my security also. I love to cycle alone. Now the time is coming when cycle is going to run fast," he said.

'Cycle' is the party symbol of the Samajwadi Party.

Leader of the Opposition Ram Govind Chaudhary of Samajwadi Party had raised the issue of security threat to Akhilesh in State Assembly on Monday. Yadav had recently claimed that he had received a threat call and a message from a BJP leader after a youth shouted 'Jai Shri Ram' at one of the gatherings he was addressing.

Total debt likely to 28.8 per cent of SGDP in 2020-21

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The debt burden on the State Government is mounting and the total debt on it from different sources is likely to be over ₹5.16 lakh crore by the end of next fiscal 2020-21.

The budget size of 2020-21 at ₹5.12 lakh crore is a little less than the debt burden. The total debt of the state, however, came down from 29.6 per cent of State Gross Domestic Product (SGDP) in 2017-18 and is estimated to be 28.8 per cent in 2020-21.

With a debt burden of over ₹5.16 lakh crore, every resident of UP has a debt of ₹22,442 on their head.

"The debt per person in the state during the 2019-20 fiscal is estimated to be ₹20,702 as the total debt burden would be little over ₹ 4.76

lakh crores," Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna said while tabling the budget for 2020-21 in the Assembly on Tuesday.

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

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

Madras HC restrains Muslim body from organising Assembly siege

PTI ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

bench posted the matter to March 12 for further hearing.

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

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

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

Supreme Court.

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

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

Petitioner Varaki, a journalist, contended if the assem-

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

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

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

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

Mizoram Govt yet to notify new prohibition rules: Minister

PTI ■ AIZAWL

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

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

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

PTI ■ MALAPPURAM (KERALA)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) said.

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

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

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

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

GRSE delivers 4th anti-submarine warfare corvette to Navy

PTI ■ KOLKATA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mizoram tops in HIV/AIDS cases

GOVT TAKING STEPS TO TACKLE MENACE: MIN

PTI ■ AIZAWL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ THANE

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

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

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

PTI ■ PATNA

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

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

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

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

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

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

Industrialist VL Dutt is dead

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

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

Dr Dutt was the president of the Federation of Indian

Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) during 1991-92 and was a widely respected industrialist.

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

Bangla star, ex-TMC MP Tapas Pal dead

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

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

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

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



political career and was arrested by the CBI for his alleged involvement in the multi-crore Rose Valley chit fund case. Both Pal and Bollywood actress Madhuri Dixit acted in one of their initial films Abodh. In fact Dixit along with senior Tollywood actors like Soumitra Chatterjee and Madhabi Mukherjee deeply condoled his untimely death.

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

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

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

Mani, former chief editor of Kerala Kaumudi is no more

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

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

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

brought to light the massive deforestation happening in the Western Ghats under political patronage.

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

low traveller, Mani was in the forefront against the appeasement politics pursued by both the Cong and the Communists in Kerala. The editorials that appeared in Kaumudi during his tenure as editor-in-chief are still rated as the benchmark of quality journalism.

NOTICE FOR CANCELLATION OF TENDER
No. SSA/MIS/Support-materials/OD/336/2006/842 Date: 18.02.2020
The tender invited vide No. SSA/MIS/Support-materials/OD/336/2006/488 dated 03.02.2020 for supply and installation of Laptop, Desktop Computer, UPS, Scanner and Printer is hereby cancelled due to administrative reasons.
Sd/- Mission Director, SSA, Assam, Kahilpara, Guwahati-19

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

Shettar's meeting with upset BJP MLAs sparks speculation

PTI ■ BENGALURU

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

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

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

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

Speaking to reporters here,

Few legislators had met him regarding their constituency-related work - Shettar

he said, any "such meeting as being reported" is "far from truth".

"There was no such meeting, legislators had come for their work, there is no need to have any misunderstanding about it," he said, adding that he was not answerable to media reports and owes no explanation.

According to some media reports, eight-time BJP MLA Umesh Katti (Hukkeri), who had openly expressed his displeasure over not being inducted into the ministry, and Shankar Patil Munenakoppa (Navalagund) were among those who had met at Shettar's

residence.

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ BENGALURU

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

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

ing opponents.

After hearing his preliminary submission, Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri ruled that a discussion will be held on the topic at 3 PM on Wednesday, but under a different rule.

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

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

Siddaramaiah pointed out that the Governor's address to the joint sitting of the state legislature on Monday did not mention the state-wide anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protests and the one in which two people died in Mangaluru in December. By discussing the issue, "it is our duty to instill confidence among the affected people as we have come here with their mandate, representing them", he said.

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

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

PTI ■ BENGALURU

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

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

in the state and Centre for an "undeclared emergency" in the country. He also accused the BJP of undermining the Constitution and democracy, to which Minister KS Eshwarappa referred to the Emergency declared by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and reminded the former Chief Minister that he had opposed it while in the Janata Dal. "We (BJP/RSS workers then) were put behind bars for hailing Bharat Mata and calling ourselves as her sons", Eshwarappa said.

Reacting to this Siddaramaiah said, "Bharat Mata is not your property. You have not taken on lease. All 135 crore Indians are her children."

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

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

With no let-up in the ongoing tug of war between the ruling Shiv Sena and its allies over Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's decision to let NIA investigate the Bhima Koregaon-Elgaar Parishad case, the Congress on Tuesday opened a new front by coming out openly against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), National Register of Citizens (NRC) and National Population Register (NPR).

On a day when Uddhav Thackeray of the Shiv Sena came out in support of the CAA, extended conditional support to the NPR and voiced his opposition to the NRC, Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) president and party minister in the MVA Cabinet Bal Saheb Thorat formally opposed CAA, NRC and NPR. "The Congress party's stand regarding #CAA #NRC

#NPR is very clear and we are opposed to it. The Congress party is opposed to anything that causes discrimination in the society. We will convince our alliance partners on the same," he tweeted.

For the first time, Uddhav spelt out the Shiv Sena's stand on CAA, NRC and NPR. "CAA and NRC are two different subjects. NPR is a third subject. There is nothing to worry about in CAA. NRC has not come and it will not be implemented. If it (NRC) is implemented, it will not affect just Muslims, but it will also affect Hindus, Adivasis and other deprived sections of the society," Uddhav tweeted.

In another tweet on NPR, Uddhav said: "NPR is more of a census. But, still I will have a look at the questions in the data collection form. But, I do not see there is impediment in NPR. Because, the census takes place once in ten years".

The NCP is also serious

reservations about NPR. After a meeting of NCP ministers convened by party chief Sharad Pawar, the party spokesperson and minister Nawab Malik had said on Monday: "Before devising the strategy on NPR, we - MVA partners - will jointly study the questions in the NPR and views of the non-BJP governments. Because some irrelevant and un-called for information is being sought by the Centre as part of the data collection. The NCP is opposed to the date of birth and place of birth of parents and grandparents," Malik said.

Both the NCP and Congress have urged the chief minister to convene a meeting of the leaders of the parties to devise a common strategy on NPR, CAA and NRC.

In a related development, the chief minister's decision to let the NIA to investigate the Elgaar Parishad case continued to be a bone of contention between the ruling Shiv Sena

MVA GOVT BLUES

and its allies in the MVA government.

Uddhav, who has come in for a flak from both the NCP and Congress for his ad hoc decision to let the NIA to investigate Bhima Koregaon-Elgaar Parishad case, sought to clarify his position. "Elghar Parishad conspiracy and Bhima-Koregaon violence are two different cases. As far as the Bhima-Koregaon case is concerned, it concerns Dalits. I have not given this case to the NIA. I would like to clarify that I will not let injustice to happen to the Dalits".

However, there was some ambiguity in the NCP's stand on Bhima Koregaon-Elgaar Parishad case. On one hand, like Uddhav, Pawar also said that Elgaar Parishad and Bhima-Koregaon were two different cases. "The CM has powers to hand over the case to the NIA. There was no alternative but to hand over the case to the NIA," Pawar said.

Pawar dares Modi Govt to hold mid-term LS polls

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

As the BJP predicted the collapse of MVA Government and consequent mid-term polls in the State, NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Tuesday turned the table on the principal Opposition party in the State by saying that it was for the latter, which rules the country, to hold mid-term polls in the country.

Reacting to a BJP leader's comment that the MVA Government would soon collapse and there would be mid-term polls in the state, NCP chief said: "The mid-term polls are normally held in the country. It is in the hands of the BJP to hold mid-terms polls in the country."

Let the Union Cabinet and decide on holding the mid-term polls in the country". Former Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnis had on Sunday dared the Shiv Sena to hold mid-term polls in the state. He had predicted that if the mid-term polls were held in the state, the BJP would defeat the Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress squarely and return to power in the state.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday, former chief minister Narayan Rane predicted that since chief minister Uddhav Thackeray was not capable of running the government, "I need not tell you that there is already considerable resentment within the Shiv Sena."

Uddhav Thackeray will not continue in his post for long," Rane said.

Infrastructure is a catalyst for development: Guv

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Governor Jagdish Mukhi on Tuesday asserted that infrastructure is a catalyst for development. He said the government is committed to the development of the state by strengthening infrastructure.

The Centre is very liberal in investing in infrastructure to eliminate service backlogs of northeast with special emphasis on rural areas, Mukhi said at the inaugural session of North East Infrastructure Development Conclave, organised by the CII-North East, here.

A well-planned infrastructure enables established businesses to expand their production levels and encourage small businesses to enter the market and as such, both Central and state governments are making concerted efforts to put in place a robust infrastructure for physical connectivity in the areas of air, water, internet and land transport, he said.

He said the Union budget has allocated funds for laying new tracks and doubling of railway lines in the northeast region, the governor said.

Electrification of railway lines under the Northeast Frontier Railways was also going on and by 2022 the three states of Mizoram, Manipur and Sikkim will be connected by railways, he added.

The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has also conceived of extensive national highway projects to give a boost to the region's physical connectivity.

The governor also highlighted the measures being

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

undertaken in northeast for bringing the region closer to the rest of the country with 12 airports in the region being operative and the Guwahati Airport being revamped with a new state of the art terminus.

Moreover, a seamless digital connectivity has been in use in the region by liberalising its cyber space with India and Bangladesh signing an agreement for using unspent bandwidth available at Bangladesh's Cox Bazar in Chittagong to bring in a revolution not only in the northeast but also in some mainland states, he said.

Assam is nurtured by two great rivers--the Brahmaputra and Barak and both along with their many tributaries have huge potential for river transport, tourism and industry.

He also said inland waterways in Assam received a boost during the last five years.

There was an urgent need for strengthening the physical infrastructure of Assam as it was the largest among the eight northeastern states, with a population of 33 million and area of 78 thousand square kilometre, the governor said.

In the face of growing urban population and rising urban infrastructural needs, solutions like planning newer modes of transportation systems especially for congested areas has become the need of the hour, he added.

Diamond merchant jumps from 15-storey terrace, ends life

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A leading diamond merchant on Tuesday allegedly committed suicide by jumping down from the terrace of 15th floor of a commercial building at Zaveri Bazar in south Mumbai.

Dhiren Chandrakant Shah, who owned a diamond polishing and export company, on the top floor of the "Prasad Chambers", died instantly after his fall from the 15-storey building, which houses the offices of prominent diamond merchants.

Shah, who lived with his family at upmarket Napean Sea Road, was 61 and survived by his wife and two children. While a son lives in the United States, his daughter stays in Dubai.

Quoting his staffer, the police said that Shah reached the office at around 9.45 am on Tuesday.

He told some of his employees that he was going to the terrace of the building for a walk. Within next few minutes he jumped from the terrace and allegedly committed suicide.

Shah was rushed to the nearby hospital where he was declared dead on admission. His body has been sent for a post mortem.

"We have found a two-line suicide note on the desk of the deceased. In the note, he has stated that it was his decision to take the extreme step and no one should be blamed for it."

We have registered an accidental death case and are investigating the matter," a senior police inspector attached to the D B Nagar police station said.

Shah's death came as a big shock to the city's diamond and jewellery industry. The police are trying to ascertain the reasons for Shah's alleged suicide.

PM thinks Ahmedabad only choice for foreign dignitaries: Pawar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

As India prepares to welcome US President Donald Trump, NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Tuesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state Gujarat has become the preferred destination for key foreign dignitaries visiting India.

Before Modi became the PM, top foreign dignitaries visiting India also used to go to places like Hyderabad and Bengaluru, Pawar told reporters here.

"Earlier, they (foreign dignitaries) used to go to places like Agra, Delhi, Hyderabad and Bengaluru. It is good that in the last five years, all these people chose Ahmedabad. It is

a good thing," Pawar said, when asked why his Maharashtra missing from Trump's itinerary.

"We are happy that the country's prime minister thinks Ahmedabad is the best place to show in India to any visiting foreign dignitary," Pawar said.

Important global leaders who visited Gujarat after Modi became the

PM in 2014 include Chinese President Xi Jinping and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

NCP MLA and Pawar's grand nephew Rohit Pawar had last week asked the Centre that apart from Delhi and Ahmedabad, Trump should also visit the country's financial capital, Mumbai.

Trump to be gifted Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography, portrait

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

US President Donald Trump will be gifted a spinning wheel, two books on the life and times of Mahatma Gandhi and a portrait of the Father of the Nation during his visit to the Sabarmati Ashram here on February 24.

Trump will be accompanied by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to the ashram located on the banks of the river Sabarmati.

Trump will be the first US president to visit the ashram, a place closely associated with India's freedom struggle.

The ashram, also known as Gandhi Ashram, was home to the independence movement leader and peace icon from 1917 to 1930. It is now managed by the Sabarmati Ashram

Preservation and Memorial Trust.

Ashram trustees Kartikeya Sarabhai and Amrut Modi said the American president, US First Lady Melania Trump and Prime Minister Modi would spend around 30 minutes at the ashram.

Sources said Trump and Melania may try their hands on the spinning wheel (charkha) kept near 'Hriday Kunj', a cottage inside the ashram where Gandhiji and his wife Kasturba once lived.

"We will gift Trump a spinning wheel, Gandhiji's autobiography and a book named 'My Life My Message'. This book is based on an exhibition depicting Gandhiji's entire life."

"The ashram would also gift Gandhiji's portrait to Trump. Along with the

charkha, we will give him a note describing its importance in the country's freedom struggle," said Amrut Modi. He said the dignitaries will be welcomed with garlands made of 'khadi' (hand-woven fabric).

Trump and the Prime Minister will also take part in a roadshow that will start from the Ahmedabad airport and end at the cricket stadium in Motera after passing along the ashram. On the backside of the ashram, a platform is being built so that PM Modi can show the entire Sabarmati riverfront to the visiting

dignitaries from one place, officials had said. The Gujarat government has announced that Trump and the First Lady would arrive at the Ahmedabad international airport directly from Washington.

| हरियाणा सरकार | | | | | | |
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| 2 | THE AMBALA DISTT. COOP. MILK PRODUCERS UNION LTD | HDDCF GROUP PERSONAL INSURANCE POLICY TO COVER "NATURAL DEATH FOR THE PERIOD 01.04.2020 TO 31.03.2021 FOR HDDCF MILK SUPPLIERS NUMBERING ABOUT 50000 (APPROX). | 22.02.2020 05.03.2020 | --- | http://vitaindia.etenders.hry.nic.in www.vitaindia.org.in | 0171-2540614, 9996648121 milkplant@vitaambala.com |
| 3 | THE AMBALA DISTT. COOP. MILK PRODUCERS UNION LTD | HDDCF GROUP PERSONAL INSURANCE POLICY TO COVER "ACCIDENTAL DEATH, PERMANENT/PARTIAL DISABILITY FOR THE PERIOD 01.04.2020 TO 31.03.2021 FOR HDDCF MILK SUPPLIERS NUMBERING ABOUT 50000 (APPROX). | 22.02.2020 05.03.2020 | --- | http://vitaindia.etenders.hry.nic.in www.vitaindia.org.in | 0171-2540614, 9996648121 milkplant@vitaambala.com |
| 4 | H.S.A.M BOARD, JIND. | CONST. OF BLOCK AGRICULTURE OFFICE (BAO) ALEWA + 2 OTHER WORKS | CLOSING DATE 16.03.2020 | 144.75 LACS | http://etenders.hry.nic.in | 01681-252003 etenders.gov.in |
| 5 | ADDITIONAL DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, BHIWANI | SUPPLY, INSTALLATION/COMMISSIONING OF THREE NO. OF 85 CUM CAPACITY BIOGAS PLANT AT GPS SUI, KHARAK KALAN, MANDHOLI KALAN & ONE 35 CUM CAPACITY BIOGAS PLANT AT GP BIDHWAN AS PER KVIC/MNRE MODEL | 18.02.2020 24.02.2020 | 42.57 LACS | http://etenders.hry.nic.in | 01664-254070, 242893 bwnhsbms@gmail.com |
| 6 | UHBVN, KURUKSHETRA | HIRING OF 1 NO. JEEP (BOLERO) FOR SDO CONST. DIVISION, UHBVN, AMBALA | CLOSING DATE 06.03.2020 | RS. 6000/- PER VEHICLE | www.uhbvn.org.in | XEN Const. Division, UHBVN, Kurukshetra |
| 7 | UHBVN, KARNAL | HIRING OF 1 NO. JEEP/MAHINDRA BALERO FOR THE USE OF SDO(OP) SUB-DIVN. UHBVN, GARGHIBIRAL | CLOSING DATE 27.02.2020 | 7000/- | www.uhbvn.org.in | 0184-2268525 xenpubbvn@karnal@gmail.com |
| 8 | MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BHIWANI | PROVIDING AND FIXING (AS PER ATTACHED SPECIFICATION) OF RCC BENCH IN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BHIWANI. (RETENDER) | CLOSING DATE 25.02.2020 | 50000 | http://etenders.hry.nic.in | 9810880504 me.mcbhiwani@gmail.com |
| 9 | MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BHIWANI | CAPTURING OF MONKEY IN MC BHIWANI (RETENDER) | CLOSING DATE 25.02.2020 | 25000 | http://etenders.hry.nic.in | 9810880504 me.mcbhiwani@gmail.com |
| 10 | MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE, NISSING | RE-CONSTRUCTION OF STREET AND DRAIN FROM H/O GEETA RAM TO MANGA RAM WARD NO.1 + 10 OTHER WORKS | CLOSING DATE 28.02.2020 | 149.62 LACS | http://etenders.hry.nic.in | 01745-271608 |
| 11 | MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BHIWANI | CONST. AND LAYING OF STREET FROM MITTAL TIMBER STORE TO KRISHAN JHAPRAYA AARA MACHINE, KATH MANDIR WINO 17. + 8 WORKS | CLOSING DATE 28.02.2020 | 105770 | http://etenders.hry.nic.in 2019_HRY_118836_1 to 2019_HRY_114018_9 | 9810880504 me.mcbhiwani@gmail.com |

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in RO 79936

PARADIP PORT TRUST
 PARADIP PORT - 754 142, ODISHA (INDIA) SAGARMALA
 (An autonomous body under Ministry of Shipping, Govt. of India)

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

Walk-In-Interview

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

Sr. Dy. Secretary for Secretary

PPT/PR/675/19-20, Dt. 18/02/2020

Notice Inviting Re-e-Tender

No. SSA/MIS/Support-materials/OD/336/2006/843 Date : 18.02.2020
 Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilpara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites re-tender through e-Tendering process from Reputed Organization for supply and installation of Laptop, Desktop Computer, UPS, Scanner and Printer.

To participate in the tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of class-II (minimum) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable tender fee of Rs. 1,000/- (Rupees one thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilpara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

Sd/- Mission Director, SSA, Assam, Kahilpara, Guwahati-19

Sensex, Nifty clock 4th successive loss

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty settled with losses for the fourth straight session on Tuesday as the ongoing AGR issue weighed on telecom and financial stocks.

After trading in the deep red for a better part of the session, the BSE gauge Sensex reclaimed most of its lost ground towards the day-end. At the closing bell, the index was down 161.31 points or 0.39 per cent at 40,894.38.

Intra-day, the Sensex fell over 444 points and touched the day's low of 40,610.95.

The NSE barometer Nifty too staged a late recovery from the day's low and settled at 11,992.50, showing a fall of 53.30 points or 0.44 per cent. On the Sensex chart, Bharti Airtel was the biggest loser with nearly 3 per cent drop in its share price. It was followed by IndusInd Bank, Maruti Suzuki, HeroMoto Corp and Tata Steel.

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to stop the telecom department from taking any coercive steps for recovery of dues from Vodafone Idea.

Shares of Vodafone Idea on Tuesday tanked more than 16 per cent in intra-day trade due

to rating downgrade on AGR dues and other issues of the company.

Reliance Industries declined nearly 1 per cent after it announced consolidation of all its media and distribution businesses under flagship 'Network18'.

The three group entities namely Hathway Cable & Datacom, Den Networks and TV18 Broadcast — which would be merged into Network18 — rose by 20 per cent, 9.98 per cent and 14.7 per cent, respectively.

"Market sentiment continued to be hit by Covid-19 after the issue of warning note from

a key global MNC regarding the sales impact. Global weakness is expected to hurt domestic market as high valuation and low economic growth is not supportive," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services commented.

Also, the huge government dues to be paid by telecom sector will keep banking stocks

volatile impacting the market performance, Nair added.

In contrast, SBI, Infosys, PowerGrid, Tech Mahindra and TCS featured among major gainers.

Sectorally, BSE telecom index suffered the most by shedding over 4 per cent. Other top laggards included metal, auto and realty indices.

Birla meets Telecom Secy as Voda Idea stares at over ₹53K cr AGR dues

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Amid talks of the Government mulling encashing of bank guarantee over default in payment of dues, Vodafone Idea Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla on Tuesday met Telecom Secretary Anshu Prakash as he looked for options to keep the company afloat.

After the meeting, Birla said he "cannot say anything at the moment."

Birla, who met the telecom secretary for over an hour, was accompanied by Ravinder Takkar, MD & CEO of Vodafone Idea.

He refused to respond to queries on whether or not Vodafone Idea Ltd (VIL) would default on payment of AGR dues or if the company could head towards insolvency.

Vodafone Idea on Monday paid Rs 2,500 crore to DoT and promised to pay another Rs 1,000 crore before the end of the week.

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

Voda Idea stock falls over 11% amid AGR woes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Vodafone Idea on Tuesday settled over 11 per cent down in the wake of continuing business uncertainty over payment of statutory dues.

The scrip has been closing in the red for the past seven consecutive sessions. The company's credit rating has also been downgraded by two rating agencies. On the BSE, the stock plunged 17.25 per cent to trade at a low of ₹2.83. It settled with a loss of 11.40 per cent at ₹3.03.

The scrip plummeted 17.64 per cent to ₹2.80 on the National Stock Exchange (NSE). It closed 10.29 per cent lower at ₹3.05.

In terms of traded volume, more than 64 crore shares of the company were traded on the NSE and over 15 crore units exchanged hands on the BSE.

During the day, spurt in volume was more than 3.11 times on the BSE.

The stock has been on a losing spree for the past seven trading sessions on the BSE. It has plunged 43.9 per cent since February 7.

Hero MotoCorp unveils new products, announces ₹10,000 crore investments

KUSHAN MITRA ■ KUKAS, RAJASTHAN

Later this year, Hero MotoCorp will unveil the 100 millionth motorcycle to leave one of their production lines. In the 35 years since the Munjal-promoted group has been producing two-wheelers, first in collaboration with Japanese major Honda and then by themselves since 2011, they will become the fastest manufacturer to reach this milestone.

But as questions hover around the future viability of the company as it finds itself with a global technology partner unlike their Indian rivals, Bajaj and TVS, the Chairman and promoter of the company, Pawan Munjal wanted to showcase the future with a display of Hero's technological and product development competence at their Centre for Innovation and Technology (CIT) established at Kukas, outside Jaipur.

Hero, which skipped the Auto Expo earlier this month also used the opportunity to launch their latest products that all adhere to the upcoming BS-6 emission norms. As the company has seen increased competition over the years and declining sales of their bestsellers, they also launched the new Glamour 125 and Passion Pro as well as showcasing the Xtreme 160R road racer in the fast growing 150-200cc category.

The company wants to regain their leadership position in these segments where Bajaj, TVS and their erstwhile partner Honda dominates. Speaking to The Pioneer, Munjal also mentioned that Hero could look at potential partnerships with either Indian or global 'freemium' companies going forward, and that he was not terribly concerned about the move to electric vehicles, "we are a large investor in Ather Energy, India's leading electric two-wheeler company with a 31 per cent stake in the company, and we have been



Hero MotoCorp Chairman and Managing Director, Pawan Munjal, unveils the all-new Hero Xtreme 160R bike during Hero World 2020 in Jaipur on Tuesday. PTI

OUTLINES STRATEGY FOR NEXT 5-7 YEARS, PLANS GLOBAL EXPANSION AND BELIEVES SECOND-HALF OF 2020 WILL SEE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY REVIVE

helping the company grow. The scooters might not have a 'Hero' but that does not mean that Hero is not seriously looking at this area. Our major issue with the Government's initial plan to move to all-electric vehicles by 2025, which it wisely reconsidered was that the entire infrastructure would be disrupted, from sales channels to mechanics.

The industry could have shifted, but the government has to remember the contribution the automotive industry makes to the Indian economy and think accordingly." He added that Hero was looking at electric and hybrid technologies for two-wheelers as early as 2012 even before the modern shift to such technologies, "we are a leader in this space in India, just because we do not have a product right now should not be something to be worried

about."

Munjal also said that Hero would invest over ₹10,000 crore in new plants, research and development and market development over the next five to seven years in order to maintain its leadership. "When we started our solo journey in 2011 we had just 100 engineers doing basic product development in Dharuhera, three plants and exported products to just four countries. Today, we have one of the most advanced R&D centres in the two-wheeler world in Kukas with over 1,000 engineers, products have just started rolling out of our eighth plant in Andhra Pradesh and we have two global factories in Bangladesh and Colombia and we are present in over 40 countries globally. I'm sure our next 100 million will happen a lot faster than our first 100 million."

Panama back on EU tax-haven blacklist

AFP ■ BRUSSELS

The EU on Tuesday put Panama back on its blacklist of tax havens after deciding the country had not done enough to meet global transparency standards.

Panama, along with the Cayman Islands, Seychelles and Palau were added to eight other territories already deemed to be "non-cooperative tax jurisdictions," the Council of the EU said in a statement following a meeting of the bloc's finance ministers.

They join American Samoa, Fiji, Guam, Oman, Samoa, Trinidad and Tobago, the US Virgin Islands and Vanuatu on the list.

The addition of the Cayman Islands represented the first time an overseas British territory was placed on the EU's blacklist.

Rupee slides 22 paise to nearly 3-week low of 71.54 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee tumbled by 22 paise to settle at a nearly three-week low of 71.54 against the US dollar on Tuesday as concerns over the economic fallout from coronavirus outbreak continued to roil forex market sentiment.

Besides, sustained foreign fund outflows and subdued equities also put pressure on the rupee.

Starting off the session on a weaker note, the rupee weakened further to hit the day's low of 71.56 against the American currency. The domestic unit finally settled down by 22 paise at 71.54, a level not seen since January 30.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose by 0.15 per cent to 99.15.

The 10-year government bond yield was at 6.39 per cent. Global crude oil benchmark Brent futures dropped 1.89 per cent to trade at USD 56.58 per barrel.

"Rupee started the day on a weak note crossing beyond 71.50, majorly on back of selling from institution in risky assets as FIIs (are) likely to be pulling out money from equities as the global market weighs slowdown effects of rising Coronavirus threat in China," LKP Securities Senior Research Analyst (Commodity & Currency) Jateen Trivedi said.

The Financial Benchmark India Private Ltd (FBIL) set the reference rate for the rupee/dollar at 71.4259 and for rupee/euro at 77.4162. The reference rate for rupee/British pound was fixed at 93.1737 and for rupee/100 Japanese yen at 65.02.

BUSINESS CORNER

ICIOT CONFERENCE IN SRM DRAWS CROWD

Kattankulathur: Second edition of International Conference on Internet of Things (ICIOT) was held at SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur from 17 to 21 February 2020. The event was organised by Department of Computer Science and Engineering.



The chief guests for the event were Vidhyacharan Bhaskar, Professor at the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, San Francisco State University, USA and Raghavendra Belur Jana, Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology Skoltech, Department of Civil Engineering, Moscow, Russia. The conference proceedings, printed in the form of a book of abstracts, were released on the inauguration. Registrar of SRMIST, N Sethuraman, said that this conference will help to discuss various issues related to the Computer Science Department and other Department, making it interdisciplinary. He then urged students to explore other avenues for further research. "There are several challenges and this conference can help you find solutions for the same. It will be a win-win situation where, participants and speakers will get benefited," he said and added, "By understanding the need of IoT, progress can be achieved. But you will face challenges. Any invention that is not useful for the society will lose its charm and this conference will throw light on the prevailing challenges."

GRSE DELIVERS YARD 3020 KAVARATTI TO NAVY

Kolkata: Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd., (GRSE), a leading Warship builder and Miniratna Category 1 Company under the administrative control of the Ministry of Defence delivered Yard 3020 (Kavaratti), to the Indian Navy on 18 Feb 20. The ship is the 104th Warship built and delivered by GRSE since its inception in 1960 and is the Last in the Series of 04 Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvettes (ASWC) under the Project 28.



"Kavaratti" was handed over by Rear Admiral VK Saxena, IN (Retd.), Chairman & Managing Director, GRSE to Cdr. Sandeep Singh, Commanding Officer (Desig) of the ship, in the presence of Cmde, DK Goswami, CEO, Chairman, D448 Eastern Naval Command, Shri S S Dogra, Director (Finance), Cmde, Sanjeev Nayyar, IN (Retd), Director (Shipbuilding) and Cmde, P R Hari, IN (Retd), Director (Personnel) and other Senior Officials of Indian Navy and GRSE. The first three ships of the series, INS Kamorta, INS Kadmat & INS Kilan were delivered earlier and now form an integral part of Eastern Fleet of the Indian Navy. The P 28 Class of ships strengthens the Indian Defence System and is the shining Armor in the "Make in India" programme.

RBI Governor says no reason to doubt Govt will meet fiscal deficit targets

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Throwing his weight behind Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's budget numbers, Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das has said that there is no reason to doubt that the government will be able to cut fiscal deficit to 3.5 per cent of the GDP in the fiscal beginning April 1.

In an interview with PTI, Das said the government has remained within the limits set by the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Committee for the budget deficit.

The government missed deficit target for the third year in a row, pushing shortfall to 3.8 per cent of the GDP in the current fiscal as compared to 3.3 per cent previously planned. The fiscal deficit target for the coming fiscal year starting April 1, has been fixed at 3.5 per cent.

The fiscal deficit is the shortfall in a government's income compared with its spending. It essentially means that the government is spending beyond its means. "With regard to the fiscal

management of the government, the government has remained within the recommendations FRBM committee," Das said. "So, therefore, the excess fiscal deficit has been restricted to 0.5 per cent. The government has adhered to that and a large part of the financing of fiscal deficit next year will come from small savings."

The FRBM committee headed by N K Singh had recommended fiscal deficit to be cut to 2.8 per cent in 2020-21 fiscal and to 2.5 per cent by FY2023.

The panel had suggested an "escape clause" in case of overriding consideration of national security, acts of war, calamities of national proportion and collapse of agriculture severely affecting farm output and incomes. Under this, a deviation from the stipulated fiscal deficit target can be taken but not in excess of 0.5 percentage points in a year.

Das said there is no reason to doubt that the fiscal deficit for the next year would be met.

"There is no reason for anyone to doubt that number. The Budget has been presented just about a fortnight ago,"

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that two girls namely (1) Komal, D/o: Ram Copal, R/o: D-12, Vijay Vihar, Phase-II, Delhi, (2) Reshma, D/o: Babulal, R/o: D-53, Vijay Vihar, Phase-II, New Delhi has been reported missing/kidnapped since 21.01.2020 from the area of P.S. Vijay Vihar, New Delhi. In this regard FIR No. 51/2020, dated 22.01.2020 has been registered at P.S. Vijay Vihar, New Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing/kidnapped girls but no clue has come to light so far. The description of missing/kidnapped girls is as under:

(1) Name: Komal, Age: 16 Years, Height: 5'5", Face: Round, Complexion: Fair, Wearing: Green colour suit, golden colour salwar, black - white colour coat and Blue colour jutti in feet.

(2) Name: Reshma, Age: 15 Years, Height: 5'1", Face: Long, Complexion: Fair, Wearing: Red colour suit, golden colour salwar, red colour jacket and white colour jutti in feet.

If anyone have any information about these missing/kidnapped girls please inform P.S. Vijay Vihar, New Delhi

Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639

SHO
Police Station, Vijay Vihar, New Delhi
DP/3716/RD/2020 Ph: 011-27282350, 27280435

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person 45 years of age whose name, residence and family is unknown had been found dead at Safdarjung Hospital Campus, New Delhi. In this regard a vide has been registered with DD No. 09A, dated 14.01.2020 at P.S. S J Enclave, New Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to identify the deceased person but no clue has come to light so far.

The description of the UIDB is as under:

Sex: Male, Age: 45 years, Height: 170 cm, Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Forehead-Narrow, Hair: Black, Wearing: Black colour jacket and blue colour t-shirt.

If anyone has any information about his relatives, kindly inform the SHO/S J Enclave, New Delhi.

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax: 011-24368639

SHO
P.S. S J Enclave, New Delhi
Ph. No. 011-24106345, 24106346
DP/7219/SW/2020

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that a boy (depicted in the photo), Namely : Ravi Panday S/o Satya Prakash Pandey R/o H.No. 28-A, Ph-3, Jai Vihar, Baprola, Ranholia, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped since 04.02.2020 from the area of P.S. Ranholia, Delhi. In this regard a case vide FIR No. 92/20 u/s 363 IPC dated 05.02.2020 has been registered at Police Station Ranholia, Delhi. His physical description is as under :-

Age : 17 Years, Height: 5'5", Complexion : Shallow, Face : Long, Wearing : Black Colour Jacket and Sky Blue Colour Jeans & Black and White shoes in feet.

Any person having any information/Clue about this missing/kidnapped boy, may inform SHO, Ranholia, Delhi at E-mail id - cic@cbi.gov.in or Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

SHO
P.S. Ranholia, Delhi
Outer Distt., Delhi
Ph. No. 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639

SHO
P.S. Ranholia, Delhi
Outer Distt., Delhi
Ph. No. 011-28363001, 28363002, 28363003
DP/3144/OD/2020

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

See Section U/S 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Bhagwan Shahai @ Raju S/o Sh. Narayan Meena R/o V.P.O. Kota-Patti, P.S. Lawan District Dausa, Rajasthan has Committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence FIR No. 89/11 u/s 379 IPC has been registered at P.S. Delhi Cantt, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said Bhagwan Shahai @ Raju cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Bhagwan Shahai @ Raju has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Bhagwan Shahai @ Raju of FIR No. 89/11 u/s 379 IPC has been registered at P.S. Delhi Cantt, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 24.03.2020

By order
Ms. Ankita Lal, Ld. MM,
Patiala House Court, New Delhi
DP/7206/SW/20

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused female namely Smt. Maya, W/o: Sh. Vinod, R/o: Jhuggi Bakkarwala & Jhuggi Raghurib Nagar, New Delhi, has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 958/15 dated 19.09.2015 U/s 379/411/34 IPC registered at P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued (unexecuted), stating that the said Smt. Maya cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Smt. Maya has absconded (or is concealing her self to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proceeding u/s 82 Cr.P.C. has been initiated in this case. Proclamation is hereby made that the said Smt. Maya accused of FIR No. 958/15 dated 19.09.2015 U/s 379/411/34 IPC P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer said complaint on or before 24.03.2020.

By Order
Mr. Anuj Kumar Singh
Metropolitan Magistrate 03,
Court No. 212,
Saket Courts, New Delhi
DP/7210/SW/2020

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Share Certificate No(s) 00045198 & 00045199 for 200 Equity share(s) having distinctive nos. 9912501 to 9912600 & 9912601 to 9912700 respectively of Merino Industries Ltd., having its registered Office at 5, Alexander Court 60/1, Chowringhee Road Kolkata - 700020, registered in the name of Mr. Narendra Garg, Folio No. 001915, have been lost. I, now has applied to the Company for issue of duplicate share certificates in lieu of above. Any person having any objection to the issue of duplicate Share certificate(s) as aforesaid is requested to lodge objection thereto with the Company at their above address, or to its Registrars C B Management Services (P) Ltd., P-22, Bondel Road, Kolkata-700019 in writing within 15 days from the date of publication.

Sd/
Narendra Prakash Garg,
House No. 433, Maheshwari Mandir Wali Gali, W-33, Arya Nagar, Hapur (UP) - 245101

Date :
Place : Hapur

To present first UK Budget on March 11: Rishi Sunak

PTI ■ LONDON

The UK Government will present the Budget on March 11 as previously announced, the new Indian-origin Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said on Tuesday as he vowed to unleash the country's potential and deliver the promises made to the voters.

There had been much speculation that the Budget could be delayed after the 39-year-old son-in-law of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy replaced Pakistani-origin Sajid Javid following his shock resignation on February 13.

Now it will be presented as previously scheduled on March 11, he said on his maiden Budget. Sunak tweeted that he was "cracking on" with preparations and would deliver the promises made to voters ahead of December's General Election won by the Conservative Party led by Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

China to waive tariffs on US medical imports amid virus outbreak

AFP ■ BEIJING

China will waive trade-war tariffs on imports of selected US medical equipment from March 2, the Government said Tuesday, as the country battles to contain the new coronavirus epidemic. The move comes as doctors and nurses treating virus patients in China's overstretched hospitals struggle to deal with the health crisis amid a shortage of basic medical items.

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

Patient monitors, blood transfusion equipment and instruments to measure blood pressure are among the products that qualify for the exemptions, according to a list released by the Tariff Commission of the State Council. They are among 696 US products that now qualify for waivers, including key agricultural and energy items such as frozen pork and beef, soybeans and liquified natural gas.

Sunil opens India's Gold account

Competing in 87kg category wrestler rewrites history and becomes third Indian to win yellow metal in Greco-Roman

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Wrestler Sunil Kumar won India's first Gold medal in the opening day of Asian Wrestling Championship 2020 here at KD Jadhav stadium on Tuesday after beating Kyrgyzstan opponent Azat Salidinov 5-0 in the final match of 87kg Greco-Roman category.

Last edition Silver medalist dominated the entire game and didn't allow his counterpart to gain any sort of breathing space and in process put a full stop to country's 27-year drought for the yellow metal. Sunil now becomes only the third Indian ever to achieve this feat after Pappu Yadav.

Sunil with his comprehensive defence was able to keep Salidinov at bay for most of the bout. Salidinov didn't have an answer to the strategy of Sunil and finally went down pretty easily.

Earlier, Sunil on his way to the final made an impressive comeback in the semi-final bout. He came back from 1-8 down to win the bout 12-8. This was an improvement for



India's Sunil Kumar celebrates after his win against Salidinov Azat (KAZ) in the final of 87kg category wrestling match during the Asian Wrestling Championship 2020

Sunil from his 2019 performance in the same tournament where he won a Silver Medal.

Speaking after the win he said, "I am feeling happy to have earned India's first Gold Medal today (Tuesday). I have worked really hard on my ground techniques and it feels good to have done better than my last year's performance."

Before Sunil's historic Gold medal win, Arjun Halakurki (55kg) won his Bronze Medal bout defeating Donghyeok Won of Korea. Arjun started the bout slowly and was down by 1-4 in the first period. But, Arjun didn't give up and came back strongly snatching six straight points with a combination of good defence and attack. The final score at the end of the bout was 7-4 in favour of Arjun.

Though, India's third medal hope Mehar Singh (130 kg) suffered a setback as he lost his bout against Roman Kim of Kyrgyzstan by a narrow scoreline of 2-3. Mehar was majorly suffering the aftereffects of his wrist injury which he suffered in his semi-final bout earlier.

Asian Wrestling Championship
Live from 11:00am IST
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

SINGLES

BAVUMA OUT OF FIRST T20

JOHANNESBURG: Batsman Temba Bavuma has been ruled out of the first Twenty20 international against Australia at the Wanderers Stadium on Friday because of a hamstring strain. He was injured while fielding in the third match against England. He will stay with the South African squad in the hope that he will be fit for the second and third matches against Australia in Port Elizabeth on Sunday and Cape Town on Wednesday.

AMAAN INCLUDED IN IND SQUAD

NEW DELHI: The Basketball Federation of India on Monday announced the senior men's squad that will be part of the 2021 FIBA Asia Cup Qualifiers. Singh, who recently led Punjab to gold in the U-21 category in the 2020 Khelo India Youth Games, has been in the NBA Global Academy in Canberra, Australia for over a year. Also part of the squad is 17-year-old Amaan Sandhu. Sandhu, a student-athlete at the NBA Academy India, was also part of the gold-medal-winning Punjab squad. He was one of three Indians (the only boy) selected to the Basketball Without Border Global Camp at the 2020 All-Star Weekend in Chicago.

MOEEN TO CAPTAIN BIRMINGHAM

LONDON: Moeen Ali will captain Birmingham Phoenix in English cricket's new Hundred competition, it was announced Tuesday. The England all-rounder, who grew up near Edgbaston, the venue for the Phoenix' home matches, will lead a side that includes fellow World Cup winner Chris Woakes as well as Kane Williamson, the captain of the New Zealand side beaten in last year's thrilling global 50-over final. A dashing left-handed batsman and off-spin bowler, Moeen rose through the ranks at Edgbaston with Warwickshire before establishing himself in county cricket with Midlands rivals Worcestershire. "Every time that I come to Edgbaston it takes me back to some great first memories of coming here at a very young age," said Moeen in a statement.

VIETNAM F1 GRAND PRIX GETS GO-AHEAD

HANOI: Vietnam's inaugural Formula One Grand Prix will take place in Hanoi in April as planned, organisers told AFP Tuesday, avoiding the fate of the Chinese Grand Prix which was postponed over the deadly coronavirus. The race will be held as "scheduled" on April 5, Le Ngoc Chi, CEO of Vietnam Grand Prix told AFP. The virus, which has killed more than 1,800 people in China, has trashed Asia's sporting calendar, forcing the postponement of top events including the Shanghai grand prix and the Hong Kong Sevens rugby. But Vietnamese authorities said the country's inaugural Formula One race would go ahead on schedule.

SANIA AND GARCIA SAIL INTO QUARTERS

DUBAI: Indian tennis ace Sania Mirza and Caroline Garcia registered a hard-fought win over Russia's Alla Kudryavtseva and Slovenia's Katarina Srebotnik to advance to the women's doubles pre-quarterfinals at the Dubai Open here on Tuesday. The Indo-French pair beat their Russian opponents 6-4, 4-6, 10-8 in the first round match. The Sania-Garcia combine will now meet the fifth seeded duo of Saisai Zheng of China and Barbora Krejickova of Czech Republic in the round of 16.

MANPREET TO LEAD IND IN FIH PRO LEAGUE

NEW DELHI: Manpreet Singh will lead India in the upcoming FIH Pro League matches against world no.2 Australia, a 24-member team for which was announced by Hockey India on Tuesday. Harmanpreet Singh will shoulder the duties of the vice captain in the matches, scheduled to take place on February 21 and 22 at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar. Indian Team: Sreejesh Parattu Raveendran, Krishan Pathak, Amit Rohidas, Surender Kumar, Birendra Lakra, Harmanpreet Singh, Varun Kumar, Gurinder Singh, Rupinder Pal Singh, Manpreet Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Hardik Singh, Chinglensana Singh, Raj Kumar Pal, Akashdeep Singh, Sumit, Lalit Upadhyay, Gursahibjit Singh, Dilpreet Singh, SV Sunil, Jarmanpreet Singh, Simranjeet Singh, Nilakanta Sharma, Ramandeep Singh.

Five Indian cities to host FIFA U-17 Women's WC matches

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a first, five Indian cities - Guwahati, Kolkata, Navi Mumbai, Bhubaneswar and Ahmedabad on Tuesday have been confirmed as the host cities for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup scheduled to take place in India from November 2 to November 21 this year.

To set the stage for the future of women's football, FIFA and Local Organising Committee (LOC) also announced the match schedule alongside the Official Slogan - Kick off the dream for the tournament here in presence of Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs Kiren Rijiju, Sarai Bareman, FIFA Chief Women's Football Officer, Roberto Grassi, FIFA Head of Youth Tournaments and AIFF president Praful Patel, who is also LOC



Praful Patel, Kiren Rijiju, Sarai Bareman and Roberto Grassi during the announcement and launch of official slogan for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup

Chairman and FIFA Council member. Sixteen teams featuring the rising stars of women's football will compete across 32 matches to lift the

Guwahati and Kolkata), with the knockout stages also taking place in four cities (Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata and Navi Mumbai). The winners will lift the trophy at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai on November 21.

Following the launch of the Official Emblem in November 2019, the unveiling of the five host cities and the match schedule marks a major milestone for the tournament as fans in the host cities and across India prepare to welcome the future stars and heroes of women's football.

The key dates for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2020 include: Opening match - November 2.

Quarter-finals - November 12 and 13. Semi-finals - November 17 and 3rd/4th-place playoff & final - November 21.



Jose Mourinho applauds during the last minutes of the English FA Cup

Spurs holding on for dear life after Son's injury: Mourinho

AFP ■ LONDON

Tottenham Hotspur's hopes of obtaining something from the season have been equated to someone hanging on for dear life from a balcony in a typically colourful analogy by their manager Jose Mourinho.

The 57-year-old Portuguese made the comparison after he said he believed Korean star Son Heung-min's season could well be over due to a fractured right arm.

Mourinho is already without star striker Harry Kane — side-lined since January with a torn hamstring — as the club enters a crucial period. Midfielder Moussa Sissoko is another long-term casualty.

Spurs host German side RB Leipzig in a Champions League Last 16 first leg match on Wednesday and play Chelsea in a match that could prove pivotal in the dog-fight for the fourth and final Champions League spot.

"You know I like analogies," said Mourinho, who took over after Mauricio Pochettino was sacked in late November last year.

"Sometimes I do good ones and sometimes silly ones. This time I do this. "When we arrived we were in minus 12 floor, we got on the stairs and we started climbing.

"But immediately the stairs broke and trouble. "We were trying to find a way.

"Lots of effort but we were going and going.

"Then 11th floor and when we arrived on the fourth floor, where we wanted to arrive, someone took the stairs away so we are now in trouble.

"We are holding by our arms on the balcony."

Mourinho said the club were at a crossroads in their season.

"Now we have two options," he said. "To fall and die because it's the fourth floor.

"The other is to climb. We will be on that balcony fighting with everything we have."

'WE MISS HIM'

Son's absence comes as a cruel blow to the player and the team as he had been in a rich vein of form scoring in the last five matches after filling in for Kane up front.

The 27-year-old South Korean international forward suffered the injury in the 3-2 Premier League victory over Aston Villa — in which he scored twice including the late winner — on Sunday.

Son suffered the injury in a robust first-minute challenge from Villa's Ezri Konsa. The club did not specify how long Son would be out — he is due to undergo surgery this week — but Mourinho was pessimistic.

"I'm not going to count on him again this season," Mourinho said.

The club said only after the medical operation would they be able to say how long he would be absent.

"Following surgery, our medical staff shall be reviewing management options for Son's rehabilitation with the player expected to be sidelined for a number of weeks."

Mourinho said he would have phrased the statement differently.

"The club wrote a nice statement," he said.

"If I was the one to write the statement I would write different. We miss him," added the 57-year-old Portuguese.

With both Kane and Son missing, Lucas Moura looks like having the burden placed on him as Mourinho discounted untested Irish youngster Troy Parrott.

"In some periods I was worried about not having attacking options on the bench, now it's not having attacking options on the pitch," said Mourinho.

"My thoughts are that Troy Parrott is not ready and Ryan Sessegnon is not a striker."

Utd stun Chelsea to close gap on top four

AFP ■ LONDON

Manchester United moved to within three points of fourth-placed Chelsea with a smash and grab 2-0 win at Stamford Bridge thanks to goals from Anthony Martial and Harry Maguire.

Chelsea had two goals disallowed by VAR reviews and were furious Maguire was not sent-off early on for an off-the-ball kick out at Michy Batshuayi.

However, Blues boss Frank Lampard cut a frustrated figure as the flaws in both boxes which have seen his side win just four of their last 14 league games were exposed once more against ordinary opposition.

Victory lifts United up to seventh and within two points of Tottenham in fifth, which could be good enough to qualify for the Champions League next season pending Manchester City's appeal again a two-season ban from European competition.

Lampard made a bold call before kick-off by again dropping the most expensive goalkeeper in football history, Kepa Arrizabalaga, to the bench in favour of the 38-year-old Willy



Manchester United's Luke Shaw, left, and Chelsea's Mason Mount battle for the ball

Caballero.

Batshuayi also started with Tammy Abraham ruled out by injury and Lampard's anger at missing out on a striker in the January window was borne out by a poor night for the

firing Belgium forward.

Chelsea suffered another injury blow early on when N'Golo Kante hobbled off and the France World Cup winner is now a doubt to face Bayern Munich in the Champions League next

week.

The loss of Kante did not disrupt the home side's early rhythm as Reece James and Willian fired just wide.

Chelsea were then furious Maguire somehow escaped without being sent-off for kicking Batshuayi after the two collided in front of the dugouts.

The former Marseille attacker then squandered the first of a host of chances by firing wide from Mason Mount's cut-back.

ONE-WAY TRAFFIC

Chelsea's sense of injustice increased when Willian was harshly booked for diving as he went down under a challenge from Bruno Fernandes looking for a penalty.

United had not made Caballero make a single save before going in front a minute before the break when Martial planted a brilliant header into the far corner from Aaron Wan-Bissaka's cross.

There was still time for Batshuayi to miss another chance before half-time when he skewed wide from a narrow angle.

The one-way traffic continued at

the start of the second period as Mount hit the post and a brave block from Wan-Bissaka deflected Pedro's goal-bound effort behind.

But even when Chelsea did get the ball in the net through substitute Kurt Zouma, the goal was ruled out by VAR for a push on Brandon Williams by Cesar Azpilicueta.

Fernandes was unable to make much of an impact from open play in his second United appearance since a USD 62 million move from Sporting Lisbon.

However, the Portuguese international is a huge threat from set-pieces and nearly caught Caballero out with a free-kick that crashed back off the post.

Moments later, Fernandes provided his first assist for the Red Devils with a corner which Maguire powered home.

Lampard had seen enough from Batshuayi and handed Olivier Giroud a rare appearance off the bench for the final quarter.

The French striker thought he had given Chelsea a lifeline with a near post header, but was ruled offside after a VAR review.

AC Milan eye Euro spots after Torino win

AFP ■ MILAN

AC Milan closed in on the European places in Serie A after Ante Rebic fired them to a 1-0 win over Torino.

Rebic on Monday swept home Samu Castillejo's low pull back in the 25th minute to consign to draw Milan level on 35 points with Hellas Verona, who currently occupy the final Europa League spot on goal difference.

Rebic's winning goal was his sixth in seven games in all competitions, a run that comes after failing to score at all in the first half of the season.

The Croatian's strike helped the hosts bounce back from last week's derby disap-



Ante Rebic celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal

pointment against Inter Milan to continue a positive run under coach Stefano Pioli that also saw them unlucky not to beat Juventus in the Coppa

Italia semi-final first leg last week.

They have lost just once since the turn of the year — to title-chasing Inter — and are playing well enough to aim for European football next season.

However the Champions League will likely be beyond them thanks to the 10-point gap between them and fourth-placed Atalanta.

Torino meanwhile are inching closer to the relegation zone after their fifth straight defeat, a slump that shows little sign of ending.

They are just five points from the drop despite bringing in Moreno Longo to replace Walter Mazzarri earlier this month.

Bencic soars, then crashes in Dubai

AFP ■ DUBAI

Holder Belinda Bencic ran off the first 19 points against Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova before collapsing to a 1-6, 6-1, 6-1 loss on Tuesday at the Dubai Championships.

Another former champion, the 2017 and 2018 winner Elina Svitolina, also fell, 6-2, 6-1, to US qualifier Jennifer Brady.

Pavlyuchenkova could not have made a worse start.

"It's tennis, sometimes it happens," the

31st-ranked Russian said "You go out there and you just don't feel anything."

"I just kept on fighting, still trying to hit every ball, trying to be there

"It doesn't matter what the score is, just play. Slowly I started to turn it around, I started to find my game."

"I honestly wasn't focusing on the score. Sometimes you can play amazing tennis and still lose 6-1. In the third set, it was a good level from both of us."

Bencic, who is Swiss was seeded four

and Svitolina third. That leaves the spotlight to tournament number one Simona Halep and second-seeded Karolina Pliskova, who begin in the second round after byes.

Weekend ATP Rotterdam winner Gael Monfils watched in pain as girlfriend Svitolina went down to Brady.

Svitolina had little to offer as the 52nd-ranked Brady gained her second victory this season over a Top 10 opponent after beating Barty in Brisbane.

The Ukrainian's

usually steady game was nowhere to be found at the Aviation Club as first-round play concluded.

"It was not a bad start, but then everything just went downhill," Svitolina said.

"I wish I could regroup better. In the end, I didn't feel so good the ball. Just everything was all over the place today." At this level it's tough to pick just one thing: everybody is putting the ball over the net, and you have to play long rallies, you have to build the points.

MESSI & HAMILTON ARE WORLD'S BEST

PTI ■ BERLIN

British F1 ace Lewis Hamilton and Lionel Messi, arguably the world's greatest footballer, were on Monday declared the joint winners of the prestigious Laureus World Sportsman of the year award.

They received the same number of votes, a first in the 20-year history of the awards with the jury unable to split Hamilton and Messi.

Messi, the six-time FIFA World Player of the year, is the first team-player to bag the award. He though was not present to receive the award and sent a video message.

They pipped golfing great Tiger Woods, Kenyan marathoner Eliud Kipchoge, tennis legend Rafael Nadal and MotoGP champion Marc Marquez.

American gymnast Simone Biles who won five gold medals at the 2019 World Championships, grabbed the World Sportswoman of the year award, her third in four years after winning it in 2017 and in 2019.

She beat a strong challenge from Jamaican sprinting great Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, who

missed out on the honour for the fifth time. She was nominated 2010, 2013, 2014 and 2016 also but did not win it.

The most decorated gymnast also beat competition from American footballer Megan Rapinoe, Japanese tennis sensation Naomi Osaka, American track and field athlete Allyson Felix and skier Mikaela Shiffrin.

Snowboarding sensation Chloe Kim won the World Action Sportsman of the year, her second straight in the same category.

In the Sportsman of the year with a disability category, Oksana Masters, born with limb impairments caused by radiation from Chernobyl and adopted by an American single parent, was recognised for an outstanding year in 2019.

She won five Gold medals and a Silver at the World Para Nordic Skiing Championships.

South Bronx United (SBU), a football programme based in New York, was honoured with the Sport for Good Award. The programme uses football to achieve educational outcomes for young people from underserved communities.

The 2019 Rugby World Cup



British reigning F1 drivers champion Lewis Hamilton poses with Worlds best sportsman of year Award during the 2020 Laureus World Sports Awards

winners South Africa won their second Laureus World Team of the Year Award, beating Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool and the US Women's Football Team, among others.

For the 2020 Laureus World Comeback of the Year, Germany's gritty F3 driver Sophia Florschütz was the winner.

Travelling at 276km per hour, she had lost control of her car at the Macau circuit, crashing through safety barriers and leaving her with a spinal fracture which required an 11-hour surgery and months of rehabilitation.

In November 2019, a year on from her accident, the 18-year-old Sophia was back in the cockpit, racing once again in the Macau Grand Prix.

Egan Bernal, who became the youngest rider to win the Tour de France at 22, grabbed the World Breakthrough of the Year award.

German basketball great Dirk Nowitzki was recognised at the Ceremony with the Laureus Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to the sport of basketball.

Spanish Basketball Federation got the Exceptional Achievement Award.

Tendulkar wins best sporting moment award

PTI ■ BERLIN

Being carried on the shoulders of his teammates after India's World Cup triumph at home in 2011 was voted the Laureus best sporting moment in the last 20 years.

With the backing of Indian cricket fans, Tendulkar got the maximum number of votes to emerge winner on Monday.

The charged-up Indian cricketers rushed to the ground at the Wankhede Stadium and soon they lifted Tendulkar on their shoulders and made a lap of honour, a moment etched in the minds of the fans.

Former Australian skipper Steve Waugh handed the trophy to Tendulkar after tennis legend Bros Becker announced the winner at a glittering ceremony.

"It's incredible. The feeling of winning the world cup was beyond what words can express. How



many times you get an event happening where there are no mixed opinions. Very rarely the entire country celebrates," Tendulkar said after receiving the trophy.

"And this is a reminder of how powerful a sport is and what magic it does to our lives. Even now when I watch that it has stayed with me."

Won't rule out playing 2023 WC: Taylor

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Veteran New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor doesn't rule out playing the 2023 ODI World Cup but says his form, fitness and motivation level at the end of next year will decide whether he actually manages a place in the squad.

The 35-year-old will become the first cricketer in the world to complete 100 games across three international formats when he steps out for the first Test against India at Basin Reserve on February 21.

"I haven't ruled it (2023 World Cup) out but I still think it's a long way away. First and foremost I want to get to next year - the Twenty20 World Cup and then the home summer - and then I'll have a good idea on how I'm placed at the end of next summer," Taylor was quoted as saying by 'stuff.Co.Nz'.

"Whether there is still a drive, whether I'm good enough, whether I'm fit enough, and whether I deserve my spot in the side. If I can tick all those, then definitely 2023

is an option."

The big-hitting batsman said despite his desire to continue, he won't out himself under too much pressure.

"You always want to do well and first and foremost the game is more important. At the same time you can put extra pressure on yourself. You've just got to go out and enjoy it and take it as another game. Hopefully I can contribute in any way I can," he said.



Kyle Jamieson after dismissing Prithvi Shaw

Black Caps/Twitter

Jamieson credits shift to Auckland for making him better cricketer

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Towering New Zealand pacer Kyle Jamieson has revealed that moving from Canterbury to Auckland helped him get rid of a detrimental aggressive streak and become a cricketer worthy of national duty.

The 6'8" tall pacer, who made his ODI debut against India in the recent series, was handed a place in the Test squad for the upcoming two-match rubber beginning at Basin Reserves here on February 21.

"I'm a pretty fiery character on the field. On the field I'm pretty aggressive. I think it came out in ways I necessarily didn't like. I would sort of do it and then post-game be like, 'What did I do that for?'" he was quoted as saying by 'stuff.Co.Nz'.

Jamieson shifted to Auckland, where he was born, prior to this season after making his T20 debut for Canterbury in 2016 in the Super Smash.

He said there was a lot of

negativity around him in Canterbury, where he grew up, and it affected his behaviour.

"There was a bit of negativity surrounding myself and that environment and that was coming out in my behaviour on the field," he said.

The 25-year-old said returning to Auckland made a massive difference to his game.

"I'm really enjoying my cricket, which is probably something I couldn't say a couple of years ago," said Jamieson, who scored 25 and took 2 for 42 on debut during the second ODI against India at Eden Park.

"I was going through a bit of stuff off the field. Just the chance to come in with this group and turn up and learn everyday - try and better myself as a cricketer - was something that was too hard to turn down, so look, it's been massive for my game."

"...It was just a shift that I needed to make. Most importantly, I needed to be happy and I needed to enjoy my cricket. Wherever that may take me, then it will," he added.

Can't wait to get Virat out: Boult

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

There are no half measures for fit-again New Zealand pace spearhead Trent Boult who is ready to challenge India captain Virat Kohli on his return to international cricket during the two-Test series starting here on Friday.

Boult was out of action for the past six weeks due to a fracture on his right hand sustained during the Boxing Day Test against Australia and missed out on the limited-overs leg of the India series.

Back for the traditional format, the left-arm fast bowler made his priorities clear ahead of the first Test.

"That's personally why I play the game, to get guys like that (Kohli) out and test myself against them, so I can't wait to get stuck in. But he's an exceptional player. Everyone knows how great he is," Boult said, sending out a warning after landing in the capital city for the opening Test.

The Basin Reserve track will have a lot for the seamers and in conditions conducive to seam bowling, a wily customer like Boult might prove to be a handful.

"I'm preparing for a solid wicket. It generally is very good here and goes the full distance (five days). I do enjoy playing here, the history that's involved, and it's going to be an exciting week building up. I can't wait to get out there," said the 30-year-old who has taken 256 wickets from 65 Tests.



New Zealand seamer Trent Boult celebrates after taking wicket

ICC/Twitter

It was frustrating for him to watch his side get walloped 0-5 in the T20 series but exhilarating to when it got its mojo back in the subsequent one-dayers. The Black Caps won 3-

0 in the 50-over format.

"I think it is what it is. I have just got to put the last six or so weeks behind me and just back myself to get out there and do my thing," said Boult,

"That's personally why I play the game, to get guys like that (Kohli) out and test myself against them, so I can't wait to get stuck in. But he's an exceptional player. Everyone knows how great he is,"

who warmed up by playing a club game at the picturesque Taupo ground.

"I was pushing in off the long run. I think a couple of the clubbies from Taupo really enjoyed that. It was a good afternoon," added the pacer, who sent down eight overs in a friendly game for his club Cadets.

Professionally, Boult had to lie low due to injury, but it was also a good break as he and wife Lana welcomed their second child.

"Having some time away from the game and having my second son a couple of weeks ago came at quite a good time," said Boult.

Fighting fit, all he wants now is to get hold of a red kookaburra and get a few to tail into Kohli and company.

"I am hungry to be here and can't wait to get back in the white and get the red ball moving around," he said.



Indian women's team celebrates after winning the warm-up match against West Indies BCCI

Poonam's three wickets help Ind edge out WI

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Spinner Poonam Yadav claimed three wickets as India geared up for the ICC women's T20 World Cup with a thrilling two-run win over the West Indies in a low-scoring warm-up match here on Tuesday.

Electing to bat, India posted a lowly 107 for eight in their stipulated 20 overs before returning to restrict West Indies to 105 for seven.

Chasing 108 to win, West Indies were comfortably placed at 57 for one in 13 overs when Deepti Sharma struck, cleaning up opener Lee-Ann Kirby (42) to trigger a collapse.

Soon skipper Stafanie Taylor (16), Chedean Nation (0) and Deandra Dottin (1) were back in the hut as West Indies slipped to 67 for five in the 17th over.

Hayley Matthews (25) and Chinelle Henry (17) blasted three fours and a six in the 19th over to leave them with 11 to get off the last six balls.

Henry blasted Poonam for a four but the Indian dismissed

Matthews in the fourth ball.

West Indies needed three runs off the last ball but Henry was caught by Veda Krishnamurthy.

Earlier, India's top-three failed to fire as they were reduced to 17 for three in 3.1 overs. Opener Smriti Mandhana (4) lasted just six balls, while Jemimah Rodrigues (0) failed to open her account. Young Shafali Verma blasted a couple of fours before being caught by Britney Cooper off Shamalia Connell (2/20).

Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (11), too, didn't stay long, while Krishnamurthy was cleaned up by Afy Fletcher (1/26), as India slumped to 52 for five in 11.2 overs.

Deepti Sharma made a 32-ball 21 before becoming a victim of Anisa Mohammed (2/16), while Pooja Vastrakar (13) was removed by Aaliyah Alleyne (1/9). Stafanie Taylor then got rid of Taniya Bhatia for 10.

Shikha Pandey finally smashed a 16-ball 24 to give some respectability to the total.

'NZ's conservative approach against Bumrah will soon be adopted by others'

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

New Zealand's conservative approach against Jasprit Bumrah could become a template for other teams as they look to tackle the Indian pacer who recently endured a rare wicket-less outing in an ODI series, reckons former fast bowler Shane Bond.

The premier bowler copped criticism for his lean run during the three ODIs against New Zealand and Bond put that down to expectations.

"That's the nature of expectations when you got a bowler of Jasprit's quality," Bond, the fastest New Zealand bowler during his time, told PTI in an exclusive interview.

"I thought New Zealand played him well and identified him as a risk. They have played him conservatively and obviously there was some inexperience around (Navdeep Saini and Shardul Thakur)," he said.

"All teams will now identify him as a risk and attack others. So that's where the bowling group and what they do (as a group) is massive. It is not an easy place to bowl as wickets are flat."

But Bond felt Bumrah's bowling wasn't all that bad during the series, which India lost 0-3.

"At the end of the day, all you can do is try and bowl well. He bowled reasonably well but sometimes you don't get wickets," Bond said.

Bond, who has spent considerable amount of time with Bumrah as the Mumbai Indians bowling coach in the IPL, nonetheless expects India's premier strike bowler to have a "massive impact" on the two-Test series starting Friday.

"When you come back from a lay-off, it's always hard to get into the groove. Just that he hadn't had a lot of game before the series and conditions are a bit foreign," said Bond.

"Although New Zealand played him well in limited overs, Jasprit will have a massive impact on the Test series. I have no doubt about that,"



'Hope Pandya gets to play some cricket before IPL'

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Mumbai Indians bowling coach Shane Bond wants all-rounder Hardik Pandya, who is recovering from a back surgery, to play a few matches before the Indian Premier League, beginning March 29.

"I only hope he gets to play some cricket before the IPL and always believe it's better to spend a little bit longer for coming back rather than rushing it," Bond said.

"There's no doubt he can come back. I am just pleased that they are taking an orthodox approach with Hardik's rehabilitation and T20s, especially IPL will be nice for him to comeback as he will not be over-bowled."

Pandya underwent a productive net session at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru recently.

He was seen facing throwdown in the nets and mainly played with a straight bat. It is not yet clear if he will make a comeback in the South Africa ODIs next month or the IPL.

Earlier this month, Pandya was ruled out of the Test series against New Zealand after failing to regain full match fitness.

added the bowler, whose promising career was cut short by numerous injuries.

"It always takes time to get back to top form because there is no substitute of game time. So it's good for Jasprit that he is leading into Test matches with some short form cricket," said Bond, who played 18 Tests, 82 ODIs and 20 T20 Internationals.

Limited DRS use was always planned for Ranji semifinals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The limited use of Decision Review System was always planned for the Ranji Trophy semifinals and not from the knockout stages, clarified BCCI's general manager of cricket Saba Karim on Tuesday.

The move to introduce limited DRS comes after the umpires committed some howlers in some knockout games of the previous season. However, the quarterfinals starting on Thursday will not see the use of DRS.

"We are introducing from the semifinals. This the first time we have initiated this program, we wanted to bring in semifinals and we have done that. It was never meant for the quarterfinals," Karim, also a former India wicketkeeper, told PTI.

"The whole idea is that we wanted to bring in the DRS wherein we can have uniformity for both the games and that will be in the semifinals. All the four teams have been pitted equally and that would not have been possible before (in quarters)," he said.

The restricted technology for Ranji semis will not have Hawk Eye and Ultra Edge, two key components of the DRS used in international games.

"We will be using the technology which is available to us. We are looking at a very limited use of the DRS. We don't have snickometer and ball tracking. We have red zone and we have spin vision and we will try and give whatever is available to umpires for them to decide," added Karim.