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Nationalism likened to Nazism: Bhagwat

PNS ■ RANCHI

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday said the word "nationalism" is nowadays equated with Hitler's "nazism" or Mussolini's "fascism" and it is better to avoid this word, stressing on using some alternative terms.

Bhagwat's remark came amid continued protests in several cities of the country against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, which is branded by those opposing the CAA as a reflection of "Hindutva nationalism" that is detrimental to Muslims.

Besides, analysing the results of this month's Delhi Assembly polls, the BJP's ideological mentor RSS said in an editorial in its mouthpiece on Thursday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah cannot always help the BJP win Assembly elections.

Recalling an RSS event in the United Kingdom (UK), Bhagwat said, "During my recent visit to the UK, I was advised by an RSS worker not to use the word 'nationalism' as English is not our language and it could have a different meaning in England. It's okay to say nation, national and nationalism but not nationalism. Because it means (alludes to) Hitler, Nazism and Fascism (in



RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat addresses 'Sangh Samagam' at Ranchi College Football Ground on Thursday

PTI

England)." Calling upon RSS members to connect with people irrespective of their caste, language, religion or region, Bhagwat said India's characteristic is to bind everyone in one thread following the principle of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the world is a family).

"We (Indians) live for each other, not for ourselves. We believe that the world has made us and we have to give back to it. We look at the world with gratitude," he said.

Sharing an anecdote, he said, a Muslim intellectual from the country once went for Haj and was sent to jail on blasphemy charges for wearing a 'locket'. The then Foreign Minister, Sushma Swaraj, intervened and got him released within eight days, he said, apparently suggesting that everyone from India is considered a Hindu outside the country.

"...Because Bharatiya sanskriti (Indian culture) is also known as Hindu sanskriti, reflecting its values, ethos and

culture," he said.

The RSS chief also gave a call to make India a superpower.

Bhagwat said, "The aim of the Sangh is to unite Hindu society. The Swayamsevaks are dedicated to their aim. By feeling proud of the culture of our country we have to work to take the country to new heights. We have to make India a world 'Guru'."

It is time to make India a superpower, but not like other superpowers that misuse their influence."

Modi, Shah can't always help BJP win Assembly polls: RSS

RaGa likely to return as Cong prez in April

This comes after many leaders call for full-time party president

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rahul Gandhi is all set to be reback as the Congress chief in the party's plenary session in April. Rahul had quit the post following the Congress rout in the Lok Sabha polls last year.

Congress Working Committee (CWC) had appointed Sonia Gandhi as interim president of the party in August last year. But as the unwell Sonia had to skip the party's campaign in the recent Assembly polls, the calls for Rahul to head the party have become stronger.

The Congress on Thursday said Rahul was a clear choice for the party president's post. Party sources said Rahul was the only contender, hinting that elections in that case may not even be necessary.

"Rahul has acceptability across the country and also the capability to lead the party," said a senior Congress leader.

Several party leaders have called for the appointment of a full-time party president. On Thursday, former Union Minister Shashi Tharoor, who has been advocating elections



to the CWC, said, "I renew my appeal to CWC to hold leadership elections to energise workers and inspire voters."

"I was referring to my earlier call — eight months ago — for elections among the 10,000 party workers who constitute the 'AICC plus PCC delegates' list. These should be for the elected seats in the CWC as well as for the party presidency," said Tharoor.

Former MP Sandeep Dikshit has accused senior leaders of failing to find a new president because they are "scared who will bell the cat".

Reacting to the remarks, Tharoor tweeted, "What Sandeep Dikshit said openly is what dozens of party leaders from across the country are saying privately, including many with responsible positions in the party. I renew my appeal to CWC to hold leadership elections to energise

workers and inspire voters." Asked about the remarks made by Tharoor and Dikshit, Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said the CWC will decide on the Congress chief post.

"If anyone has any doubts about this, he should kindly read the resolution of the CWC before giving any statements in public," Surjewala said.

"Instead of giving statements on social media and interviews in the media, if Sandeep Dikshit works hard in his own constituency and politically encash the work initiated during Sheila Dikshit's rule, the Congress will emerge victorious. It is my appeal to every leader like Dikshit that instead of giving knowledge to the entire country, they should first show the benefits of their own work done in their constituencies," he said.

Continued on Page 4

CAPSULE

CONCERNS ADDRESSED ON TRUMP'S REMARKS: MEA
New Delhi: With US President Donald Trump claiming that India has not treated his country "very well" on the trade front, the Ministry of External Affairs said the context in which the remarks were made was balance of trade and there have been efforts to address the concerns.

'CHINA CAN'T OBJECT TO SHAH'S ARUNACHAL VISIT'
New Delhi: India on Thursday countered criticism from Beijing over Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to Arunachal Pradesh, asserting that it did not stand to reason and understanding to object to the visit of an Indian leader to a State of India. China had registered its objection to Amit Shah's visit to Arunachal Pradesh earlier in the day, claiming that India had violated territorial sovereignty and "sabotaged" political mutual trust with India.

'NO REASON WHY CENTRAL VISTA CAN'T BE REBUILT'
New Delhi: Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Thursday said Government infrastructure, including the North and South Blocks, was built more than a century ago and there is no reason why the Centre should not go for a new-look Central Vista aesthetically while preserving the heritage.

GERMANY KILLING: MERKEL SLAMS 'POISON' OF RACISM
Hanau: Chancellor Angela Merkel condemned the "poison" of racism on Thursday after a shooter with suspected far-right beliefs killed nine people at a shisha bar and a cafe in the German city of Hanau.

Nirbhaya convict tries mental trick to escape death

Vinay moves court, seeks treatment for 'schizophrenia'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In what could be termed as another attempt to buy more time and delay the hanging of the four death-row convicts of the Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case, Vinay Sharma, one of them, moved the court on Thursday and demanded better treatment for his "mental illness".

The court has sought response from the Tihar jail authorities on a plea by Vinay, who through his counsel sought remedy for his claimed mental illness, schizophrenia and the injuries suffered in his head and arms.

Additional Sessions Judge (ASJ) Dharmender Rana directed the prison authorities to file its reply on the plea of Vinay on Saturday.

"Vinay injured himself by banging his head on his cell wall in Tihar Jail. The incident happened in jail number 3 on Sunday afternoon and he got



some minor injuries and was treated inside the prison premises," said a prison official.

During the hearing, the prosecution opposed the plea saying it was not maintainable. Counsel for Vinay told the court that he was refusing to recognise people, including his mother.

The plea claimed that when Vinay's counsel visited him in the prison on the request of his family members, he found that he had sustained grievous head injury, fractures in his right arm with plaster and was suffering from insanity, mental illness and schizophrenia.

No light at end of Shaheen Bagh tunnel?

As protesters dig in heels, mediator says resolution needed otherwise SC will act

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The mediation attempt by Supreme Court-appointed interlocutors advocates Sanjay Hedge and Sadhana Ramchandran to persuade the Shaheen Bagh protesters to lift blockade of the Delhi-Noida main road remained futile for the second day on Thursday. The protesters patiently expressed their anguish but refused to budge from their Day 1 demand that they would end protest only after the CAA is repealed and proposed NRC is shelved.

After holding talks with the protesters, Hedge and Ramchandran left for the day. It is understood they are likely to visit the sit-in protest which has been going on since December 15 again on Friday to find an amicable solution to end the impasse.

Like Wednesday, Hedge and Ramchandran expressed their unwillingness to talk with protesters in the presence of the media. As Ramchandran started addressing the protesters surrounding the dais tried to suggest her on how to hold talks. It angered her, and she asked the media persons to leave the tent where the talks were to be resumed.

Ramchandran began addressing the protestors say-



Supreme Court appointed interlocutors — advocates Sanjay Hedge and Sadhana Ramchandran — during their visit to Shaheen Bagh in New Delhi on Thursday

ing, "Aapne bulaya, hum chale aaye (You called us and we are here)". Hedge said the SC has recognised their right to protest, but added "the rights of others have to be respected".

"When Shaheen Bagh has become an example of protests in India, let us set an example of a protest that does not disturb anybody. You all must be rest assured that we are here to fight for you. Don't think if you

change your spot, your fight will die down," Hedge said.

"We have seen many PMs come and go. Whoever comes in power and runs the country, sometimes some could be right and some could be wrong. Whatever you are saying the whole country and the PM are listening," he added.

Ramchandran said she is waiting for that day when the country's atmosphere will

change. Then an elderly man expressed his fear, "I am very scared... I am very scared for my children. Madam save me," he said. When Ramchandran asked him more about his fear, the man replied, "I am a single father. I will die but my children should get to live here fearlessly. My girls go to school where they are being told that you will go out of the country."

Continued on Page 4

Kejriwal to take Melania on happiness course tour

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is likely to take the US First Lady, Melania Trump, on a brief tour of a Government school to help her get a first-hand experience of the "happiness curriculum" introduced by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government, during her visit, along with US President Donald Trump, to Delhi on February 25.

The US First Lady is also expected to interact with students of the school.

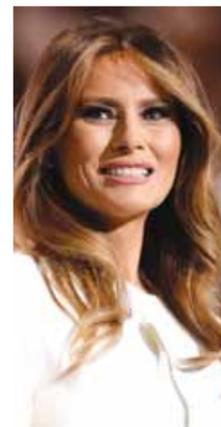
"Melania is likely to be welcomed by Kejriwal and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia," a Government official said.

Trump, accompanied by wife Melania and a high-level delegation, will arrive in Ahmedabad early on February 24 for a little less than 36-hour-long trip to India. From Ahmedabad, he will travel to Agra before arriving in the national Capital for the main leg of the visit.

A visit to heritage site in Agra — Taj Mahal — is also in the schedule.

Melania is to visit the school when President Trump will hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Delhi Government's "happiness curriculum" was introduced in Delhi Government schools two years ago with an aim to reduce stress



among schoolchildren. In 40 minutes of happiness class, meditation, relaxation techniques are imparted.

To joggers delight, Ashram to Naraina special corridor

GAYATHRI MANI ■ NEW DELHI

Jogging, cycling or long walk on the roads of the national Capital is fraught with risks as the sheer volume of traffic on the roads poses physical injury threat. In its bid to ensure safe

corridors for pedestrians, morning walkers and joggers, the Public Works Department (PWD) is going to create a separate and safe lane for the pedestrians and Non-Motorised Vehicles (NMVs) from Ashram to Naraina.

Part of the Delhi Government's dream project 'Street scaping, beautification and widening, the stretch will be completely redeveloped on the standards of American Road designs and architecture. The main agenda behind

Stretch to be redeveloped on lines of American Road designs, architecture

this project is to create a pedestrian-friendly road by making the people feel happy with green ambience and 'zero' traffic hurdles while traveling on these roads. The total estimated cost of the redevelopment plan for this stretch is Rs 75 crores, said a Government official.

"The stretch from Ashram to Naraina barring Moolchand to Moti Bagh will be redeveloped, beautified and widened. The stretch will be developed on American standards with an aim to provide a pedestrian-friendly as well as disabled-friendly road because if you see, most of the roads in the city are

not disabled friendly. Encroachment and narrow roads are also another issue on this stretch, which will also be cleared," added the official.

As per the official, the proposal was passed by the Government last year but the project could not start due to the imposition of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) of the Delhi Assembly elections. However, the work on the stretch has started and is expected to be completed by December 2020.

From AIIMS to Ashram is one of the identified and selected stretches from the 10 most



congested roads of Delhi. Currently on this stretch, the bus stops and pedestrian facilities such as FOBs and subways are also in un-designated places, for instance far from the bus stop or very close to ramp of the flyover, which becomes one of the main reasons for accidents.

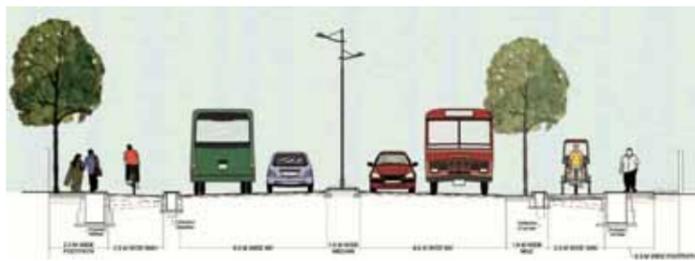
Moreover, due to the poor condition of the street, barrier-free movement becomes impossible," said the official.

"Thus, the PWD has decided to beautify and streetscape the roads by giving an aesthetic look and to provide maximum basic facilities to the road users as per the norms of United Traffic and Transportation Infrastructure (Planning and Engineering) (UTTPEEC) and pedestrians can walk, jog and cycle without any fear," said the official.

Under the street scaping and beautification of roads, the PWD will redesign and provide good infrastructure such as bus stops, separate

lane for pedestrians, stands for auto-rickshaws, cycles and e-rickshaws will be created.

The official further added that public toilets, drinking water points, police booths, separate parking for police and emergency vehicles would also be provided. It has been deemed necessary to provide basic amenities to the people and also ensure cleanliness on the stretches. Separate street vending zones, mohalla clinics, public canteens, maps, traffic signages, green carpeting and seating arrangements will also be developed. Once this project is completed, the outcome would be analysed and new such corridors would be developed in other parts of the city as well, the official said.



TRUMP'S REMARKS

Efforts made to address concerns: MEA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A day after US President Donald Trump said in Washington that India has not treated his country "very well," on issues of bilateral trade, the Ministry of External Affairs on Thursday said the context in which the remarks were made was balance of trade and there have been efforts to address the concerns.

Looking forward to his visit to India, Trump had said India has not treated his country "very well" on the trade front and indicated that a "very big" bilateral deal with New Delhi may not be signed before the American presidential election in November.

Trump, forcefully pursuing his 'America first' policy, has previously described India as a "tariff king" for imposing "tremendously high" tariffs on American products, also

DEAL DRAMA

◆ The US President's remarks came days ahead of his maiden two-day visit to India commencing February 24

◆ Looking forward to his visit to India, Trump had said India has not treated his country "very well" on the trade front and indicated that a "very big" bilateral deal with New Delhi may not be signed before the American presidential election in November

◆ Trump, forcefully pursuing his



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

expressed dissatisfaction over the US-India trade ties. "Well, we can have a trade deal with India, but I'm really saving the big deal for later on," Trump told reporters at the Joint Base Andrews outside Washington on Tuesday when asked whether he expects a trade deal with India before the visit.

Asked about his comments, the External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said here it is important to understand the context in which the remarks were made. The context was balance of trade and efforts have been made to address concerns, he said.

India is eagerly awaiting President Trump's visit and it will strengthen the bilateral global strategic ties, Kumar said. He also said "we don't want to create any artificial deadline" replying to question on when India-US trade deal will be signed.

On how many agreements will be signed during Trump's India visit, Kumar said around five MoUs were under discussion. Asked whether the issues relating to H1B visa will figure in Modi-Trump talks, Kumar said they could come up.

Trump will reach Ahmedabad on February 24 where a grand event - called "Namaste Trump" - to welcome him will "showcase India's rich and diverse culture that will have few parallels in India or elsewhere".

"US President Trump will land in Ahmedabad around noon, from there he will go to the Motera Stadium to address the 'Namaste Trump' event. The route from the airport to the stadium -- we expect a large

number of people will line-up," Ravish Kumar said.

Talking of the route from the Ahmedabad airport to the stadium, he said, "We expect a large number of people lined up along the route". So far, 28 stages have been set up which will represent various parts of the country, on which artists will be performing.

The roadshow will feature Mahatma Gandhi's life and the programme at the Motera Stadium would be like the "Howdy Modi" event, he said referring to the mega programme at Houston in US, where Trump had shared stage with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and addressed the assembled Indians.

The other stop on Trump's schedule is Agra and the last stop is New Delhi where Modi and Trump will hold talks on the entire range of bilateral issues including defence and trade. Incidentally, it will be the fifth meeting between Modi and Trump in the last eight months.

COMMISSION FOR WOMEN IN ARMY SC verdict gives clarity in moving forward: Naravane

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Days after the landmark Supreme Court judgment directing the Government to grant permanent commission and command postings to women officers, Army Chief MM Naravane on Thursday said his force has been championing gender equality and the apex court verdict has given the Army clarity to move forward.

In a momentous ruling on Monday, the apex court on Monday had called for a "change in mindsets" and directed that women officers of the Army, serving under Short Service Commission (SSC), be considered for grant of Permanent Commission, irrespective of tenure of service, and also for command posts in non-combat areas since "an absolute bar on women seeking criteria or command appointments would not comport with the guarantee of equality under Article 14."

Making the Army's stand clear, the Army Chief said here the Indian Army does not discriminate any soldier based on religion, caste, creed, or even gender. The outlook of the Indian Army has been through-out like this and "that is why we started inducting women officers as early as in 1993."

Outlining steps taken to induct women in the force, he said the Army has taken the initiative to induct women in rank and file, and the first batch of 100 women soldiers is undergoing training at Corps of Military Police Centre and School, he said.

Supreme Court's decision is a welcome one as it brings out a sense of clarity and purpose to gainfully employ officers for better efficiency of the organisation. I must assure that everybody in the Indian Army including women officers will

Army maintaining pressure on terror groups in J&K, says chief

Speaking on the situation in Jammu & Kashmir, Naravane said terror incidents have seen a downturn and the Army is maintaining pressure on terror groups.

There is an external dimension to the decrease in cross-border terrorism, he said, in oblique reference to the ongoing Financial Action Task Force (FATF) plenary. Pakistan may have to rethink strategy as even China realised they cannot back

their all-weather friend all the time, the Army chief said on the FATF plenary.

On the health condition of headline Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, the army chief only said security forces are geared up to take care of any situation. On the proposed creation of a theatre command exclusively for Jammu and Kashmir, he said there will be detailed discussions before anything is finalised.

New Army's headquarters to be ready in next 5 years

Regarding the new Thal Sena Bhawan to be built in the Delhi Cantonment, for which Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will lay the first stone on Friday morning, the Army Chief said the proposed

"Thal Sena Bhawan will bring all Army Headquarters offices under one roof thereby improving the working

efficiency, while reducing the carbon footprint and logistics requirements."

However, he clarified that the office of the Army Chief will not shift to the new building, and will continue to be close to wherever the Defence Minister's office is. The new Army Headquarters will be spread over 35 acres and will be built in five years.

be given equal opportunity to contribute to the nation as also progress in their careers," he said hailing the verdict as enabling. Naravane also said letters are being sent to women officers asking whether they will prefer permanent commission.

The court has given three months' time to the Government to implement its verdict and Naravane said a roadmap has been prepared for its implementation. He also said there is equal opportunity for everyone and there is no gender discrimination. "We

have drafted a plan" he stated. Same procedure for male Short Service Commission (SSC) officers will be followed for women to give permanent commission, the Army chief clarified adding "it will be same rule for everyone."

Observing that the judgement is for those who have crossed a certain point in their career in the Army, he said those rules for young officers will not be applied on them. In the next batch of women officers trained all these factors will be discussed, he stated.

INSHORT

SC TO HEAR KERALA'S PLEA ON AIRPORT

New Delhi: The Supreme Court said on Thursday it will hear next week the Kerala Government's appeal challenging the High Court verdict that dismissed its plea against the AAI decision granting rights to Adani group for operating and developing Thiruvananthapuram International Airport.

SC'S NO TO PLEA ON MINORITY STATUS

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Thursday refused to entertain a plea seeking to define the word 'minority' and laying of guidelines to accord minority status based on state-wise population of a particular community.

BAIL TO CHINMAYANAND: SC TO HEAR PLEA

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday said it would hear on February 24 the plea against the Allahabad High Court order granting bail to former BJP lawmaker Swami Chinmayanand in an alleged rape case lodged by a law student.

DEFAULT IN PAYMENTS: SC NOTICE TO MILL OWNERS

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday sought response from rice mill owners in Bihar who have defaulted in payment of more than ₹450 crore to the State exchequer.

MEA: Arunachal part of India, China's objection to Shah visit not reasonable

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As China on Thursday objected to Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to Arunachal Pradesh, saying the visit had violated its territorial sovereignty and "sabotaged" mutual trust with India, New Delhi asserted the eastern State is an integral part of the country. Moreover, objection to an Indian Minister's visit there does not stand to reason, it reiterated.

The Home Minister is in Arunachal Pradesh to attend functions related to the 34th Statehood Day of the north-eastern state and launched projects including industry and road infrastructure. China has always claimed the border State as part of south Tibet and routinely criticises the visit of any Indian official to the region.

Objecting to Shah's visit, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang said "China's position on the eastern sector of the China-India boundary, or the southern part of China's Tibet region, is consistent and clear."

Responding to a question about Shah's visit, the



Home Minister Amit Shah presides over the 34th Statehood Day celebrations of Arunachal Pradesh in Itanagar on Thursday. PIB

spokesperson said "the Chinese Government has never recognised the so-called 'Arunachal Pradesh' and is firmly opposed to the Indian politician's visit to the southern part of China's Tibet region as it violated China's territorial sovereignty, undermined stability of the border area, sabotaged political mutual trust, and violated relevant bilateral agreement," Geng. The official also said India should stop taking any action that may "further complicate the border issue."

Asked about China's objection to Shah's visit, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said here on Thursday India's consistent posi-

tion has been that the State is its integral and inalienable part. Objecting to visit to Arunachal by an Indian leader does not stand to reason, he said.

China last year too raised similar issue when Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited Arunachal Pradesh to take stock of the security situation in the frontier border region.

Earlier in 2019, customs authorities in a northeastern Chinese city had destroyed nearly 30,000 world maps showing Arunachal Pradesh as a part of India and Taiwan as a separate country.

CBI plea rejected against withdrawal of consent by Punjab to probe sacrilege cases

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed the CBI's plea challenging the Punjab and Haryana High Court order by which it had last year refused to interfere with the Punjab Government decision to take back all sacrilege cases from the Central probe agency. A Bench of Justices R F Nariman and S Ravindra Bhat dismissed the CBI's plea on the ground of delay.

"...Special Leave Petitions are dismissed on the ground of delay. However, the question of law is left open. Pending application stands disposed of," the Bench said. PTI

SC allows K'taka plea for implementation of Mahadayi Water Dispute tribunal's final award

New Delhi: The Supreme Court in its interim order on Thursday allowed the plea of the Karnataka Government for implementation of the final award by a tribunal for sharing of water between Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra from the Mahadayi river.

The interim order was passed by a Bench comprising Justice DY Chandrachud and

Justice Hemant Gupta after hearing the counsel from the three States. The Bench said the final hearing in the matter will take place in July.

It also said the interim order is subject to the final outcome of the petitions filed by the three States against the tribunal's award. PTI

SC questions issuance of death warrants by trial courts

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Thursday questioned the issuance of black warrants by trial courts for execution of death penalty even before the expiry of 60-day time period for filing of appeals in the apex court by the convicts. The top court's observation came during the hearing of an appeal, filed by death row convict Anil Surendra Singh Yadav, alleging that the black warrant was issued by a Gujarat sessions court just 33 days after his conviction was upheld by the high court. PTI

Ravidas Temple: Ex-MP seeks action against DDA, Delhi Govt

New Delhi: Former Congress MP Ashok Tanwar moved the Supreme Court on Thursday seeking contempt proceedings against the DDA and the Delhi Government for allegedly "wilfully and deliberately disobeying" its orders allowing construction of a permanent structure for the Guru Ravidas temple at Tughlaqabad. The temple was demolished by the DDA following the SC's August 9 last year direction which had observed that "serious breach" was committed by Guru Ravidas Jayanti Samaroh Samiti. PTI

No reason why Central Vista can't be rebuilt: Puri

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid concerns and criticisms, Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Thursday said that Government infrastructure, including the North and South Blocks, was built more than a century ago and there is no reason why the Centre should not go for a new-look Central Vista aesthetically while preserving the heritage.

Speaking at a function, Puri said that some people are talking about the Central Vista makeover without knowing what is happening. "Look every 100 years somebody has to take charge and decide what the city is going to look like. Delhi is in its present form...The current Delhi Governmental infrastructure (including



Rashtrapati Bhavan, North Block, South Block, were built in 1910s or 1920s," Puri added.

The questions are being raised by experts from various quarters that what is the need to do so and what's the objective and why it is being implemented. "We are paying thousands of crores of rent to house Government buildings. We have the land, so there is no reason why we can't do it in an architecturally, aesthetic way, preserve the heritage etc and create a New Delhi," he said.

Sources said that the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has received nearly 400 objections to the proposed change of land use for 101 acres in central Delhi for the Centre's ambitious Central Vista redevelopment project. The objections range from questioning the need for the project to its impact on environment and traffic. Some also stressed on the need to protect heritage and demanded a proper assessment before going ahead with the plan.

LokPATH (people for Appropriate Transformation of Habitat), a collective of urban development experts, which was formed recently, has flagged the lack of transparency in the process of land use change. The Indian Society of Landscape Architects (ISOLA) has called the project an "inappropriate planning decision". Many have questioned the need for the project and said it contradicts the provisions of the Master Plan of Delhi 2021.

The redevelopment of the Central Vista — the nation's power corridor in Delhi — envisages a triangular Parliament building next to the existing one, a common Central Secretariat for ministries and the revamping of the three-km-long Rajpath - from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate.

India's first coronavirus patient discharged from Kerala hospital

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With the discharge of a woman medico, who was country's first novel coronavirus patient being treated at the Government Medical College hospital in Kerala on Thursday, India may have become a pathogen-free country for now, but the pathogen continues to take its toll in neighbouring nations.

One more Indian aboard a quarantined cruise ship off Japan was tested positive for the novel coronavirus and shifted to hospital, taking the number of Indian nationals infected with the virus on the vessel to eight, the Indian embassy said on Thursday. China has reported 2,118 deaths while the overall confirmed cases has climbed to 74,576.

The Indian embassy said that a total of 138 Indians, including 132 crew and 6 passengers, were among

the 3,711 people on board the Diamond Princess cruise ship. In a tweet, the Indian embassy here said, "1 Indian crew who tested positive for #COVID19 among 79 new cases on #DiamondPrincess yesterday too has been shifted to hospital for treatment. All 8 Indians receiving treatment are responding well. Rest all Indians on-board are braving out the trying circumstances."

Earlier, seven Indians were tested positive for the COVID-19. The mission said that infected Indians were responding well to the treatment.

Many countries have banned arrivals from China while major airlines have suspended flights to the country. In India, national carrier Air India has announced that it is extending the suspension of its flights to the neighbouring country till June 30.

The discharge of the women



medico student marked the recovery of all three cases of infection in India reported from Kerala. Two other students — one from Alappuzha and another Kasaragod — had been discharged recently

after they too tested negative for the virus in fresh tests days after being infected by it.

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 coronavirus in that country.

Last month, the Air India had suspended its six weekly Delhi-Shanghai flights from January 31 to

ITBP honours staffers who served at its Delhi quarantine facility for coronavirus

The Indo Tibetan Border Police on Thursday honoured its doctors, paramedics, cooks and sanitation officials who served in a special quarantine centre set up here housing 406 people suspected to have been exposed to coronavirus, a spokesperson of the force said. "Thank you for what you did. The country and the force is proud of you," ITBP Director

General (DG) S S Deswal told the personnel after he held a special 'sainik sammelan' at the Chhawla camp of the force. Deswal gave away the top award of the force called the 'DG commendation disc' to 28 personnel, appreciation letters to three while 32 staffers were presented with cash rewards, ITBP spokesperson Vivek Kumar Pandey said.

February 14. However, it did not restart the flight operations from February 15 onwards.

The national carrier had also suspended its Delhi-Hong Kong flights due to the coronavirus epidemic that has killed more than 2,000 people in China till date.

"Flight operations on both routes — Delhi-Shanghai and Delhi-Hong Kong — have been suspended till June 30," an Air India spokesperson said on Thursday.

Earlier, IndiGo and SpiceJet had suspended their flight operations between India and China.

Paddy procurement on support price Concluding day too mark by farmers' demonstration

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Raising demand to extend the last day of procurement, farmers staged protests at several places across the state on the last day of paddy procurement at minimum support price.

Road blockade was also done by farmers at Chhira in Bemetara and in Kondagaon districts as well.

Notable, even on Wednesday farmers resorted to chakka jam at places like Bemetara, Marwahi, Kawardha, Kanker, Kondagaon and Surajpur. Upset over 'non-procurement' of their paddy they also set ablaze their crop at Surajpur to mark their protest.

Meanwhile, the Agriculture Minister, in a



statement, claimed that the demonstrations of farmers were sponsored and were instigated by opposition BJP. The minister also denied the allegation of cane charge on farmers and said the administration tried to pacify the agi-

tated farmers and that the allegation of cane charge was not true.

Regarding balance difference amount of ₹2500 from that of the paddy support price, the minister said a budgetary provision of ₹5000 crore

had been made.

A policy decision had been taken by the cabinet subcommittee regarding it and soon after arrival of the Chief Minister from his foreign tour the scheme would be given a name, he added.

'Record paddy procurement'

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

State government has claimed that the paddy procurement on support price this year was highest ever since inception of the separate state of Chhattisgarh.

A total of 83 LMT of paddy was purchased till Thursday evening and the procurement process will continue till late night, sources said. The procurement figure is thus expected to be 85 LMT,

they added.

A payment of 14,500 crore was being made till date to the bank accounts of farmers directly.

Previous year, the paddy procured was 80 LMT and the number of farmers increased this Kharif season was recorded to be 2.5 lakhs. In Kharif crop season 2018-19, 15.71 lakh registered farmers sold their produce while this year the number increased to 18.45 lakhs, sources informed.



BJP demands white paper on paddy procurement

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Raising several demands, including a white paper on paddy procurement, a delegation of Chhattisgarh BJP called on Governor Anusuya Uikey and submitted a memorandum on Thursday at Raj Bhawan.

The delegation demanded of the state government a white paper on paddy procurement.

The state government promised to procure each grain of farmers and hence, the BJP demanded that procurement duration be extended by 15 days and



token be provided to all farmers.

The delegation also demanded that those farmers who sustained injuries during cane charge

by police should be extended free medical treatment and adequate compensation be given to them.

The BJP delegation

further stated that all cases filed against the farmers should be withdrawn and a probe committee be constituted to fix responsibility and to bring to book those responsible for cane charging.

The other demands include providing two years of balance bonus to the farmers and no dues be issued so that they can avail loans in future. The paddy procurement target be raised to one crore metric tons of paddy and the cropping area forcefully left out to be added again, the delegation demanded.

The BJP in memorandum claimed that during

its rule in the state for 15 years, the procurement had been done smoothly and the amount was being transferred directly into farmer's account. The BJP government had procured up to 80 lakh MT of paddy without any chaos, it claimed. Even zero percent interest loans were being extended by the then government, it further claimed.

BJP alleged that Congress has failed to keep all the promises it had made before coming to power and created hurdles in procurement of paddy from the farmers at minimum support price.

Land allotment for food parks in progress at Jashpur

JASPUR: As per the announcement of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel to establish agro-based industries in the state, Jashpur district and business centre with the help of district administration has begun the process of identifying land and its allocation for establishment of food parks in each block.

As per information provided by general manager, Industries and Business C. R. Tekam, in Kunkuri block at Mayali 15 acres, in Duldula block at Patratoli 19 acres, Farsabahr 15 acres and in Pathalgaon block at Chiknipani 15 acres of land have been allocated to industries department. Thus, in four blocks around 64 acres of land have been allocated for establishment of food parks. The land for establishment of agro-based products will be allocated on priority basis in rebate.

Improve policing or face the music: DGP Awasthi

STAFF REPORTER ■ AMBIKAPUR

Expressing discontent over weak policing in Surguja region, Director General of Police DM Awasthi curtly told the police officers to improve the policing in the region or be ready to face the consequences.

The DGP chaired a review meeting during his Surguja tour where he told Inspector General of Police to hold monthly meetings of officers starting from district SPs to SDOs and review their works.

"In this duration responsibilities of every officer will be fixed and if their performances do not improve then negative comments could be made on their annual CR (Confidential Reports)," the DGP said.

He said that he will again review the policing situation in April. The DGP while sharing his experiences gave tips for



improving policing. He asked officers to improve the image of police among masses.

He also assured that very soon a proposal for setting permanent traffic thana will be sent to the state government.

Additional Director General of Police RK Vij who was also present in the meeting asked cops to keep eye on the quality of construction works going on for the police in Surguja region.

He informed that in past

two years 50 new police station/outpost buildings have been sanctioned.

"For improving the functioning of police stations and making it fast 300 desktops with printers will be made available at police stations. An investigation box will be also supplied to 50 percent police stations across the state," he said while adding that mobile data on CUG numbers used by cops will be also made free.

Menstrual hygiene awareness camp held

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Under Clean India Mission (Rural), women self-help groups are supplying sanitary napkins at low cost in girls hostels and ashrams to create awareness towards menstrual hygiene among women and teenage girls.

Sanitary napkin supply is turning out to be a better business opportunity for women in rural areas and has become a medium for their financial empowerment.

On World Menstrual Hygiene Day i.e. 28 May, National Rural Livelihood Mission had provided ₹1 lakh each to 10 women self-help groups of the district to procure high-quality biodegradable sanitary napkins at low cost. These sanitary napkins are being sold by women self-help groups

to women and teenage girls in villages.

The self-help groups are also creating awareness about menstrual hygiene and advantages of using sanitary napkins. This has resulted in significant decrease in number of cases of infections, uterus cancer and pregnancy related complications. Attendance of girl students in schools has also improved, as informed by the women of Gram Sangathan. Women and girls are also being made aware of the importance of using biodegradable and eco-friendly sanitary napkins and their safe disposal.

Inspired by the initiative, other self-help groups have also started procuring sanitary napkins at their own expense, to sell these in rural areas.

Seven persons killed in separate road accidents

STAFF REPORTER ■ JAGDALPUR/BALRAMPUR

Seven persons lost their lives in different road accidents that happened in Jagdalpur and Balrampur district of the state.

Four persons were killed and a few others injured when the tractor they were travelling in turned turtle in Bastar district on Thursday, police said.

The incident took place at Tirthum Square when the victims were returning from a market in Kodanar village, around 40 km away from Jagdalpur, Station House Officer (SHO) Kodanar, Khilleshwar Chandravanshi said.

As per preliminary investigations, four persons, including the tractor driver, were killed when

the vehicle overturned, he said.

Few others who sustained injuries are undergoing treatment at a local hospital, he added.

The deceased persons were identified as Joga Korami (45) a resident of Bodanar, Mungdi (17), Sanko (20), Bitay (35) all residents of Dilimli village, the official said, adding that further probe is underway.

Three killed as SUV rammmed into stationary truck

In separate mishap, three persons were killed while one sustained serious injuries after a SUV rammmed into a parked truck on Chando-Balrampur road near SP bungalow.

The deceased were identified as Vishnu Prajapati, Suraj Rajak and Rahul Rajak, police said.

The victims, all residents of Tangarmarhi and Purandih village of the district, had come to Amdand village for attending a wedding party, police informed.

"After attending the marriage party, they were on way back to home when the Mahindra Scorpio in which they were travelling rammmed into a road side stationary truck," a local police officers informed.

The impact of collision was so severe that two persons died on the spot while another lost his life on way to hospital. Two persons were seriously injured of which one has been referred to Raipur, he added.

Meanwhile, police have registered a case in this connection and are further investigating the incident, he said.

Govt plans to develop reading skills among primary students

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Reading ability is one of the most important aspects of quality education. The textbooks serve its purpose only when children understand what they read. Keeping this in view, School Education Department has formulated a scheme to develop reading ability in children.

Under this scheme, entire month of April will be dedicated to development of reading ability in children, so that they may learn to read and understand their lessons. For this, competitions will be organized from cluster

level to state level. Nearly 17 lakh children of primary schools across the state will be benefitted under the scheme.

School Education Department Principal Secretary Dr Alok Shukla has written a letter to all the district collectors informing them about the scheme, and has directed them to chalk out and submit the format for respective district within a week.

It was stated in the letter that evaluation work in all schools of primary-level should be completed by the month of March, so that April month can be dedicated to development of reading ability in students.

In the month of March, workshops will be organized at school-level in all the districts and reading material along with text books will be selected.

This material will be made available to primary schools and in libraries. Collectors have been directed to ensure that the reading material is enjoyable for students, games and activities should be planned to develop reading ability in children. Teacher learning material should be developed by making best out of waste. In every cluster, minimum of 100 games and TLMs should be enlisted, through which children may have fun

learning experience.

In the month of April, schools will dedicate entire day every day to teach reading to children. A team will be formed by collector to monitor this activity and every school will be inspected at least once by any of the officer. Collectors have been directed to prepare plan for monitoring system and share it with Principal Secretary School Education.

Towards the end of April month, reading competitions will be organized at cluster-level and mother of students will be the judge. Local public representatives have also been requested to be present in

these competitions.

The competition will serve as parents-teachers meeting. Winners of cluster-level competitions will participate in block-level reading competitions. And the winners of block-level competitions will participate in district-level competitions. Collectors have been asked to set time table for these activities.

On a fixed date in the month of May, state-level programme will be held, where children of all schools will read a lesson simultaneously. In this way, 17 lakh children in all the primary schools across the state will read simultaneously.

BoB holds symposium on International Mother Tongue Day

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

A symposium titled 'importance of mother tongue' was held here at regional office of Bank of Baroda (BoB) on Thursday on the occasion of International Mother Tongue Day.

At the outset, the Rajbhasha officers of the bank welcomed the distinguished guests and threw light on the objective of organising the mother tongue day.

Regional Head of the BoB Raipur Ranjeet Kumar Mandal, who presided over the function, appealed the staff to use their mother tongue as much as possible.



On this occasion staff of the bank expressed their views in their own mother tongues.

Monthly felicitation programme 'Rajbhasha Vaibhaw

Puraskar' was also held on this occasion and the winners were honoured for their contribution in promoting the official language.

India need to invest \$109 bn to halve road crash fatalities

Washington: India needs to invest an estimated extra USD 109 billion in road safety over the next decade to halve its crash fatalities, the World Bank said in a report released on a day when at least 35 people were killed in four separate accidents in the country.

The bank said such an investment will bring economic benefits equivalent annually to 3.7 per cent of the GDP.

The report titled "Delivering Road Safety in India" was released at the Third Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in Stockholm. It points to the high death rate on India's roads caused by chronic lack of investment in systemic, targeted, and sustained

road safety programmes and identifies relevant investment priorities to reverse the trend.

India has one of the highest rates of road crashes in the world. Every year, about 150,000 people lose their lives on India's roads, and more than five times that number are injured or maimed for life, the report said.

The national highways alone claim one life a year for every two kilometers. This is ten times higher than the developed country threshold. Road crashes also impact economic growth, costing the economy between 3 to 5 per cent of GDP a year, it said.

At least 20 people were killed and several injured seri-

ously when a bus collided with a container lorry near Tamil Nadu's Avinashi town in Tirupur district in the early hours on Thursday.

Six people were killed and seven injured when their car rammed into a stationary truck on Maharashtra's Chandrapur district on Thursday.

In another accident in Jammu and Kashmir, five members of a family were killed when their car rammed into a stationary truck on the Jammu - P a t h a n k o t Highway in Samba district on Thursday.

Four persons were killed when a tractor turned turtle in Chhattisgarh's Bastar district on Thursday.



Given the rising trajectory of crashes in India, the report calls the country's recent enactment of the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019 as an important step towards reducing road crash fatalities.

Part of a regional report, "Road Safety in South Asia: Opportunities for Shared Regional Initiatives," the World Bank in its report calls for regional initiatives to make roads and vehicles safer, even while making national-level actions a top priority.

"Years of rapid economic growth in South Asia, followed

by a steep rise in vehicle ownership have led to mounting traffic deaths and contributed to lost economic opportunities," said Hartwig Schafer, World Bank Vice President for South Asia.

"South Asia's road safety crisis is unacceptable but preventable. The good news is that South Asian countries recognise the urgent need to protect their people, save lives, and sustain their journey toward greater prosperity. We at the World Bank stand ready to support their efforts," said the World Bank official.

Towards this, the report suggests countries should collaborate on making regional trade corridors safer.

All categories of road users and vehicle types - animals, pedestrians, bicycles, rickshaws, motorcycles, motorized three-wheelers, cars, minibuses, buses, mini trucks, trucks, and agricultural vehicles - are represented in these corridors with narrow lanes, limited or no shoulders, and inadequate pedestrian facilities, it said.

According to the World Bank, the road safety conditions on these corridors mirror the nature and scale of conditions prevalent on national highways.

Crash data collected in a sample of highway sections across Nepal, India, and Bangladesh reveal alarming annual fatality rates ranging

from 0.3 to 3 deaths per kilometer, at a yearly average of 0.87 fatalities per kilometer.

"In India, 34.5 per cent of fatalities in 2016 resulted from crashes on the National Highways, which comprise only 1.79 per cent of the country's total road network," the report said.

"Historically, when countries reached motorisation levels of between 50-100 vehicles per 1,000 people, road crashes became one of the leading causes of death and injuries. Improving road safety was then recognised as a national development priority," said Arnab Bandyopadhyay, Lead Transport Specialist, World Bank. **PTI**

7 held in Dalit thrashing incident in Raj, protests in State Assembly

Jaipur: Seven people were arrested for beating and torturing two Dalit men in Rajasthan's Nagaur district, an incident that triggered protests in the state assembly and condemnation by political leaders on Thursday.

Apart from the seven arrested, seven others have been detained in this connection, police said.

DGP Bhupendra Singh said the Heinous Crime Monitoring Unit (HCMU) will monitor the case and it will be taken up under the case officer scheme for speedy investigation.

The police said IG Human Rights, Bipin Kumar Panday has been sent to Nagaur for a detailed investigation into the incident.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi earlier in the day termed the torture of the Dalits as "horrific and sickening" and asked his party government in the state to take immediate action to bring the perpetrators

to book.

"The recent video of two young Dalit men being brutally tortured in Nagaur, Rajasthan is horrific and sickening. I urge the state Government to take immediate action to bring the perpetrators of this shocking crime to justice," he tweeted.

According to the police, the incident took place on February 16 at a motorcycle service agency in Karanu village falling under Panchodi police station area. The staffers of the agency attacked the Dalits after accusing them of committing theft.

The brutal incident came to light after a video of the assault went viral. In the video, a group of men is seen thrashing two persons with rubber belts. They later torture one of the victims by pouring petrol on his private parts with a piece of cloth wrapped on a screwdriver.

"Seven people have been arrested after registering a case

against them under various sections of IPC and the SC/ST Act. A cross FIR has also been registered for stealing money. We are ascertaining how much money was stolen from the service agency counter. Further investigation in the matter is on," DSP Nagaur, Mukul Sharma said.

The police said section 308 of IPC (attempt to commit culpable homicide) has also been added in the FIR.

The arrested accused have been identified as Bhim Singh, Imaan Singh, Hanuman Singh, Raghuveer Singh, Chhail Singh, Chhatar Singh and Rehmatullah.

Meanwhile, three legislators of the opposition Rashtriya Loktantrik Party (RLP), holding placards, entered the Well of the House in protest against the incident.

When the Speaker asked them to return to their seats ahead of the budget speech, the legislators walked out of the House. **PTI**

Jamiat Ulema-I-Hind says NPR is big threat to Muslims

Mumbai: The Jamiat Ulema-I-Hind (JUIH) on Thursday opposed the upcoming National Population Register (NPR) exercise, saying it is a "big threat" to Muslims, who have been living in the country for centuries.

The NPR exercise will be carried out across the country along with the house listing phase of the Census 2021 from April 1 to September 30, 2020. It is mandatory for every usual resident of India to register in the NPR. The objective of the NPR is to create a comprehensive identity database of every usual resident in the country.

JUIH president Maulana Syed Arshad Madani said they do not have any problem with the NPR if it is conducted in a way that is similar to Census since 1951, but it has now acquired a different form and meaning.

Addressing a press confer-

ence at the Mumbai Marathi Patrakar Sangh here, Madani alleged the central government is engaging in "politics of hate" for the past few years.

"The world knows the government is sowing the seeds of hatred for the past eight years. We have a threat from the survey officer of that government as we will never get our rights," he said. Madani said the NPR-NRC project is part of the Central government's communal agenda to transform India into a Hindu nation.

"The NPR-NRC is part of a larger communal agenda to isolate and alienate Muslims and make India a Hindu nation. They want to polarise the society," he said. "When the Constitution guarantees equal rights to all citizens, irrespective of their religion, caste, language, region, the agenda behind the CAA-NRC-NPR is very clear," the JUIH chief said. **PTI**



Workers fix tiles near the fountains at Taj Mahal, ahead of US President Donald Trump's visit, in Agra on Thursday **PTI**

GOVERNMENT OF CHHATTISGARH, WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
KELO PROJECT SURVEY DIVISION RAIGARH
DISTT. - RAIGARH (C.G.)

e-Procurement Tender Notice
 eProcurement Portal: <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>
 (SECOND-CALL)

SYSTEM TENDER NO. 60778/ NOTICE INVITING TENDER NO. 06/SAC/2019-20 DATED: 18.02.2020
 Online Tenders are invited for the following works up to 05.03.2020 (17:30 hours IST).

System Tender No.	Group No.	Name of Work	Probable amount of contract
60778		CONSTRUCTION OF C.C LINING WITH EARTH WORK BETWEEN RD O M. TO RD 4590 M. OF JHARMUDA BRANCH CANAL OF KELO PROJECT.	Rs. 404.24 Lakhs

The details can be viewed & downloaded online directly from the Govt. of Chhattisgarh Integrated e-Procurement Portal (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>) from dated 25.02.2020 at 17:31 hours (IST) onwards.
Note : All eligible/interested contractors/bidders are mandated to get enrolled on the integrated e-procurement portal (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>) and get approval on specific vendor class from PWD under centralized contractor/supplier registration in order to download the tender documents and participate in the subsequent bidding process.

Executive Engineer
 Kelo Project Survey Division
 Raigarh (C.G.)

G- 77127/5 Ryp/Dtd 20.2.20

Edelweiss RETAIL FINANCE LIMITED
 Registered Office: Tower 3, Wing B, Kohnoor City Mall, Kohnoor City, Kiro Road, Kurla (W), Mumbai - 400070

APPENDIX IV POSSESSION NOTICE
 (for immovable property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Edelweiss Retail Finance Ltd (ERFL) 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, Demand Notice(s) issued by the Authorized Officer of the company to the Borrower(s) / Co Borrower(s) mentioned herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s) / Co Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of the Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement rules, 2002. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ERFL for an amount as mentioned herein under with interest thereon.

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s) (Loan Number)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Description of Secured Asset (Immovable Property)	Date of Possession
1.	(Loan No.: LRA15LE000037295/ Raipur Branch) M/s. Jainam Clothing Private Limited (Borrower) Mr. Mahendra Kocher (Co-Borrower) Mr. Abhay Kumar Jain (Co-Borrower)	11-12-2019 and Rs. 1,03,82,152.49/- (One Crore Three Lakhs Eighty Two Thousand One Hundred and Fifty Two and Paise Forty Nine Only)	All That Piece And Parcel Of Residential House Bearing No. E-98, Comprising Area 1,250 Sq. Ft Or 116.17 Sq. Mt. Comprised In Part Of Khasra No. 293/1, Situated At Raipur Vikas Pradhikaran (RDA), Under The Shalindra Nagar Scheme No. 027, Mauza - Tikrapara, Lt. Arvind Dicit Ward, Ward No. 47, Ph. No. 114, R.I.C. Raipur - 2, Tahsil & District, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492001; Boundary Details: North: 30 Ft. Road; East: House No. E-97; South: C- Type Plot Lines; West: House No. E-99	15.02.2020

Date: 21.02.2020
 Place: Raipur

Sd/-
 (Authorized Officer)
 Edelweiss Retail Finance Ltd

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE BASTAR, JAGDALPUR (C.G.)
 No.: SP/BTR/AC/Tender/E/ 559/2020 Jagdalpur, Dated: 17/2/2020

Short Time Tender Notice

Superintendent of Police Bastar on behalf of Governor of Chhattisgarh, invites sealed tenders for the following work from approved and eligible contractors of CPWD/PWD/RES/ HOUSING BOARD/MES/RAILWAY/ P&T who are registered as manufacturer for making Concertina Coil Fencing as per Ministry of Defence specification No. IND/ENGG/ PRO/1245 B or CQAE/5660/1602/a its connected drawing with Ministry of Defence Controllerate of Quality Assurance (Engineering Equipments)/DGS&D/NSIC and have executed work of Concertina Coil Fencing for at least 50.00 Lacs.

The offers will be received in the office of the Superintendent of Police Bastar up to 4.00 P.M. on Dated 27/02/2020 and will be open on dated 27/02/2020 at 5.00 P.M. Tender form will be issued till date 26/02/2020 up to 17.00 PM. (1) Time for work completion 20 Days after work order issue (2) Category of registration - D Class & Above.

Name of work	Location	Length	Cost of work	Earnest Money
Specification of Concertina Coil 1050 mm dia for Fencing Providing and Fixing of Fencing with punched tape concertina coils (PTCC) conforming to defence specification No. IND/ENGG/ PRO/1245 B or CQAE/5660/1602/a & its connected drawing and 1050 mm dia in close condition after stretching 10 mtr. dia should be 915 mm reinforced barbed tape (RBT) in pyramid shape i.e 3 tiers top at bottom and one at top the five rows of RPT to be fixed between angle 50x50x6 mm at a distance of 3.0 m centre to centre height 2.00 mt above ground level at different places i/c transportation and cost of all materials and labour etc complete.	STF Hub Bhatpal, Jagdalpur	1000 Mtr	17.00 Lacs	12750/-

Note:- 1. Cost of Tender form of each group will be 750/- Rs. (in shape in favour of superintendent of police bastar, on account head 0055, sub head 800 other receipt.)
 2. Tender related detail information from received from S.P. Office Jagdalpur on working day in working hours.

G- 77085/2 Ryp/Dtd 20.2.20

Superintendent of Police
 District Bastar

Religion teaches us harmony, not divide & rule policy: Mamata

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday said religions have taught India to live in harmony and not take recourse to divide and rule.

The spirit of harmony was preached by Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Guru Nanak, Lord Buddha, Gandhiji and Netaji and others, she said.

"They have said we love a united India and we don't divide each other. We have travelled with so many gods and goddesses. From the period of Renaissance to the freedom movement, our Hindu religion is universal," Banerjee said at a programme of the Bharat Sevashram Sangha.

"Hindu religion has taught us that we can't close our doors to others. It has taught us to greet everyone with open arms and also to show restraint and tolerance," she said.

The Trinamool Congress chief who had been severely critical of the Centre's move on citizenship said, "Our nation's welfare is our welfare. Our strength lies in unity in diversity."

Taking a jibe at the BJP, she said religion does not mean only loud sermons. It teaches men to honour women and sisters, the chief minister said.

In 2018, Banerjee said, she wanted to go to the US on the occasion of 125 years of Swami Vivekananda's historic speech at Chicago.

Magisterial probe: Police officials to be summoned for hearing

Mangaluru: Notices would be served on 176 police officers and staff to appear for hearing on the December 19 firing on anti-CAA protestors in the city, Udupi deputy commissioner G Jagadeesh, conducting the magisterial probe into the incident, said on Thursday.

Addressing reporters here, he said officials, including the city police commissioner PS Harsha, would be summoned to depose on the violence which led to police firing that killed two persons. Mangaluru

(north) assistant commissioner K U Bellappa, who is the nodal officer for the police department, has given a list of 176 policemen who are ready to adduce evidence in the hearing.

The police officers would be summoned in phases. The next hearing is on February 25.

He said so far, 203 members of the public have deposed before him on the incident.

Former city mayor K Ashraf, who is under treatment in hospital, has also provided a written statement.

The remaining members of the public can provide evidence during next hearings, he said. On December 19, two persons were killed in police firing as protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) turned violent here.

The protesters had attempted to besiege the Mangaluru north police station and tried to attack police personnel, following which force was used to disperse them, police had said. **PTI**

Vanvasi Raksha Parivar Foundation to organise Kumbh on February 23

New Delhi: The Vanvasi Raksha Parivar Foundation will organise 'Vanvasi Raksha Parivar Kumbh' at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, New Delhi on 23 February 2020, Sunday. In this, 11 states of the country and Delhi-NCR and surrounding metropolitan cities would be participating. Virendra Kumar, the organization's in-charge of the foundation, told reporters at Press Club of India, New Delhi, that under the Vanvasi Raksha Parivar Foundation single campaign, the religious identity of the forest dwellers settled in 4 lakh villages of the Vanvasi tribe and backward areas of the country, self-respect, is dedicated to reinforcing the spirit of self-reliance and nationalism. **PTI**

RaGa likely to return as Cong prez in April

From Page 1

Another man, while talking to the interlocutors, said, "I have a national flag on my bicycle. We love this country and stop calling us traitors."

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

The apex court also asked Hegde to "play a constructive role as an interlocutor" to persuade the protesters to move to an alternative site. It said the interlocutors could seek former bureaucrat

No light at end of Shaheen...

From Page 1

Wajahat Habibullah's assistance.

NAVA RAIPUR ATAL NAGAR VIKAS PRADHIKARAN
 Parvati Bhaban, North Block, Sector 19, Nava Raipur Atal Nagar- 492 002, Chhattisgarh
 Tel No: +91 771 2512000; Fax No: +91 771 2512400
 Website: www.navaripuratalnagar.com, <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>

E-Procurement short Tender Notice

The Chief Executive Officer, NRANVP invites item rate tender for the following works:
NIT No: 55/MISCRI-RYAB/EEC-IV/ENC/NRANVP/2019-20, Nava Raipur Atal Nagar, Dist, Raipur Dated: 19.02.2020

Name of Work: "Miscellaneous Civil & Interior Works in Rajya Yojna Aayog Bhaban, North Block, Sector 19 at Nava Raipur Atal Nagar, Dist Raipur (CG)".

Estimated cost: INR 48.62 Lakhs, EMD: INR 98,000/-, Period of Completion : 02 Months
Last Time & Date of Online Submission : 15:00hrs on 02.03.2020

The E-Procurement tender documents can be downloaded from the portal ([Website](http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in)) <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> directly and shall be submitted online on the same website only after making on payment of bid participation fees online.
Amendment in tender, if any, will only be uploaded on the website and shall not be published in any newspaper.

Samvad - 24621/3 **Engineer-in-Chief, NRANVP**

पावरग्रिड POWERGRID

NOTICE

1. Approval under CERC (Terms and Conditions of Tariff) Regulations 2019 for 2 Nos 765KV line bays at 765/400KV Indore Substation of POWERGRID (for Khandwa PS(TBCB)-Indore 765 KV D/C Line) & 240MVAR, 765KV Switchable Line Reactors along with 700 Ohms NGR at 765/400KV Indore Substation and of each of Khandwa Pool-Indore 765KV D/C line (line being implemented under TBCB) under "POWERGRID Works associated with Transmission System Strengthening in WR associated with Khargone TPS" in Western Region

2. The beneficiaries of the above mentioned Transmission system are: (a) Madhya Pradesh Power Management Corporation Ltd, (b) Electricity Department, Administration of Daman & Diu, Daman, (c) Gujarat Uja Vikas Nigam Ltd., Vadodara, (d) Electricity Department, Government of Goa, Panaji, (e) Electricity Department, Administration of Dadra Nagar Haveli, Silvassa, (f) Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd., Mumbai, (g) Chhattisgarh State Electricity Board, Raipur, (h) Madhya Pradesh Audyogik Kandra Vikas Nigam (Indore) Ltd, Indore (i) NTPC, Delhi (j) KHARGONE TRANSMISSION LIMITED, (STERLITE GRID LIMITED).

3. Tariff details:
 Authority which approved capital cost: Board of Directors of POWERGRID

Asset (Proposed DOCC-01.08.2019)	Apporionated approved cost on (₹ Cr)	Est. Capital DOCC	Tariff for 2019-24 Tariff Block				
			2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Asset 1	9722.40	7288.27	999.68	1563.89	1564.38	1533.83	1503.33

4. A copy of the application made for determination of tariff is posted on the website of the applicant at www.powergridindia.com. 5. The suggestions and objections, if any, on the proposals for determination of tariff contained in the application to be filed by any person, including the beneficiary before the Secretary, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, 3 & 4th Floor, Chandrablok Building, Jansath, New Delhi - 110 021 (or other address where the office of the Commission is situated), with a copy to the applicant at the address of its corporate office within 30 days of publication of this notice.

Place: GURGAON Sd/-
 Date: 20.02.2020 Dy. General Manager (Commercial)

POWER GRID CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED
 (A Government of India Enterprise)
 Corp. Office: "Saudamini", Plot No. 2, Sector-29, Gurgaon-122001, (Haryana) Tel.: 0124-2571700-719
 Reg. Office: B-9, Qutab Institutional Area, Kharwa Sarai, New Delhi-110016, Tel: 011-26580112, 26580121
 Website: www.powergridindia.com, CN: L40101DL1989G0138121

A Maharashtra PSU

Priyanka for RS?

The Cong is hoping that the gambit of putting her in a Central role will hold out some hope of reviving the party



There may be a host of recommendations for the Congress to revive itself and capitalise on its pan-India matrix as a cohesive Opposition force. But there's nobody to accept them. There may be umpteen calls to restore inner-party democracy by holding organisational elections and choosing capable leaders and its president based on cadre choices. But there's nobody to "bell the cat" as one of its own self-deprecating leaders said. There may be articulate and activist young leaders, who have sought to shine their light

for a 2.0 recast but have been fobbed off by old hawks who fear their irrelevance, even if that applies to holding on to the crumbs of a fast disintegrating party. There may be seasoned leaders with wise words of wisdom that run in different directions, justifying them as inner party democratic dialogues although the world sees them as terrible infighting. There's the old matriarch, who is still keeping it together, the Gandhi tag the party's brand adhesive that's as scapegoating for party leaders in failure as grandstanding in success. But Sonia Gandhi doesn't know how to pass it on to her offspring. Reconciling some issues and the generational divide, infusing fresh breath energy with his band of followers was son Rahul, reluctant yet stubborn, a cocktail that's more impulsive than explosive. Then there is Priyanka Gandhi, the more willing and capable scion with some strike capabilities, who could have been the galvaniser had not her *brahmastra* potential been wasted by benching her. So the Congress is tempted to play its last family card to mend the party by assigning her a Central role now rather than waiting for the next round of parliamentary elections. As 51 Rajya Sabha seats will be falling vacant in April, of which eight are from the three party-ruled States, there's a growing clamour to elect her to the Rajya Sabha.

Can this reset the Congress' narrative indeed? On the face of it, she has not been able to sway the Lok Sabha verdict even though she was made party general-secretary in charge of eastern Uttar Pradesh (UP). In fact, the Gandhis lost the home bastion of Amethi, too. Beyond some crowd-pleasing speeches, dramatic optics with the boatmen of Varanasi and campaign colour, Priyanka was compromised by an organisational matrix that had been floundering in the face of the BJP's phalanx. She herself admitted as much. And although she is probably the only politician other than Modi who can produce a mass resonance, she has two handicaps — the people's rejection of the politics of entitlement and a disconnect with the grassroots. Which is why one must credit her with not abandoning UP even after the Lok Sabha debacle while her brother chose exile. She worked the ground unlike her brother, who chose to be a disembodied conscience. She has been taking up the cudgels on behalf of the dispossessed tribals in Sonbhadra, praying with Dalits and has been visiting the anti-citizenship law protesters at the receiving end of police brutality. She has also been articulating her positions on national issues rather vociferously on social media. There is a rooted realism to her brother's exalted escapism, one that is now translating into huge crowd turnouts at her roadshow to the utter discomfort of caste-based parties, Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). Not only has she lived down her tag, her political sensibilities are primed and she has based herself in Lucknow with diligence of purpose. But the real problem is how she negotiates the tricky territory between her and Rahul camp followers and obviates criticism that by getting elected to the Rajya Sabha, the Gandhis would ensure family representation in each House and were just living out their timelines as legislators. But Priyanka could make herself heard that much more nationally as a parliamentarian and counter the BJP's oratory and propaganda. Comparisons are being drawn about how her grandmother Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister in 1966 as a Rajya Sabha member. However, the context was different as Indira had the Congress as the dominant political party ruling in most States and at the Centre. That position has been wrested by the BJP today, leaving Priyanka with virtually no enablers. She has a classic glass cliff situation; she could emerge in her own right if she manages to bring the Congress out of the ventilator or she could be condemned for inefficiencies if she fails. Besides, she has a better connect with and a sensibility to deal with both senior and junior leaders, who are claiming fiefdoms of importance and fighting each other, be it Milind Deora, Ajay Maken, Pawan Khera, Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Kamal Nath or Jyotiraditya Scindia. She could still be the balancer and end the confusion at least. But how would she avoid her Achilles' heel, businessman-husband Robert Vadra, who is entangled in vigilance probes? If she manages the political dissociation from personal, perhaps she could still get the party back on keel.

Tesla's second coming

The company announces it is working on improved EV batteries to reduce 'range anxiety' among drivers



South Africa-born entrepreneur Elon Musk is a polarising figure. His late night tweets are analysed by venture capitalists and tech journalists as much as that of US President Donald Trump's morning tweets, which are examined by diplomats and political journalists alike. It would not thus be incorrect to argue that Musk has become one of the most important human beings in the world alongside Trump. That's because his automotive venture, Tesla Motors, which makes Electric Vehicles (EVs), is now valued at \$100 billion, more than the entirety of India's automotive sector combined and even more than that of Volkswagen AG, the German automotive colossus. Only Japanese carmaker Toyota is worth more by quite a bit. But Tesla Motors, named after the famed Serbian inventor Nikola Tesla, who promoted the alternating current system, is now miles ahead of the rest of the global automotive industry as it pivots towards an electric future. It is not only taking a lead with its readily available products but dominates the software world, too, with its autonomous driving system.

Musk and Tesla are also leading the charge when it comes to battery technology. The company is now developing batteries that can ensure an electric car can travel almost 600 km on a single charge. It will make for the longest journeys possible on a single charge, diluting "range anxiety" that is still the single-most quoted reason for people not to buy electric vehicles at this time. Yet, while Tesla solves problems for the first world, India is still miles away from adopting an electric future, with infrastructure and manufacturing far behind the curve. That said, the few electric cars that have been launched in our country right now are promising and have decent enough range for daily commuting, if not long-distance travel. With Musk bemoaning high Customs duties for imported cars, Tesla Motors is yet to come to India. It would be wise for the Government to keep a lower degree at least initially on electric cars to promote their usage going forward.

The war on rationality

Shutting down N-power plants only to replace them with coal burning is the height of illogic. Nobody is as crazy as the Germans and the Japanese



GWYNNE DYER

Germany and Japan are finally winning a war together. Unfortunately, it is the "war on rationality". Coal, as everybody knows, is by far the most damaging source of energy we use, in terms of both the harm to human beings and the impact on the climate. It's twice as bad as natural gas and dozens of times worse than solar or nuclear or wind power. Yet both Germany and Japan have been building a lot of new coal-fired power stations. But why are they still betting on coal?

Would it upset you if I said it's because they are, despite their apparent sophistication, superstitious peasants at heart? Well, go ahead and get upset. Germany still gets more than a third of its energy from burning coal and most of it is ultra-polluting lignite or "brown" coal. Solar, wind, geo-thermal and hydropower generation provide just 17 per cent of the country's electricity needs. If most of Germany's 17 nuclear powers had not been shut down after 2012 (the last are scheduled to close within two years), then at least half the coal would not have been needed.

There had been an active anti-nuclear power movement in Germany for some time but what triggered the 2012 decision to shut the entire sector down was the Fukushima disaster of the previous year. I am deliberately avoiding the words "calamity", "disaster" and "catastrophe" because while the Fukushima tsunami killed 19,000 people, the subsequent problem with the four nuclear reactors on the coast killed nobody. Yet, the German people, or at least a large number of German anti-nuclear activists, insisted that any nuclear reactor anywhere was a mortal danger and the Government agreed to shut all nuclear plants down. The country pulled a 180 and decided to embark on ending its use of nuclear power entirely.

The same thing happened in Japan. The Japanese planners were foolish to put four reactors on the coast in a region where earthquakes and consequent tsunamis were to be expected from time to time. What needs to be condemned is the decision of the planners and not nuclear power. Nevertheless, all 50 Japanese nuclear reactors, which accounted for 30 per cent of the country's electrical power, were immediately shut down.

The Japanese are not as blindly dogmatic as the Germans: Two of those nuclear plants reopened in 2015 and seven more resurfaced recently. A further 17 are in the lengthy process of restart approval. So by 2030, the Japanese Government hopes to be getting 20 per cent of its electricity from nuclear power again. But that's only half the amount of



nuclear power that Japan originally planned to make available by 2030. The gap between 20 per cent and the planned 40 per cent of the country's energy needs will be made up by burning coal.

Japan recently announced that it plans to build 22 new coal-burning power plants in the next five years. Its Government has argued that these coal plants use ultra-supercritical boilers that are vastly more energy-efficient and pollute less per unit of energy. But these plants still emit greenhouse gases and are a non-starter for activists who want the world to zero out carbon emissions.

This is deeply irresponsible behaviour and the worst thing is that the decision-makers know it. They are just deferring to public opinion, which in this instance is entirely wrong. The "superstitious peasants" should really be frightened of global warming, for which coal-burning is a major driver, not of relatively harmless nuclear power.

That's not to say that nuclear power is the solution to all our problems, or even most of them. It is generally

OTHER COUNTRIES CAN BE IDIOTIC, TOO. DUE TO AN ADMINISTRATIVE GLITCH, CHINESE PROVINCES ARE CURRENTLY BUILDING HUNDREDS OF UNNECESSARY COAL-FIRED POWER STATIONS THAT MAY NEVER BE USED SINCE THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EXPECTS THE COUNTRY'S COAL USE TO PEAK THIS YEAR

the most expensive option because it costs so much to build the reactors and the associated controls and safety devices. Indeed, nuclear is no longer cost-competitive with other "clean" sources of power like wind and solar.

So there is a case for not building any more nuclear power stations, at least in regions and countries that have ample resources in terms of sun and wind. But there is no case for shutting down existing nuclear stations and burning more coal to make up the difference. That is so stupid, it verges on the criminal.

Other countries can be idiotic, too. Due to an administrative glitch, Chinese provinces are currently building hundreds of unnecessary coal-fired power stations that may never be used, since the Central Government expects the country's coal use to peak this year — and most existing Chinese coal plants already sit idle more than half of the time.

China is using coal power financing as a key element of its Belt and Road Initiative to expand its economic and political influence throughout Asia and Africa. Both Japan

and China are now racing to secure lucrative construction contracts in developing countries to expand their strategic reach.

At least China is also building nuclear plants as fast as it can. Last year, it accounted for more than half the world's output of solar panels. (On the other hand, it is providing work for the Chinese construction industry by building a planned 300 coal-fired power stations in other countries, presumably on the unspoken assumption that carbon dioxide emissions elsewhere won't affect China's climate.)

But nobody is as crazy as the Germans and the Japanese, who have been shutting down nuclear plants and replacing them with coal-fired plants. France will close its last coal-fired station in 2022 and Britain will do the same in 2025. But Germany says 2038 and Japan just says "eventually." That's far too late: By then the die will be cast and the world will be committed to more than 2°C of warming.

(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work'.)

SOUNDBITE

Problems of radicalism, environment and the belief that one is right while the rest are wrong are the basic issues disturbing the peace in the world.



RSS chief — Mohan Bhagwat

It is hypocritical that only female actors are accused of going under the knife or getting botox when male actors do the same. Why point fingers at women?



Actor — Raveena Tandon

In all fairness, the Chinese have slowed down. It is India that is an even bigger problem but it is an enormous problem. Nobody is doing anything about it.



US presidential aspirant — Michael Bloomberg

China has realised that it cannot back its all-weather friend all the time. If FATF comes down heavily on them (Pakistan), it may have to do a rethink on rhetoric and activities.



Army Chief — General MM Naravane

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Threat of extinction

Sir — The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) operates with four levels of language endangerment between "safe" (not endangered) and "extinct" (no living speakers), based on inter-generational transfer. At a time when nations are talking about the decline of languages, India still ranks one among those countries that have the largest number of living languages. But it is depressing that our country has also earned the dubious distinction of being one with the most number of endangered languages in the world. India has reportedly lost one-fifth of its languages in the past five decades.

It's not surprising that those languages that are at risk are the ones spoken by marginal tribes. Mother tongue languages, too, rank at the bottom. When there's no education in the mother tongue, children drop out when they go to high school. The best way to conserve a language is to create livelihood opportunities for those who speak it.

Dimpay Bhatia
New Delhi

Speak up to save languages

The mother tongue forms the very basis of "identity" of an individual or a community. Every effort must be made to build strong foundations at the formative stage to preserve languages. To stress the importance of mother tongue in one's life, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) declared February 21 as the International Mother Language Day to celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism. However, it's disturbing that India is not doing enough to preserve its rich native languages. In the 1961 census report, a total of 1,652 mother tongues were mentioned. The 1971 census mentioned only 108 languages. Further, a 2017 study, carried out by the Bhasha Research and Publication Centre, titled *People's Linguistic Survey of India*, arrived at the conclusion that the country had lost at least 300 languages since Independence. It predicted that at least 400 Indian languages were at the risk of dying over the next 50 years. The extinction of hundreds of languages indicates the loss of culture, too.

The importance of languages must be realised. They permeate every facet of our lives and form the very basis of our civilisation. They play a significant role in creating and strengthening bonds among people. Preserving



and protecting our cultural heritage is the constitutional duty of the citizens. Social scientists and concerned authorities, too, must rise to the occasion and rescue dying languages and cultures to keep heterogeneity and spirit of "equality of all languages" alive. The protection and promotion of languages is the responsibility of both the citizens and the Government. The best way is to constantly use them. A start can be made at schools by making mother tongue the medium of instruction for children.

Kajal Chatterjee
Kolkata

Welcome move

Sir — It wasn't surprising that a special court pulled up the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for not conducting a lie

detector or psychological test on its former Special Director, Rakesh Asthana, in an alleged bribery case. But it was happy that Special CBI Judge Sanjeev Aggarwal has asked the probe agency to submit the case diary

for examination. It also enquired about the previous investigating officer, Ajay Kumar Bassi, who was taken off the case and had been transferred to Port Blair after the then agency Chief, Alok Kumar Verma, was shunt-

ed out. People are fully aware that Asthana is the blue-eyed boy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. How can one forget that in 2002, the then Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani had introduced Asthana to the then Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi?

Back then, he was heading the probe on the Godhra train burning case and had sent the State into an unprecedented carnage and helped Modi to get clean chit from the Supreme Court appointed-SIT, headed by R Raghavan.

To clear the matter, Special Judge Aggarwal has directed the initial investigating officer in the case, Ajay Kumar Bassi, to appear before it on February 28. Hope the case diary clears the role of Asthana and Prime Minister Modi's much hyped *na khaunga, na khane dunga* mantra and simultaneously, the skeleton of the country's highest probe agency's alleged wrongdoing.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee
Faridabad

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

We must come up Trumps

Leaders of both nations have to look at meaningful and time-bound solutions to address each other's concerns on emerging trade issues



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

In the run up to President Donald Trump's maiden visit to India, a bunch of eye-catching, US Secret Service men have started fanning out in locations which the leader is expected to visit. Make no mistake, that's not the only spectacle India will witness for the next week or so. "Namaste Trump" formerly "Kemcho Trump", promises to be a grander display of abundance and strategic friendship than "Howdy Modi" in Houston. Trump has already made statements on being "Number one" on Facebook, ahead of Modi, and expressed elation over the millions and millions of people who are expected to greet him in India.

Meanwhile, thousands of eyes would be scanning for inches or miles moved in the crucial Indo-US strategic partnership corridor. Trump is keen for India to open up its markets further for US goods and services and act as a key balancing partner in the region that is facing threats of dominance from China. Pushing his "America first" policy, Trump has been chipping away at any preferential treatment to India, specially in the field of trade. A few days ago, he declared India with a national average income of \$2,000 and, therefore, an approximate \$3 trillion economy as "developed" at par with China. He thereby justified taking India off any list of a preferential trade policy. Perhaps in the same breath a US-based think tank *World Population Review* has ranked India as the fifth-largest economy, overtaking the UK and France. While it may have led to celebrations in some quarters, many look at this development under the bleak prospect of a meaningful trade deal.

India's key ask from the US at this stage is a reinstatement of the Generalised System of Preferences (GSPs) programme which will allow it to export nearly \$6 billion worth of goods to the US under nearly zero tariffs. While it may be less than 10 per cent of India's overall exports to the US, it is a sticking point. Several trade watchers and policy analysts have indicated that the US is pushing for an increase of nearly \$5-\$6 billion in additional trade value of goods. Hopeful of a deal, nearly \$3.5 billion defence agreements between India and the US are ready to be signed when Trump visits India. These include nearly 30 armed helicopters meant for naval operations, a key tool in the strategic Indian Ocean where China has been seen flexing its maritime muscles. Whether a sale of weapons and military copters will be seen within the broad contours of Indo-US trade, will be a complex question to answer.

That leaves — fraught with screaming lobbies on both sides — high attention agricultural produce and medical equipment sectors. In the run-up to the visit, reports have surfaced of India's willingness to allow low tariff import of some frozen meat products, along with berries and nuts. Conditional import of dairy products with strict compliance to the vegetarian nature of the produce, could also be made. Limited concessions on medical devices' price caps imposed in the post-GSP era, can also be brought to the table.

However, right now chances of a restricted or "mini" trade deal are also looking like a distant possibility. US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, who was supposed to be in India at least a week before Trump to give final contours to the deal, has given it a pass, substituting it with hectic video conference calls with his Indian counterpart Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal. It is unclear if the duo would be able to strike a lighting deal in under a week to come up with cracking billion figure hopes.

Many point at previous last-minute dashes for making major announcements, sometimes literally minutes ahead of crucial leadership meetings. Take the example of US support to India's permanent seat at the UN Security Council, a decision which was taken "15 minutes" ahead of then President Barack Obama's address to the Indian Parliament. This gives rise to hopes of a fig leaf trade deal pending since the "Howdy Modi" event in Houston last year being accomplished during the "Namaste Trump" extravaganza.

This deal or no deal, from what we gather, still leaves an impactful chunk of digital trade between India and the US. Trade in services between the two nations — large portions of it digitally-aided — remains a key area of negotiation. US companies have raised concerns with Indian counterparts and the Government on the restrictive nature of tariffs and non-tariff barriers which limit the access of US tech firms to India. For instance, the upcoming Data Protection Bill has text additions which suggest compulsory data localisation and sharing of non-personal data with the Government. These are seen as growth and innovation barriers in a connected, seamless, shared digital economy of two great democracies. Technology collaboration by removing tariff and non-tariff barriers, specifically in the technology segment, could be great lever of strategic and public policy partnership for both countries. One clear area to work together is looking at developing protocols beyond fifth generation or 5G followed by communications. India and the US can be natural partners in the new digital trade world. Rhetoric and spectacle aside, leaders of both nations have to look at meaningful and time-bound solutions to address each other's concerns on emerging trade issues while ensuring prosperity for local markets.

(The writer is Country Manager, India, ITC Council)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

ALL WHO WORK AS BRAND AMBASSADORS ARE AT A RISK OF BEING FRAMED BY THIS (MODI) GOVT. TAPAS WAS THE THIRD VICTIM OF THIS VENDETTA POLITICS.

—BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER
MAMATA BANERJEE



MAMATA, TOO, FOLLOWED A SIMILAR VENDETTA POLITICS IN BENGAL AND PUT HUNDREDS OF OPPOSITION WORKERS IN JAIL.

—CONGRESS LEADER
ADHIR CHOWDHURY

No country for women

Govt apathy and hopelessness have led many farm widows to take their lives. Just how many more suicides will it take for the State to take action?



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

Mudapu Yadamma, 38, is from Mallareddipalli village in Nalgonda district, Telangana. Two years ago, her husband, a farmer, committed suicide by consuming pesticide and left her with a debt of ₹3.5 lakh. Kamatham Lakshmidevi, 31, is from Danduripalli village in Ananthapur district of Andhra Pradesh. She, too, was left with a debt of ₹8 lakh after her husband, also a farmer, killed himself two years ago.

Vidya More, 38, is from Maharashtra. When her husband ended his life in 2012, his suicide was declared not eligible (as a farm suicide) thereby denying her the right to ex-gratia compensation.

They may live in different States but the fate of farm widows across the country is worryingly similar. Not only do farm widows suddenly become invisible to the State, they are ostracised by their families and are left to fend for themselves, especially when they are hounded to repay the debts taken by their farmer husbands. Latest statistics released by the Government show that 11,379 farmers killed themselves in India in 2016. In other words, there were 948 suicides every month or 31 growers committed suicide daily. One big reason for this was mounting debts. While the inability to pay back loans can be attributed to several reasons, including failed crops, the agrarian crisis and the unavailability of alternative opportunities for earning a livelihood, the burden of repaying the debts has fallen on their widows.

At present, there is no programme or policy that frees these farm widows from debts incurred by their husbands. The harrying by banks or moneylenders begins almost immediately after the husband's death, leaving hardly any time for the widow to mourn her spouse.

The need to survive and look after her children pushes her to earn a living. But studies have shown that the woman farmer often adopts the same kind of farming as the deceased husband. She also resorts to the same practice of chemical-intensive and external-input-driven farming requiring investments and borrowing. But with women farmers not seen as credit-worthy and access to Government schemes and credit being limited, the situation can be so hopeless and dire that women farmers are often forced to take the same path as their husbands and end their lives. Women accounted for 8.6 per cent of farmer suicides in the country.

A prime cause has been the inadequate efforts by the Government to prevent farmer suicides coupled with insufficient and lopsided support to families affected by them, according to the Mahila Kisan Adhikar Manch (MAKAAM), an informal forum comprising 120 organisations of women farmers and civil society groups in 24 States working to secure rights of women growers.

Recent consultations on the "Status of Women Farmers in Farm Suicide Families" held by MAKAAM and UN Women also revealed that the lack of recognition by the Government of the deaths as farm suicides in many cases further exacerbated the conditions of the marginalised widows as the State refused to extend any support to them.

Korra Shanthi is one such victim of State apathy. A resident of Nalgonda district, Telangana, Shanthi and her husband were engaged in cul-

“ LACK OF RECOGNITION IS A MAJOR HURDLE IN THE RELIEF AND REHABILITATION OF WIDOWS AND THEIR FAMILIES. THIS IS ACCORDING TO A MAKAAM STUDY ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN FARM SUICIDE-AFFECTED FAMILIES IN THE SIX STATES OF MAHARASHTRA, KARNATAKA, TELANGANA, ANDHRA PRADESH, TAMIL NADU AND PUNJAB ”



ivation on leased land. When her husband ended his life in 2018, Shanthi was left with a debt of ₹6 lakh. Although she applied for ex-gratia payment with the help of local activists, she has not received any money yet. Shanthi has been told that she is unlikely to receive it because her husband did not own any land in his name, making her ineligible for ex-gratia payment.

Since several State Government rules specify that only land owners and land title holders are considered as farmers while extending support to the suicide-affected family, those toiling on leased land fall through the cracks. With land ownership being the main criteria, tenant farmers and women farmers, especially farm widows who do not have land in their names, are not recognised as real farmers. Further, farmers who have borrowed from moneylenders also don't get counted as eligible or genuine cases and their widows and families are denied compensation. "This is one of the biggest problems in Punjab," contends 40-year-old Veerpal Kaur. A resident of Mansa district, Punjab, Kaur has witnessed the despair that led to her husband, father and father-in-law ending their lives. But their families were not considered eligible although the suicides were due to farm distress.

Lack of recognition is a major hurdle in the relief and rehabilitation of widows and their families. This is according to a MAKAAM study on the status of women in farm suicide-affected families in six States of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Punjab. One of the important findings was that in Maharashtra, Punjab and Karnataka,

only those farmers who had institutional debt were considered as genuine and eligible for support, not those who ended their lives due to pressure from money-lenders.

Moreover, there was a wide variation in the relief and rehabilitation package given by these six States. The study showed that the criteria used to determine "farm suicides" were different across States and even within the relevant agencies like the police, agriculture and revenue departments.

According to MAKAAM's Seema Kulkarni, even in the States where compensation was being paid, it was not uniform. "While Andhra Pradesh provides a compensation of ₹7 lakh for each family, in Maharashtra, which has the largest number of farm suicides in the country, this is only ₹2 lakh. In the case of Telangana, although its policy states a compensation of ₹6 lakh, hardly any payment had been made since subsuming farm suicide cases into the Farmer Insurance scheme called Rythu Beema Padhakam", says Kulkarni.

Of all the States, only Andhra Pradesh had a one-time settlement mechanism, (used in certain cases), to settle all outstanding institutional as well as private loans within ₹1 lakh to liberate woman from never-ending debt. However, its use was limited.

The study also found that only Karnataka had a policy to support education of children from farm suicide families, including reimbursement of fee of those studying in private institutions. "However, even here, the implementation was poor and lacked coordination between different agencies, states", Ashalatha Satyam of Rythu Swarajya

Vedika, a MAKAAM partner. She points out that such a policy does not exist in other States. This is why many widows in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh had to pull out their children from schools. Although the Maharashtra Government had announced a support package related to education fee, nothing has been finalised so far.

In cases where land is in the name of the husband, wives have the opportunity to eke out a living once they are able to get it transferred in their name. But even here it is usually a long and uphill battle as relatives don't want to give her the rightful share in the property. Lack of land ownership has forced most of the women to either become labourers or seek other means of employment, often at the cost of their safety. So, Mudapu Yadamma is dependent on wage labour to keep her three children in school since her in-laws are not prepared to give her a share in the family land. Kamatham Lakshmidevi, too, was denied her share in the family land cultivated by her husband and does any work that helps her earn a living. Vidya More has taken up sewing and wage labour to make ends meet. But all this isn't enough to repay the huge debts incurred by their husbands.

They are not the only ones struggling for survival and their rights. Hundreds of farm widows have fallen off the Government's radar. Government apathy and hopelessness have led many to take their lives. This is not unknown to the political masters. Then what is the Government waiting for? Just how many more suicides will it take for it to take action?

(The writer is a senior journalist)

Strive to preserve your identity

Maintaining and retaining the languages of ethnic and cultural groups is critical for the preservation of cultural heritage and identity. Using one's mother tongue at home is part of this exercise



MJ WARSI

To promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and bolster social and multilingual identity, the International Mother Tongue Day is celebrated every year on this day (February 21).

Mother tongue refers to a person's native language, that is, a language learned from birth. The first International Mother Tongue Day was observed in 1990 after the declaration by the United Nations (UN) to recognise the sacrifices of people who lost their lives for the sake of their mother tongue in Bangladesh.

Language is one of the most precious gifts that we have and each tongue represents a unique and distinct cultural heritage. Language is a

means of communicating values, beliefs and customs and has an important social function as it fosters feelings of group identity and solidarity. It is the means by which culture, traditions and shared values may be conveyed and preserved.

About 50 per cent of the world's out-of-school children live in communities where the medium of instruction is different from the language used at home. This is perhaps one of the most astounding facts about second language education. Schools have tried to tackle the problem by going to the families of these children for assistance in helping students gain confidence in the use of the second language. They ask the parents to use the second language at home so that the students become more comfortable with it and are able to cope with it in school. This does more harm than good for reasons other than that of a second language being much harder to learn regardless of copious levels of effort put in to achieve fluency.

In developing areas, usually there aren't resources enough to prepare

students at this level, so the efforts made by the parents and the students are futile in that sense.

This second language education also causes a rift between families and their native languages in a wholly unnecessary way. Families feel alienated from their mother tongue simply because the school gives the impression that they should feel this way. By propagating this attitude, these education systems are essentially destroying diverse cultures and backgrounds that make our species so great.

The different languages and dialects spoken throughout the globe reflect how history and culture have shaped the way in which people speak, think and reflect. Our mother tongue helps to link new generations to the past, which is part of our cultural and plurilingual heritage. It is a well-known fact that everyone had a language that they grew up speaking and a good proportion of the world spoke more than one tongue. However, the idea that someone would regularly have to be taught in a language that wasn't

native to them had never occurred previously. "This was, undoubtedly, exacerbated by the fact that I never made significant strides towards becoming fluent in another language. The closest I had ever come was a working proficiency in Spanish during my junior year of high school. When I think back on my perspective on this subject in the context of my parents, their accents never bothered me because I had just always been so used to them", says a 21-year-old former student Tej, who is pursuing higher studies at Washington University in St Louis, USA.

Leanne Hinton, a Professor of linguistics at the University of California in Berkeley, says in *Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education*, "More broadly, the loss of language is part of the loss of whole cultures and knowledge systems, including philosophical systems, oral literary and musical traditions, environmental knowledge systems, medical knowledge and important cultural practices and artistic skills. The world stands to lose an impor-

tant part of the sum of human knowledge whenever a language stops being used. Just as the human species is putting itself in danger through the destruction of species diversity, so might we be in danger from the destruction of the diversity of knowledge systems".

These problems are hard to fix. If one were to approach educators and tell them to fix the issue, they would undoubtedly point to a lack of resources. Nevertheless, an effort must be made by educators to have respect for the mother tongue of their students, even if it is different from their own.

The beauty of academic education is that the majority of it comes from books that can be more easily produced in areas with greater resources. It is for the educators in these parts of the world — who are multilingual — to produce orthographical and instructional materials for use in developing areas. Given the resource crisis in the developing world, this is likely to be one of the most practical solutions. Children in developing areas have the

thirst for knowledge, we must do what we can to satiate it.

Language is the essence and identity of culture and is a major tool of communication and for exchange of ideas and emotions. To know your language is the simplest and most important way to keep and preserve your culture. In recent times, the idea of linguistic and cultural awareness has increased; thus allowing the mother tongue to be more culturally accepted.

It is clear, that we must strive to reform the systems that educate the youth, in order to further the quality of learning in the first language or mother tongue and to inspire solidarity based on understanding, tolerance and dialogue.

Maintaining and retaining the languages of ethnic and cultural groups is critical for the preservation of cultural heritage and identity. Using one's mother tongue at home will make it easier for speakers to be more comfortable with their own linguistic and cultural identity.

(The writer is Chairperson, Department of Linguistics, AMU)



FOREIGN EYE



GENERATING JOBS NEED OF THE HOUR

Is there any sign that Boris Johnson understands that monetary policy has failed and there needs to be fiscal intervention to bolster demand for jobs? Not much. Just increasing the fiscal deficit won't help. However, most of the cash flows via tax cuts to the richest, who do not spend it. Johnson promises infrastructure spending in Labour areas that voted Tory. The economic returns from this won't materialise for a decade — not in time to impress anyone who voted for the Tories. (The Guardian editorial)

20 die in in TN bus tragedy, survivors shell-shocked

Chennai: A road crash in Tamil Nadu early Thursday left 20 dead and 28 injured as a lorry collided with their bus reducing it to a mangled heap. Police said the accident occurred on the Salem-Kochi highway at Avinashi in Tirupur around 4 am as the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) bus was proceeding to Ernakulam from Bengaluru. Tirupur is located about 450 km from here.

Most of the passengers were asleep when the lorry crashed into the bus. The lorry driver, Ernakulam native Hemaraj, was arrested later.

The tiles-laden container lorry's tyre burst and it entered the wrong lane colliding with the bus, reducing the vehicle to a mangled heap, police said.

The 20, including six women, died at the scene while the injured were admitted to hospitals in Tirupur and some referred to Coimbatore, police said.

Palakkad Superintendent of Police Siva Vikram said "It was a high speed collision. The container lorry went out of

control." The accident came as a shock to many in the state since one of such a magnitude had not happened in Tamil Nadu in the recent past.

There were 48 passengers on board the bus.

The lorry suffered a tyre burst before colliding with the KSRTC bus, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami said in the State Assembly, adding, all the victims were Keralites.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit, Palaniswami, and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan consoled the deaths.

"Extremely anguished by the bus accident...In this hour of grief, my thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved families. I hope those who are injured recover at the earliest," the PM's Office said in a tweet quoting Modi.

Though reports initially suggested the bus was proceeding towards Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala, officials later clarified its destination was Ernakulam. Palaniswami said he has



Onlookers gather near the mangled remains of a Kerala State Road Transport Corporation bus which collided with a container lorry, in Tirupur district on Thursday

asked the Tirupur administration to coordinate with their Palakkad counterparts, to expedite activities including sending the bodies of the deceased to Kerala.

Further, 23 people were seriously injured and were undergoing treatment while

five others sustained simple injuries and were proceeding to Kerala, he said.

"I have directed the Tirupur collector and police officials there to set up a help centre to assist the relatives of the victims and also expedite the process of sending the

bodies of the deceased by contacting Kerala officials," he said.

In Thiruvananthapuram, Vijayan deputed his cabinet colleagues—Transport Minister AK Saseendran and Agriculture Minister VS Sunilkumar, to Tirupur to

coordinate relief operations, his office said.

The Kerala delegation later arrived in Tirupur.

Saseendran, Sunilkumar, Palakkad MP VK Sreekandan, and Alathur MP Ramya Haridas besides MLAs from Kerala are camping at Tirupur.

"The State Government will provide a compensation of ₹10 lakh to the bereaved families, ₹two lakh will be given within a week. The rest of the amount will be given following the procedures," Saseendran said.

"The families of the KSRTC employees will be given ₹30 lakh each under the insurance scheme," he added.

The State Government has also declared that it will take care of the medical expenses of the injured passengers.

The Health department has sent ambulances to Tirupur to bring back the bodies. The accident left the survivors shell-shocked.

Karishma, on her way to Ernakulam, said she was seated on the left side of the bus and was sleeping when the accident occurred.

"When I woke up suddenly, I saw many people running around and the injured being taken in ambulances," the woman told the media.

Alan, also from Kerala, said he was still finding it difficult to overcome the shock.

"I have sustained a minor injury on my leg. But my friend is injured on the nose and I am taking him to hospital," he said.

Jemin George, an injured

passenger, said he suffered a cut on his lips and an injury to his forehead that required 10 stitches.

"I do not know what exactly happened. I was sleeping in a seat behind the driver's seat," he said, adding, he was referred to a hospital in Coimbatore.

A weeping woman passenger alleged the container lorry was overloaded and there were not many vehicles on the road.

6 pilgrims from Nepal killed

Salem/Chennai: Six pilgrims from Nepal, including two women, were killed and 24 others injured in a road accident near Salem on Thursday, police said.

The accident happened on the Salem-Bengaluru highway after a bus rammed the minibus the pilgrims were travelling in when its driver tried to swerve to the right near Omalur in the district, police said.

Chief Minister K Palaniswami consoled the death of the six pilgrims and

said the accident happened in the early hours of Thursday when they were proceeding to Rajasthan from Kaniyakumari.

Speaking in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, he said that the accident happened around 1 AM. Six Nepalis including two women travelling in the bus were killed," he said and expressed his condolences.

The injured have been admitted to hospital, he said, adding he has directed the Salem Collector to ensure they received the best medical treatment. **PTI**

Didi Govt to provide Z-plus security to Prashant Kishore

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal is mulling enhanced security for election strategist Prashant Kishore, sources in the State Government said adding already the security directorate has reviewed his security status and submitted its recommendations before the Government.

Accordingly, Kishore who has reportedly been hired by the ruling Trinamool Congress to chalk out its strategy road map ahead of the 2021 Assembly elections is likely to get 'Z' category security cover which is provided among others former Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, senior Ministers like Partho Chatterjee, Firhad Hakim, Suvendu Adhikary, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly and another 5-6 persons.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and his nephew and MP Abhishek Banerjee gets 'Z

Plus' security cover.

The security personnel will be drawn from the trained officers of Kolkata Police and Bengal Police, sources said adding the decision to provide security cover to Kishore was taken following a meeting of the security directorate officials.

Significantly the meeting took place following two developments. First, Kishore's expulsion from the Jantadal United Party of Nitish Kumar and second his decision to launch 'Baat Bihar Ki'.

"A meeting was called where his security was reviewed and its upgradation was recommended to the State Government," sources said. However officials in Kishore's election management company said they did not have any information about the new security proposals.

Bengal has seen a lot of political murders over the past one decade or so. One such vic-

tim of recent escalated political hostilities was a Trinamool Congress MLA from Nadia.

Satyajit Biswas Krishanganj MLA was murdered near house in Nadia. Local BJP MP who was named among 43 others was recently grilled for four hours by the State CID regarding his alleged role in the murder.

With TMC's position improving since the losses it suffered in last year's Parliamentary elections—when the party conceded 18 out of 42 seats to the BJP —thanks Kishore's reported strategic manipulations the Bengal ruling party wants him secured at any cost, experts said.

One of the major reflections of Kishore's successes with the TMC was a remarkable comeback staged by the Trinamool in the recently held Assembly elections to three seats in which the BJP suffered humiliating defeat.

Mamata writes to Modi about 'steady reduction' of funds

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, expressing concern over 'steady reduction' of central funds to the State and 'inordinate delay' in their release.

The BJP called the letter a "political ploy to befoul people" ahead of civic polls in the state.

In her letter, Banerjee asserted that despite the decline in central funds the state's GSDP grew by 10.4 per cent against the national GDP growth of 5 per cent in 2019-20. "I write to you with deep concern regarding steady reduction of central funds to the state and also inordinate delay in release of funds to us from the Government of India," Banerjee wrote.

She said the state is yet to receive its share of central

funds totalling ₹50,000 crore till January, 2020.

This "extraordinary situation" is creating major difficulties in meeting obligations for the welfare of the state, she said.

The letter said, "You will, no doubt, appreciate that both the central and the State Governments are expected to fulfil the constitutional obligations and the commitments to the people, so that respective governments run smoothly... However West Bengal is being deprived of the huge outstanding dues."

Banerjee said West Bengal's index of industrial production (IIP) in April-November 2019-20 stood at 3.1 per cent against the national figure of 0.6 per cent, while growth of the services sector at 16.4 per cent was much higher than the national number of 6.9 percent. **PTI**

Class 9 boy threatens 'Pulwama-like attack' in school, detained in UP

Bareilly (UP): A class nine student has been detained by the police here for allegedly threatening to blow up his school building in a 'Pulwama-like attack' if he was not paid ₹2 lakh as extortion amount, an official said on Thursday.

Senior SP Shailendra Pandey said the boy, who also works as a newspaper hawker, has been sent to a reform home.

The principal of the school had complained to police that someone dropped a letter at his house on Friday threatening to blow it up and also the school building. On Tuesday, the accused student handed him a letter carrying the "Pulwama-like attack" threat, the police officer said.

On receiving the complaint, a case under relevant sections of the IPC was registered and the boy was questioned.

After changing his statement frequently, he confessed to have written the letter to make easy money, the police said. **PTI**

PHE workers extend strike by 72 hours across Jammu

PTI ■ JAMMU

The Public Health Engineering (PHE) workers on Thursday extended their ongoing strike by 72 hours in support of various demands including release of pending wages and regularisation of services.

The PHE workers had begun their strike on February 7. The stir has led to a drinking water crisis in most parts of the Jammu region.

"We have decided to extend the ongoing strike by 72 hours and if the Government failed to address our issues, we have no option but to hit the roads," a leader of the protesters said. Police on Wednesday foiled an attempt by thousands of PHE workers to stage a rally from the office of the chief engineer to the Raj Bhavan here.

"After the end of the 72-hour deadline, over 22,000 workers from across the Jammu region will gather here and come on the roads to press for their genuine demands," the leader said. He said the wages of the workers are pending for the last 65 months, while they have served the department for over two decades with a hope that their services will get regularised one day.

"We have only got assurances from time and again and therefore, we will not budge till our demands are met...With or without Article 370, our fate remains the same and our families are suffering due to the failure of the Government to address our issues," he said.

Question papers of Manipur Class 11 board exams leaked

Imphal: The Manipur State education board cancelled the class 11 final exams after question papers of at least five subjects were leaked, a senior official said on Thursday.

Question papers of Physics, Chemistry, Maths, Biology and Manipuri were leaked, Council of Higher Secondary Education Manipur (COHSEM) secretary Ch Biren Singh told PTI.

The final examinations, which began on February 17, of all streams of class 11 have been cancelled as "concrete evidence regarding the leakage" was found, COHSEM chairman L Mahendra said.

The council has instructed principals of all the affiliated schools to return the question papers "in their original forms as collected" by February 24, he added.

Mahendra assured stern action against those found responsible and said the principals who do not comply with the council's direction will be considered as individuals responsible for the leakage.

"Authorities of private institutions found guilty will have their affiliation cancelled," he said, adding that the council will announce new dates for the exams soon. **PTI**

Mizo accord beacon of hope for lasting peace, says Guv

Aizawl: Mizoram

MIZORAM STATEHOOD DAY

since attaining statehood PS Sreedharan Pillai hailed the Mizo Peace Accord, signed in 1986, as a beacon of hope for enduring peace as the north-eastern state celebrated its 34th statehood day on Thursday.

Pillai, while addressing a programme here on the occasion, said, "The signing of the historic Mizo Peace Accord on June 30, 1986 remains a beacon of hope for the world that peace can be attained and sustained if the people and leaders choose it over violence."

Mizoram became the 23rd state of India in 1987 after the Mizo National Front (MNF) signed the peace accord with the Centre, ending a two-decade-long insurgency.

Before attaining statehood, Mizoram was union territory. Observing that Mizoram's endeavour

been to attain self-reliance, Pillai urged the state government and denizens not to solely rely on central funding.

"Mizoram is abundantly blessed with resources in horticulture, handloom, handicrafts, human resource and tourism sectors, which we need to tap. It is our duty to provide a congenial socio-economic setting where our youth can flourish with pride," he said.

He called upon the state government to work towards achieving a welfare state. Pillai said the Centre has allocated 10 per cent of the Union budget for the development of the Northeast.

He also urged the churches and the NGOs to help the State Government in combating AIDS and cancer. Several programmes were held across the State on the occasion. **PTI**



A boatman waits near his 'shikara' for tourists at Dal Lake in Srinagar on Thursday

CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT

Woman raises pro-Pak slogans in Bengaluru

Bengaluru: Leaving the organisers of an Event to protest against the CAA, NRC and NRP here red-faced, a young woman on Thursday raised 'Pakistan Zindabad' slogan in the presence of AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi, who denounced her action and asserted "we are for India".

The woman, identified as Amulya, asked people to shout with her 'Pakistan Zindabad' after the organisers of the event under the banner of 'Save Constitution' invited her to address the gathering soon after Owaisi came on the stage.

Soon Owaisi rushed to snatch the mike from her hands and was joined by others who tried to remove her from the stage.

But the woman was adamant and raised the slogan again repeatedly.

Later, the police stepped in and removed her from the dais.

JD(S) corporator Imran Pasha claimed she was planted by some rival group to disrupt the event

Owaisi then addressed the gathering, saying he did not agree with the woman.

"Neither me nor my party has any link with her. We denounce her. The organisers should not have invited her here. If I knew this, I would not have come here. We are for India and we no way support our enemy nation Pakistan. Our entire drive is to save India," the AIMIM MP said.

JD(S) corporator Imran Pasha claimed she was planted by some rival group to disrupt the event. The woman, he said, was not in the list of speakers and demanded that the police investigate the matter seriously. **PTI**

TN: Protest site turns marriage venue for Muslim couple

Coimbatore: A Muslim couple entered into wedlock amid protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act here by over 1,000 people, including women, on Thursday.

The ceremony took place under a canopy erected at the protest venue at Aathupalam and was witnessed by the protesters, who have been on a sit-in since Wednesday seeking withdrawal of the CAA, proposed National Register of Citizens and National Population Register.

The marriage was solemnised by an Imam, with the bride Reshma and groom Abdul Kalam exchanging vows amid slogans against the new law.

Family members and those present at the venue blessed the couple.

A Muslim couple, holding an anti-CAA placard, got married at the venue of the ongoing protest against CAA in Chennai on Monday. **PTI**

Darapuri, Sadaf Jafar to challenge UP Govt's recovery notices in court

Lucknow: Social activists S R Darapuri and Sadaf Jafar said Thursday they intend to move court against the Uttar Pradesh Government's recovery notices on them for damage to public property during anti-CAA protests here last year.

They stated they have not yet received any official communication seeking recovery, but a senior Government official said the notices have been issued to 28 people including them.

Darapuri told PTI on Thursday, "I am hearing news that I've been issued recovery notices by the district administration, though I have not received any such notice till now. I will challenge it in the High Court if I get any."

Social activist Jafar, who is also a Congress leader, said if she receives any recovery notice she too will move court. "The State Government is sending recovery notices unconstitutionally to

people. There is no proof against me of inciting violence but instead of arresting antisocial elements, they arrested and tortured me," she said.

She was arrested on December 19 in connection with the violence.

Lucknow Additional District Magistrate (East) KP Singh had on Monday issued recovery notices to 28 people stating that they have to deposit Rs 63 lakh by March 20, otherwise action will be taken against them.

Besides Darapuri and Sadaf, the notice also names Mohammad Shoab of Rihai Manch, and social activists Robin Verma, Deepak Kabir, Pawan Rao Ambekar, among others. Darapuri, a retired IPS officer, was accused of instigating violence during the anti-CAA protest in the state capital on December 19 last year. He was arrested on December 20, but later granted bail. **PTI**

AMU students take out protest march against UP CM's remarks

PTI ■ ALIGARH (UP)

Students of the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) took out a protest march under the banner of Students' Coordination Committee here on Thursday against Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, accusing him of shielding the State police from allegations of brutalities.

"The Chief Minister is deliberately twisting facts to falsely implicate students and thus, shielding the police from allegations of brutalities," committee spokesperson Faizul Hasan said.

Hasan, a former president of the AMU Students' Union, said, "Either the Chief Minister has been grossly misinformed or he is deliberately trying to frame those who were protesting against the

Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA)."

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

Wrapping up the discussion on the governor's address in the State Assembly, he said the role of the police in dealing with rioters during the anti-CAA protests should be appreciated.

Meanwhile, in a statement, AMU Employees' Union president Professor Ramesh Rawat described Adityanath's remarks that 15,000 students of the university had attempted to indulge in arson on December 15 last year as "false and fabricated".

Nirogi Rajasthan, wealthy farmer top priorities for Raj Govt: Gehlot

Jaipur: The Rajasthan Budget is based on seven resolutions, including Nirogi Rajasthan and efforts are being made so that development is not interrupted in the State despite various challenges, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said on Thursday.

Presenting the Budget for FY2020-21 in the Rajasthan Assembly, Gehlot referred to the public welfare measures in the last Budget, and said that his Government has tried to present a concrete action plan in this Budget also.

He levied no new tax proposals and announced to fill 53,151 new vacancies. He also announced rebate of ₹130 crore in different kinds of taxes.

This is the second Budget of the Congress Government,

which came to power in the state in December 2018.

"For us the entire Rajasthan is like a family. For this family, I want to make seven resolutions as priorities of this Budget," Gehlot said.

These resolutions are healthy Rajasthan, prosperous farmers, welfare of women, children and elderly, capable labourers, youth-students, education, water power and roads, skills and technology, he added.

Chief Minister Gehlot who also holds finance portfolio said the Central government's revenue has reduced due to its wrong economic policies and Rajasthan is also suffering due to this.

He said that state's share in the central taxes has been



keeping in mind the views and suggestions of farmers, cattle rearers, women, students, youth, industrial and business organisations and civil society," Gehlot said.

He said, it is important to present the true picture of the economic situation of the country before giving details of far-reaching steps that are likely to be taken in the coming year by the state government to achieve the overall development of the state.

"The reason for mentioning the financial position of the states in our federal system depends on the policies and decisions of the Centre to a large extent and noted that today most economic indicators indicate that the country's economic condition has derailed.

"We have made efforts to make it an inclusive budget by

omy indicate that the country's economy is currently going through a bad phase," he said.

The World Bank, IMF and ADB have slashed growth rate projections. According to the Economic Survey 2019-20 India's GDP growth rate is estimated to be 5 per cent, he added.

The Chief Minister said the Central Government raises funds in many ways such as by taking money from the Reserve Bank, disinvesting in Air India and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), reducing the stake in LIC whereas the states have no such option. He said that despite these challenges, we have tried that the road to development in this budget is not obstructed.

Opposition dubs it routine, directionless

Jaipur: The Opposition BJP on Thursday criticised the Budget presented by the Congress-led Rajasthan Government, saying it was a 'routine budget' and an "example of poor financial management".

The BJP also said the budget failed to fulfil the expectations of the people of the state.

Leader of Opposition in Rajasthan Assembly, Gulab Chand Kataria said the Ashok Gehlot-led government has burdened electricity consumers with ₹12,000 crore annually by increasing the power tariff. He added that the state had come into surplus in terms of revenue receipts in the previous dispensation led by the BJP.

"Power companies are reeling under losses. They have put an annual burden of ₹12,000 crore on people by increasing power tariff. There is no relief to people in the budget. We are not able to see any development in the budget," Kataria said at a press conference.

The Congress government had recently announced the power tariff hike of 11.21 per cent.

Replying to a question on decreasing state share in tax collection from the Centre, Kataria said the State share in GST has increased concurrent with the income of the Centre.

He claimed the State Government was earning ₹21,000 crore through value-added tax (VAT), the highest in any state of the country, and despite that there was no word about development in the budget.

Rajasthan BJP president Satish Poonia said it was a routine Budget of the routine government and did not fulfil the expectations of the people of the State. They will blame the Centre and will also expect from the Centre. It is an example of their poor financial management. The Budget does not seem to be fulfilling the expectation of the people of the state.

Uddhav to meet Modi in Delhi today

Sena describes it as 'courtesy call'

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Friday, in what is being described by the Shiv Sena as a 'courtesy call'.

Though Uddhav had met Modi briefly on December 6 during the latter's visit to Pune to attend a national conference of directors general and inspectors general of police, Friday's will be — for all practical purposes — the first formal meeting between the two leaders, after the Shiv Sena snapped ties with the BJP and formed a government in Maharashtra in alliance with the NCP and Congress November 28.

Confirming Uddhav's scheduled meeting with Modi

Nagpur grants bail to Devendra Fadnavis

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A Nagpur court on Thursday granted bail to Maharashtra's former Chief Minister and leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly Devendra Fadnavis in a case seeking criminal proceedings against him non-disclosure of criminal cases registered against him in his 2014 election affidavit.

Fadnavis, who had been granted exemption from personal appearance on four previous occasions, finally appeared before Chief Metropolitan Magistrate PS Ingle amid tight security, and sought bail in the case.

After recording Fadnavis' appearance before the court, the CJM granted him bail on a personal bond of ₹15,000.

Fadnavis had been given

last chance to appear before the court on Thursday. While granting bail to Fadnavis, the CJM observed: "The presence of the accused (Fadnavis) is secured. The offences are bailable. There is no apprehension of him absconding. Hence, bail is granted".

The court was hearing an application filed by advocate Satish Uke, seeking criminal proceedings to be initiated against Fadnavis for alleged non-disclosure of criminal cases registered against him in his election affidavit in the 2014 Assembly elections.

The court, while granting bail, directed Fadnavis to remain present at the next hearing and also as when directed by the court in the matter. The court has scheduled the next hearing for March 30.

Earlier, advocate Satish Uke

POLL AFFIDAVIT CASE

opposed Fadnavis' bail application on grounds that he had skipped earlier hearings on various grounds and citing the precedence of a similar case concerning Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Uke had initially had moved a magisterial court which dismissed his complaint against Fadnavis on September 7, 2015. Subsequently, he moved a sessions court in Nagpur which transferred the matter to the magisterial court for a "de novo" (afresh) consideration.

Not happy with the Sessions court's order, Fadnavis moved the Bombay High Court, which on May 3, 2018 set it aside.

Later, in its judgment on

October 1, 2019, the apex court had set aside the Bombay High Court order which gave a clean chit to Fadnavis and held that he did not deserve to be tried for the alleged offence under the Representation of the People (RP) Act.

The SC order had come on an appeal filed by Uke, who had challenged the high court's order.

In its October 1 2019 order, the Supreme Court had directed that a magistrate's court in Nagpur district consider afresh the complaint filed by Uke, seeking criminal proceedings to be initiated against Mr Fadnavis under section 125-A of the RP Act.

The section 125-A of the RP Act, which deals with the penalty for "filing false affidavit", says if a candidate or his proposer fails to furnish or gives false or conceals any information in his nomination paper on issues like pending criminal cases, then the person may be awarded six months jail term or fine or both.

Early this week, the Supreme Court reserved its verdict on Fadnavis' plea seeking review of its 2019 judgment asking the BJP leader to face trial for allegedly failing to furnish details of two pending criminal cases against him in his 2014 poll affidavit.

While representing Fadnavis, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi had told a SC bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra that the issue would have very far reaching consequences for other candidates fighting elections and the apex court needed to re-examine its October 1, 2019 order.

No scheme of BJP Govt worth mentioning: Cong

Bengaluru: Calling BJP Government in Karnataka as "a child born illicitly from Operation Kamala", the Opposition Congress on Thursday warned the ruling party that people would punish it, if it does not keep the promise of making the state a 'Rama Rajya'.

Alleging that the BS Yediyurappa-led Government in the state has not come to power with the mandate of the people, but only by engineering the defection of 17 Congress-JD(S) legislators, the Leader of Opposition in the assembly Siddaramaiah said there was no programme worth mentioning in the last seven to eight months.

"There is no programme of the BJP Government in the last 7-8 months that is worth mentioning; all the mentions made in the address are of previous Congress and coalition Government, he said.

He accused the Government of failing to get the right share of central funds to the state on time, despite having the same party in power at the Centre.

Siddaramaiah said there would be over a ₹11,000-crore

shortfall in tax devolution to Karnataka during 15th finance commission, while warning that "We are going to suffer if this continues and the administration doesn't act."

You (BJP) people had said that you will make Karnataka a Rama Rajya if party comes to power both at the state and the Centre...Where is it? Do it," he said.

You (BJP) will construct Ram Mandir and bring in Uniform Civil Code, because it is your agendabut also make efforts towards building Rama Rajya as you had promised or else you may have to eat your own words, he said.

Participating in the debate on the motion of thanks to Governors address in the assembly, Siddaramaiah said the state government has failed to give any preview through the address.

The Governors address doesn't have anything from this Government, except the state providing ₹4,000 crore in addition to the Central governments ₹6,000 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme," he said.

Congress to dare 10 MLAs who joined BJP to quit, seek re-election

Panaji: The Goa Congress has said it will challenge its 10 former MLAs, who joined the BJP last year, to resign and seek fresh mandate on the saffron party's ticket.

State Congress spokesman Urfan Mulla told PTI on Thursday that his party leaders will visit homes of the 10 MLAs and challenge them to re-contest the election.

After the 2017 Goa polls, a hung Assembly had emerged. But, the BJP outsmarted the Congress by cobbling together a coalition quickly.

In July last year, 10 Congress MLAs switched over to the BJP. "The Congress will challenge them to re-contest as MLAs and then re-contest on BJP's ticket from their respective Assembly constituencies. If they think they can get re-elected on BJP's ticket, they should try their luck," Mulla said.

These MLAs got elected in the 2017 polls on Congress' ticket, as the voters had rejected the BJP, he claimed.

"But these ten MLAs ditched the voters and join the BJP," he alleged. The state Congress leaders will start visiting these 10 MLAs later this week, Mulla said.

Man sentenced to 12 years for raping minor

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A special court here on Thursday sentenced a man to 12 years of rigorous imprisonment for raping a 12-year-old mentally-challenged girl.

Special Judge S P Ponskhe found the accused guilty of offence committed under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

As per the minor victim's testimony, the incident took place in November 2016 when the accused worked as a sweeper at a housing society in Mulund where she lived.

The accused forcefully took the victim to the watchman's bathroom in the building's compound and raped her.

He then threatened her with dire consequences if she complained about the assault.

When the incident subsequently came to light, the minor's family lodged a complaint with the police and an FIR was registered.

Security of woman increased after her rape charge against UP BJP MLA

Bhadoli (UP): A day after registration of an FIR against local BJP MLA Ravindra Nath Tripathi and six others, including his three sons, for allegedly raping a woman repeatedly for a month in 2017, police have beefed up the victim's security on her claims that she was getting threats to her life.

"The woman alleged that she was getting threats after which her security has been enhanced. She has been provided three constables, including two women constables, who will provide her round-

the-clock security," Superintendent of Police Ram Badan Singh said.

The 40-year-old woman, who is a widow, had lodged a complaint with the police on February 10, following which an FIR was registered on Wednesday, they said.

The woman alleged that she was first raped by Tripathi's nephew Sandeep Tiwari, who has also been named in the FIR, in 2016. She said she did not lodge a complaint back then as Tiwari had promised to marry her.

She also alleged that during

2017 Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, she was kept at a hotel for a month by Tiwari. All the seven accused would visit the hotel and repeatedly rape her, the officer said.

She also claimed that she got pregnant and was forced to undergo abortion, he added.

A probe in this regard was handed over to Assistant Superintendent of Police Ravindra Verma. On the basis of his report, an FIR was registered against the seven men at the city police station, the SP said.

Man convicted for raping daughter in Muzaffarnagar

PTI ■ MUZAFFARNAGAR

A special court here on Thursday convicted a man for raping his 14-year-old daughter while the grandfather, grandmother and uncle of the victim were acquitted due to lack of evidence.

Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) court judge Sanjiv Kumar Tiwari has fixed February 24 for quantum of punishment in the case.

According to special lawyer for POCSO Dinesh Kumar Sharma, the mother of the girl had filed a complaint with the police alleging that her husband raped the daughter when she had gone to her parents' home on July 7, 2016.

The woman had also alleged that her father-in-law, mother-in-law and brother-in-law supported the accused and did not take any step to prevent him to commit rape on his daughter, Sharma said.

GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI: DELHI JAL BOARD				
OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (PR) SR-I				
SECTOR VI: POKKET D7: ROHINI: DELHI 110085				
NIT No-06 (2019-2020) EE (PR) SR-I (Re-Invite)				
PRESS NOTE				
S. No.	Name of Work	Amount put to tender (Rs.)	Earnest Money/ (Rs.)	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution
1.	P/F barbed wire fencing and watch & ward arrangement at proposed site for construction of Sewerage Pumping Station at Prem Nagar & Pratap Vihar, under Kiran GOC.	Rs. 29,81,663/-	Rs. 59700/-	19/02/2020

DELHI JAL BOARD GOVT. OF N.C.T. OF DELHI				
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (CENTRAL)-II				
ANDHA MUGHAL PARTAP NAGAR (NEAR METRO STATION) DELHI-110007				
PRESS NIT No. 66 (2019-20)				
S. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Tender Fee (Rs.)
1.	Shifting of 200mm and 450mm dia. water line due to construction of Electric Sub Station by DTL near Than Singh Nagar UGR AC-23, Karol Bagh under EE(Central)-II.	37,54,793/-	75,100/-	500/-

10 years RI to Manager of BOM for bank fraud

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A Pune-based Special CBI court has sentenced Shaliwahan Sologanekar, then Branch Manager, Bank of Maharashtra, Pune to 10 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) and levied a fine of ₹24 lakh on him, while it has awarded three years rigorous imprisonment to one Rakesh Yadhav, a private person, along with a fine of ₹10,000 on him.

The CBI had registered a case on June 28, 2018 on the allegations that during the period 2009 to 2017, Sologanekar, a Branch Manager in 5 different Branches of Bank of Maharashtra at Pune, had allegedly entered into criminal conspiracy with Jadhav and other unknown persons and both the accused fraudulently misappropriated an approximate ₹2,56,15,998 from the bank's funds.

The modus operandi used in the alleged crime was Sologanekar while working with the bank in different capacities — as Clerk, Dy. Manager at

Sahakar Nagar Branch, Dy. Manager at Lavale & Lasurne branches, Manager at Hadapsar Industrial Estate and Talegaon Dhamdhare branches — had transferred various amounts from Bank General Ledger (BGL) account to a Savings Account opened in the name of Jadhav which was maintained at Sahakar Nagar Branch of Bank of Maharashtra at Pune.

Subsequently, Shaliwahan Sologanekar transferred the said amounts from the account of Jadhav to his own Savings Bank Accounts maintained at Vadgaon Budruk Branch and Sahakarnagar Branch of Bank of Maharashtra, respectively and thereby allegedly misappropriated a total amount of ₹2,56,15,998, which was transferred to him as banker.

After investigation, the CBI filed five charge sheets were filed before the Special Judge, BI Cases, Pune on December 20, 2018 and December 26, 2018 under sections 120-B of IPC r/w 409 and under Section 13(2) r/w 13(1)(d) of P.C. Act, 1988 against the two accused.

BSES					
BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi					
TENDER NOTICE					
Date: 21.02.2020					
Sealed tenders under two Bid System (Unpriced & Priced) is invited for following job from all bidders.					
NIT No.	Brief Item Description	Estimated Cost (₹)	Cost of EMD (₹)	Due Date & Time of Submission	Date & Time of Opening
C/MC/BR/19-20/SV/AR/840	AWARD OF WORK FOR CARRYING OUT METER-READING FOR SINGLE PHASE METERS (SLCC) AND BILL DISTRIBUTION FOR SINGLE PHASE AND THREE PHASE METERS (SLCC AND MLCC) IN BRPL	96.87 Crores	12.10 Lacs	12.03.2020 1530 HRS	12.03.2020 1545 HRS

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SW) II						
DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI						
NEAR DWARKA, WTP, DWARKA, NEW DELHI-110043						
NIT No.54(19-20) (Item No. 01.02 & 03)						
S. No.	Name of Work	Amount put to tender	EMD & Tender Fee	Completion period	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Last date/time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1.	Replacement of Old Damaged Water Line by P/L 150/100mm dia D.I. Water Pipe Line at Ghanmanhera Village in Malviya Constituency under EE(SW)-II (Re-Invite) Tender I.D.: 2020_DJB_188310_1	Rs.49,33,975/-	Rs.98,700/- & Rs.500/-	90 Days	19.02.2020, 4:00 PM onward	05.03.2020 Upto 3:00 PM
2.	Making Functional the Internal Sewer System by P/L Sewer Lines in Leftout area and Tracing, Raising, repairing and Desilting of manholes in Mhipalpur Village in AC-36 under EE(SW)-II (Re-Invite) Tender I.D.: 2020_DJB_188310_2	Rs.41,14,986/-	Rs.82,500/- & Rs.500/-	120 Days	19.02.2020, 4:00 PM onward	05.03.2020 Upto 3:00 PM
3.	P/L 100mm dia D.I. Water Line at 20 Point Programme Colony, Dhulbas in Bijwasan Constituency under EE(SW)-II (Re-Invite) Tender I.D.: 2020_DJB_188310_3	Rs.30,15,846/-	Rs.60,500/- & Rs.500/-	30 Days	19.02.2020, 4:00 PM onward	05.03.2020 Upto 3:00 PM

AGRCASE

Govt may seek balance between SC order, telcos' health

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

With the telecom sector reeling under severe financial stress and Vodafone Idea staring at bankruptcy in case it is made to pay its adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues, the Government is considering options to stick to the Supreme Court's directive but with least possible impact on the financials of the stressed operators.

According to people in the know, the Government will try to ensure that its action regarding AGR dues takes care of all the perspectives, firstly, compliance with the Supreme Court's order, then, ensuring minimum impact on the health of the telcos along with making sure that the consumers are not impacted adversely.

The Government, among other options, is considering to set up a fund to facilitate oper-

ations of telcos post the payment of their AGR dues, sources said.

According to sources in the know, the dues which have to be paid to the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) would have to be put in the telecom fund, and can then be lent to the companies at lower interest.

This will allow companies to maintain their going concern status and continue operations without running to banks to raise funds.

With the sector in trouble, none of the banks would be ready to lend to telcos, so the fund would act as critical funding support. The telecom fund is likely to help telcos manage their cash flows and would be fiscally neutral for the Government.

The sources also said that two other options are being looked at — waiver of penalties

or staggered payments with interest. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the Law and Finance Ministries would take the final call.

The DoT has maintained that it will execute the top court's directive and stick to the spirit of the order.

In the last couple of days, chiefs of telecom majors, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea have met Government officials and Ministers in a bid to get some relief.

On Wednesday, Mittal and Vodafone Idea Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla met Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to apprise her the current stressed state of affairs in the telecom sector due to huge AGR payment and are learnt to have sought relief for sustenance. Both the telco bosses have also met Telecom Secretary Anshu Prakash.

AGR unprecedented crisis, sought cut in taxes for industry: Mittal

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Bharti Airtel chairman Sunil Mittal on Thursday met Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad in the wake of the current AGR payment to be made by the telcos, saying he suggested that for the overall health of the industry, taxes needed to be brought down.

Mittal, however, said the issue of AGR payment per se did not figure in the talks. The discussion was on the overall industry, he said.

"Adjusted Gross Revenue has been an unprecedented crisis for the telecom industry. I made certain suggestions on the overall health of the industry. Industry has been heavily taxed and taxes need to be

looked at. The issue of very low revenues left in the kitty of the industry needs to be addressed and the AGR also need to be dealt with", he said after the meeting with Prasad.

He said Airtel will make the balance payment expeditiously. "The demand for reduction in taxation for the telecom sector has been for a long time. The regulator has been supporting it", he said in response to a query if he has sought any cut in levies.

Mittal met the minister amid reports that said government was looking at some form of relief for the sector in view of huge AGR dues to be paid by telcos.

The telcos, particularly Vodafone Idea, which is severe-

ly hit by the AGR payment, has sought a bailout. The options here before the government are limited. There could be a cut in licence fee and spectrum usage charges, staggered payment of AGR over long years with interests, a waiver of interest and penalties on AGR dues.

So far the Government has neither stated nor indicated any relief for the telcos. On Wednesday, Mittal met Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and sought sustainability for telcos in the stressful times. He had said Indian telecom industry has been under stress for the last three-and-a-half years and the Government should ensure sustainability of the sector.

"The only thing

Government needs to do is to focus on how to ensure sustainability of the sector," he said after meeting the FM.

Airtel faces ₹35,500 crore AGR dues. The company has already announced its plans to pay the dues that arose from the Supreme Court ruling.

Earlier this week, Bharti Airtel had paid ₹10,000 crore to the telecom department as part of its AGR dues. The company plans to pay the balance amount before the next date of Supreme Court's hearing which is on March 17.

Former Finance Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg has said in a blog that telecom crisis is not limited to AGR and that the problems are much deeper.



Govt to verify telcos' AGR math via test checks before March 17: Sources

New Delhi: The telecom department will verify telcos' claims of lesser AGR dues by initiating random 'test checks' before March 17, sources said. The 'test check' will happen for all telcom firms but will start with those claiming they have already made full and final settlement towards their statutory liabilities. The exercise will help the department assess the gap between telcos' claim of what their adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues are and its own estimates.

Govt to bar vendors of countries that disallow purchase from Indian firms

New Delhi: The Department of Telecom will bar telecom vendors of those countries that would disallow or exclude Indian suppliers from providing network gears used for wifi, fixed line and cellular networks, including 5G services, in their respective local markets, according to an official order.

The order is part of Government's Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) order 2017 which

envisages to source domestically manufactured products to encourage 'Make in India'.

"Any foreign Government which is not allowing Indian suppliers to participate and/or compete in procurement of telecom equipment, provision of clause 10 (d) of Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) order 2017 be invoked in relation to the aforesaid telecom items," the order sent by the DoT to all Central Government depart-

ments and public sector units on February 19 said.

This includes wifi access points, routers, optical fibre cable, enterprise routers and related technology, integrated broadband systems, broadband transmission equipments, modems etc. Section 10 (d) of the order states that if nodal ministry finds that Indian suppliers of an item are not allowed to participate or compete in procurement by any foreign government

then it may restrict or exclude bidders from that country from eligibility for procurement of that item and other items relating that nodal ministry.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade identifies DoT as the nodal department for implementing the provisions related to procurement of goods, services or works related to the telecommunication sector.

Vodafone Idea pays ₹1,000 cr to DoT towards AGR: Sources

New Delhi: Vodafone Idea on Thursday paid ₹1,000 crore to Department of Telecom towards its AGR dues, official sources said.

Earlier this week, the telecom company had paid ₹2,500 crore and had said it would pay ₹1,000 crore more on weekends. But Friday is a holiday, so the company has made the payment on Thursday, however, Vodafone Idea did not comment on it.

The DoT seeks ₹53,000 crore AGR

payments from Vodafone Idea as it has been hit maximum by the AGR dues demand. On Wednesday, VIL chairman KM Birla and his Airtel counterpart Sunil Mittal individually met Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and learnt to have sought relief from the government.

While the Government has so far not taken any decision on a bail out, Birla and Mittal have also met Telecom secretary Anshu Prakash to press for supporting the industry for sustainability.

₹ slides 10 paise to over 1-month low of 71.64 against \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee on Thursday declined by 10 paise to settle at a more than one-month low of 71.64 against the US dollar amid heavy selling in domestic equities and strengthening of the American currency in the overseas market.

Forex traders said investor sentiments remained fragile amid coronavirus fears and sustained foreign fund outflows. The death toll from the coronavirus epidemic in China has climbed to 2,118, while the overall confirmed cases increased to 74,576, Chinese officials said on Thursday.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 71.75. During the day, it lost ground and touched a low of 71.80 and finally settled 10 paise lower at 71.64 against the US currency, a level not seen since January 8. The

rupee had settled at 71.54 against the US dollar on Tuesday. Forex market was shut on February 19, on account of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti.

"Indian rupee recovered early morning losses following Asian peers. Foreign fund inflows, dollar selling by state owned banks and stable crude oil prices also supported the rupee," said V K Sharma, Head PGC and Capital Markets Strategy, HDFC Securities.

Sharma added the near-term bias for rupee is bearish amid stronger dollar vis-a-vis major trading currencies. On a weekly basis, the rupee lost 33 paise. "Despite a lackluster week, we saw an appreciation in USD/INR spot tracking some uncertainty over coronavirus along with sharp surge in dollar index and crude oil prices," said Rahul Gupta, Head of Research- Currency, Emkay Global Financial Services.

Round-the-clock power supply by bundling renewable with thermal power: Draft policy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has proposed a draft policy for the supply of round-the-clock (RTC) power to distributors through a mix of renewable energy and electricity generated in coal-based plants.

Addressing the issues of intermittency, limited hours of supply and low capacity utilisation of transmission infrastructure, the draft policy provides for reverse bundling, wherein high-cost thermal power is being allowed to be bundled with cheaper renewable energy.

Accordingly, a power generating firm will have to supply electricity such that at least 51 per cent of the annual energy supplied corresponds to renewable energy and the balance is drawn from thermal sources.

The generator will supply RE power complemented with thermal power, in RTC man-

ner, keeping at least 80 per cent availability on an annual basis, the draft said.

"The main objective of the scheme is to provide RTC power to the discoms through bundling of RE power with thermal power and to scale up renewable capacity additions. It will also facilitate fulfilment of renewable purchase obligation (RPO) requirement of the obligated entities," the ministry said inviting comments from stakeholders on the new policy.

While India is committed to installing 175 GW of renewable energy (RE) sources by 2022 and 450 GW by 2030, intermittent power generated through such sources and its implication on the grid safety has been a concern. Parallely, there is around 26 GW of stranded thermal power assets lying unutilised which can provide firm power to the grid.

To bridge the gap, the MNRE has come out with the draft RE-based round the clock (RTC) power.

Centre to come up with new rental policy very soon: Puri

New Delhi: Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Thursday said the ministry of housing and urban affairs (MoHUA) will soon come out with a rental policy.

The policy would help alleviate housing shortage in urban areas by encouraging renting of homes as millions of houses lie vacant across the country.

"Very soon you will see a rental policy out," he said here at a function. The Minister said that a lot of people do not want to give their properties on rent because they think that "if you have a weak legal system, you might not get your property back". He expressed hope that the new policy will overcome this concern. "You have got the template etc (of the policy). States can tweak it to the extent they like. You will have a situation where large amounts of residential accommodation which is not being utilised will then be released into the market," the Minister said.

Economic activity remains weak: RBI rate setting panel minutes

Mumbai: Economic activity remains weak and high frequency indicators do not point to "bottoming out" of the downturn, the RBI Monetary Policy Committee noted while keeping the key interest rate unchanged earlier this month.

According to the minutes of the MPC released by the central bank on Thursday, member and RBI Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra observed that economic

activity remains weak. "... There are indications of the momentum of growth stabilising, with sector-specific upticks underlying this guarded optimism, but they are far from gaining economy-wide traction. In some sectors, the slowdown is deep, and activity is stalled by sizable slack in demand.

"High frequency indicators are not offering definitive evidence yet that the downturn is bottoming out," he said dur-

ing the meeting of the MPC that concluded on February 6.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, who heads the six-member panel, said "some green shoots are, however, visible". India's economic growth is estimated to have slowed down to 11-year low of 5 per cent during the current financial year ending March 2020. High frequency indicators like automobile sales and capital goods output are moderating since last several months.

Central Govt releases ₹19,950 cr GST compensation to States

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Government has released ₹19,950 crore as GST compensation to states, taking the total amount released to them to over ₹1.2 lakh crore.

In a statement, the finance ministry said ₹19,950 crore was released to states and union territories on last Monday.

When the Goods and Services Tax (GST)

came into force in July 2017, states, which lost powers to levy taxes such as VAT, were guaranteed to be compensated for any loss of revenue in the first five years of GST implementation. This compensation was to come out of a pool that is to be created by levy of cess on certain sin and luxury goods over and above the GST tax rate. The shortfall is calculated assuming a 14 per cent annual growth in GST collections by states over the base year of 2015-16.

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General public is hereby informed that one unknown male person was found unconscious Gali No.5, Ambedkar Nagar, Haiderpur, Delhi on Dated 05.02.2020, was admitted at BJRM Hospital refer to L.N.J.P Hospital vide MLC No. 185181/19, during the treatment declared dead by Doctor on dated 13.02.2020. The dead body has been preserved at L.N.J.P Hospital Mortuary identification for 72 hrs. In this regard Case DD No. 20A, Dated 14.02.2020, has been lodged at P.S. Shalimar Bagh, Delhi.

The description of the dead body is given as under Name Unknown S/o Unknown R/o Unknown Age: 33 Years, Complexion: Wheatish, Height: 5'6", Face: Long, Build: Thin. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the dead person but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this dead person please inform undersigned.

SHO P.S. Shalimar Bagh, Delhi Ph.: 011-27495198 8750870226 DP/02/NW/20

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED MALE

General Public is hereby informed that one male (depicted in the photo) namely Arjun Singh S/o Ram Singh R/o K-1861, Jahangir Puri, Delhi Aged-38 Years has been reported missing/kidnapped since 04.02.2020 vide DD No.28A Dated 05.02.2020 registered at Police Station Jahangir Puri, Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

Complexion: Wheatish, Height: 5'7", Face: Oval, Build: Thin, Clothing: Blue coloured jacket and Yellow coloured shirt, Black coloured pant and white coloured slipper in feet.

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

Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641 Sd/- FAX No. : 011-24368639 SHO, Jahangir Puri, Delhi DP/9728/NW/2020 Tel.: 011-27636000, 27631600

Fixed broadband speed dips in India in Jan, mobile download speeds slightly up: Ookla

New Delhi: Mean download speeds on fixed broadband network in India slipped to 38.84 megabit per second (Mbps), but the same on mobile network improved slightly to 11.58 Mbps in January, a report released by Ookla said on Thursday.

"India's performance in mean download speeds on fixed broadband has gone down from 40.11 Mbps in December 2019 to 38.84 in January 2020. Mean download speeds on mobile broadband have gone up from 11.46 Mbps to 11.58 Mbps in January 2020,"

the broadband speed analysis firm said in its report.

The index placed UAE on first position for mobile broadband speed with a mean download speed of 87.01 Mbps. Singapore still holds the top spot for fixed broadband speed with a significant increase in mean download speeds at 202.21 Mbps. Ookla's Speedtest Global Index compares internet speed data from round the world each month, and the data for same comes from tests taken by people using Speedtest application.

BUSINESS CORNER

OBC CELEBRATES 78TH FOUNDATION DAY

New Delhi: On the occasion of 78th Foundation Day of the Oriental Bank of Commerce, event was organised at Siri Fort Auditorium New Delhi on 19.02.2020. Various cultural activities were organized and staff members from Delhi/NCR attended the event with great zeal and enthusiasm. The guest of honour Shri. Yuzvendra Chahal, Brand ambassador of the bank along with Shri.S.K.Soni Ex.CMD OBC, Shri.T.M.Bhasin, Chairman ABFB and the other retired staff members attended the event. The celebration of Foundation Day were extended all over Circle offices and the branches on Pan India basis.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified male Age : 65 years, Face : Round, Height : 5'7" Complexion : Sallow, Build : Normal, wearing black colour jacket and black colour pant, was found unconscious on 15.02.2020 in Safdarjung Emergency, he was admitted in Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi by unknown person, during the treatment doctor declare him dead. In this regard a DD No. 09-B dated 15.02.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on following address or telephone nos.

SHO : P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi Tel. No. : 011-24106345, 24106346 DP/01/SW/20

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General Public is hereby informed that one girl Namely: Sneha, D/o Amit Kumar, R/o: H.No. 3025, Ranjit Nagar, Delhi has been missing/ kidnapped from her house since 10.02.2020 at morning 10:00 am from the area of P.S. Ranjit Nagar, Delhi In this regard a case vide FIR No. 35/2020 u/s 363 IPC, dated 10.02.2020 has been registered at P.S. Ranjit Nagar, New Delhi. The description of the missing/ kidnapped girl is as under: Age: 15 years, Height: 5'2", Face: Oval, Complexion: Fair, Build: Thin, Wearing: Green colour salwar-suit, white colour shoes. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> E-mail Id - cic@cbi.gov.in Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641 Sd/- FAX No. 011-24368639 P.S. Ranjit Nagar, Delhi DP/6930/CD/2020 Ph.: 011- 25704008, 8750870436

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that one girl Namely: Roshni, D/o: Sh. Late Arun Kumar Singh, R/o: RZ-28F, Gali No. 11, Durga Park, Sagarpur, New Delhi has been missing since 04.11.2019 from the area of P.S. Sagarpur Delhi. In this regard a case FIR No. 526/19 u/s 363 IPC dated 05.11.2019 has been lodged at PS Sagarpur, Delhi. The description of the missing girl are as under: Age: 12 yrs 11 months, Sex: Female, Height: 4' 10", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Wearing: Blue colour T shirt and jeans. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> E-Mail ID - cic@cbi.gov.in Fax No. 011-24368639 Sd/- Ph. Nos.: 011-24368638, 24368641 SHO P.S. Sagarpur, Delhi DP/7162/SW/19 7065036228 Ph.: 011-28522655, 7065036228

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General Public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male Namely Rakesh Kumar Gupta S/o Ram Kumar Gupta, R/o H.No. A-6, Mange Ram Park, Gali No. 9, Near Solanki Public School, Phase-2, Budh Vihar, North West Delhi Age: 45 years, Height: 5'9", Complexion: Wheatish, Build: Strong, Face: Round, Eyes: Black, Wearing: Sky blue shirt and navy blue pant was found dead in B-1, Jal Board, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi on 06.02.2020. In this regard a DD No.52A, dated 06.02.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Vasant Kunj North, New Delhi.

If any one having any clue about deceased male may kindly inform the undersigned and contact on following numbers.

SHO P.S. Vasant Kunj North, New Delhi Ph.: 011-26892530 DP/06/SW/2020 Mob.: 9971632959, 7065036224

India ready to 'taste' Kiwi flavoured pace

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

India's battle-hardened cricketers are ready for their toughest challenge of the World Test Championship till date as they face formidable hosts New Zealand on a spicy Basin Reserve track in the series-opener beginning here today.

Virat Kohli's top-ranked team, with 360 points in its kitty, is certainly the favourite on paper but the Black Caps under Kane Williamson are experts at wearing down opposition with their patience on pitches which turn flat as the game progresses.

The last time New Zealand lost a series at home was back in March 2017 and since then have won five (10 Tests) in familiar conditions.

For New Zealand, it is time to pick up pieces after their 0-3 drubbing in Australia while the current Indian team would love to reassert that they are the best when it comes to winning in adverse conditions like they did in Australia last year.

The open Basin Reserve ground has always been challenging for both batsmen and bowlers due to cross winds.

And the new opening pair of Prithvi Shaw and Mayank Agarwal will have its task cut out against a top class seam attack comprising Trent Boult, Tim Southee, and Kyle Jamieson, who in all likelihood will make his debut.

However, the absence of left arm speedster Neil Wagner, who could have created awkward angles with his short balls, will provide some respite for the Indian middle-order. Wagner is on a break to welcome his first child.

New Zealand named their 12 on the day and it will be a choice between seamer all-rounder Daryl Mitchell or slow left-arm orthodox Ajaz Patel.

In an open ground with overcast conditions expected, captain Kohli will not mind winning the toss and unleash Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Shami on the home team.

Even Kohli admitted that his men would need to have tons of patience once the track eases out as Williamson's team is known to the play waiting game. "It doesn't matter how much



Indian Captain virat Kohli right, New Zealand captain Kane Williamson left pose with the trophy

BCCI/Twitter

New Zealand vs India
Live from 4:00am IST
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

WTC points system unfair: Williamson

WELLINGTON: New Zealand captain Kane Williamson is not a fan of the points system used for the World Test Championship where a team gets a maximum of 120 points irrespective of the length of the series.

As per points system, the value for each Test match win in the upcoming two-match series is 60 points per game. However if it's an Ashes series, there are so many parts to it that some teams playing five, some teams playing two, the difference in countries, there is just heaps of different parts to it that don't quite make the points of equal measure," said the Kiwi skipper.

I mean the World Test Championship is a step in the right direction.

"It's not perfect but I guess after the first year or two of it, there'll always be efforts to continue to make it a better product," Williamson was guarded in his criticism.

But he did mention that points distribution system needs to have a relook.

"It is a step in the right direction but there are so many parts to it that some teams playing five, some teams playing two, the difference in countries, there is just heaps of different parts to it that don't quite make the points of equal measure," said the Kiwi skipper.

"But we have all signed up for it and we are all keen to see how it unfolds and I'm sure it'll develop over time," he said.

Williamson's sentiment was also echoed by one of his senior teammates Ross Taylor, who was also critical of the points system.

"There are probably still a few teething issues to go with the points system but it has brought context to cricket which is probably what ICC were after. Is it the ideal situation at the moment? Probably not. But it's a lot better now than it was before when we had nothing," Taylor had said during his interaction earlier this week.

patience opposition has, we have to show more patience. We can't really prepare in a manner where New Zealand show more patience and put pressure on us," skipper Kohli made his intentions clear during a media interaction.

While New Zealand are expected to go with four frontline pacers and may be a fifth seamer in all-rounder Colin de Grandhomme, the Indian team management might be tempted to try out Ravichandran Ashwin, who purely as a spinner, has more variety compared to left-arm orthodox of Ravindra Jadeja.

The wind factor in Wellington is an issue that captains need to deal with and Kohli is no different as he will have to judiciously choose ends for his bowlers.

"If breeze is blowing across the ground, who is more effective with inswinger or outswingers, these things you think as a captain," said Kohli.

The return of Trent Boult for New Zealand and Ishant for India, from their respective injuries will certainly bolster both the sides.

For India, Cheteshwar Pujara, Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane will have to be the foil around Shaw, Agarwal and Vihari with their techniques being tested.

"As a batsman, you need to think that ball might not travel in the air a lot more when you are hitting against the wind. So you need to be prepared to run a lot more which we experienced last time and if you have a light bat, you are in trouble.

"You need to be firm with your stance and where your bat is as it can really swing around," added Kohli, who is India's best batsman by a mile.

TEAMS

India (First 12): Virat Kohli (captain), Mayank Agarwal, Prithvi Shaw, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Hanuma Vihari, Wriddhiman Saha (wk), Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja.

New Zealand (12): Kane Williamson (c), Tom Blundell, Trent Boult, Colin de Grandhomme, Kyle Jamieson, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Henry Nicholls, Ajaz Patel, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, BJ Watling.



'NZ start favourites but 320 is good first innings score'

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

A first innings total in the range of 320 on a bouncy Basin Reserve track is what India vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane is aiming for despite calling New Zealand the favourites going into the first Test starting here on Friday.

"I think New Zealand are favourites in their home conditions. But I still feel the host country remains favourite because they know what to bowl and batsman are aware of what shots to play.

"As a unit we need to learn and adapt quickly as New Zealand grounds have different angles," Rahane said on a cautious note on the eve of the Test match.

But the 2014 win at Lord's or the 2018 victory in Adelaide had come with modest first innings scores of under 300 (295 at Lord's and 250 at Adelaide), a template that can be executed in Wellington also, feels the stylish Mumbaier.

"When you bat first, your mindset is always positive, not saying that it's not when you bowl first. If you get 320 to 330 outside India in first innings, it's a very good total. "All the matches if you see we won (in England and Australia), we got around 320 to 350 runs on the board in the first innings," said Rahane.

While 320 may not be a big score but Rahane's confidence stems from the fact that India's world class pace attack, which has shown ability to pick 20 wickets in overseas conditions.

"We know that our bowlers can take wickets in any condition but suppose you lose the toss and have to bat first, you should know that you are in right kind of mindset to actually go out there and tackle those situations.

"Keeping mindset right in seaming conditions even if you lose the toss is really important. Same goes to bowlers who should keep their mindset right on flat wickets. They should actually have the belief to take 20 wickets on flat tracks," said the veteran of 63 Tests.

While he called the home team the favourites but Rahane and his teammates are enjoying the phase where the current batch under Virat Kohli is expected to win Test series outside sub-continent following their historic triumph in Australia last year.

"There is no awe about conditions anymore. Every condition is home condition for us. Irrespective of victory or defeat, expectation is bound to be there. As a team, we want to enjoy this phase where people feel that we are favourites wherever we go," the confident deputy of Kohli said.

Ton-up Majumdar scripts dramatic turnaround for Bengal



JAMMU: Karnataka were wobbling at 14 for 2 at stumps after only six overs were possible due to bad light on the opening day against Jammu and Kashmir.

Overcast skies meant the light alternated between poor to border-line for most part of the day.

Play started after tea and only six overs were possible during which Karnataka struggled against Jammu and Kashmir new ball pair of Aquib Nabi (1/6) and Mujtaba Yousuf (1/5).

Karnataka lost both their openers -- Ravikumar Samarth (5) and Devdutt Padikkal (2).

At the close of play, skipper Karun Nair was batting on four in the company of Krishnamurthy Siddharth, who is yet to open his account.

Ranji Trophy Live
Live from 9:30am IST
STAR SPORTS 3 NETWORK

Anustup Majumdar raises his bat after scoring hundred against Odisha

PTI ■ TANGI (ODISHA)

Anustup Majumdar's gritty century rescued Bengal from a hopeless 46 for five in a dramatic turnaround for them on the opening day of their Ranji Trophy quarterfinal against Odisha here on Thursday.

At stumps, Bengal were 308 for six.

Put in by a pace-heavy Odisha, Bengal found themselves in all sorts of trouble in the first session.

Suryakant Pradhan (2/96), Preet Singh Chohan (2/52) and Basant Mohanty (1/48) used the early moisture to advantage and blew away the Bengal top order.

But old warhorse Majumdar, playing in his sixth match of the season, led a turnaround with an unbeaten 136 (20 fours), a composed innings that came under tremendous pressure.

Majumdar, who will turn 36 next month, had scored 99 in a similar situation in their rain-affected drawn encounter against Delhi earlier this season.

Rookie all-rounder Shahbaz Ahmed also showed a lot of maturity at No. 7, the left-hander slamming an unbeaten 82 to help Bengal take control in a fruitful final session

PATEL SCORES HUNDRED
VALSAD: Skipper Parthiv Patel led from the front with his 27th first-class century and helped Gujarat reach 330 for four against Goa.

The left-handed batsman scored an unbeaten 118 off 156 balls at the Sardar Patel Stadium, hitting 15 boundaries off the Goa bowlers.

In the process, Patel also completed 11,000 first-class runs.

For Goa, Verma was the pick of the bowlers, while Darshan Misal and Vijesh Prabhudesai (1-60) took a wicket each.

This is Patel's second hundred in Ranji knock-outs, the first being against Mumbai in the 2016-17 final.

SAURASHTRA POST 226/6

ONGOLE: Fighting half-centuries by Vishvaraj Singh Jadeja (73, 179 balls, 10 fours), Chirag Jani (53, 128 balls, 5 fours) and Sheldon Jackson (50) helped Saurashtra make 226 for 6 in 79 overs against Andhra.

For the home team, left-arm medium-pace Yarra Prithvi Raj was impressive, picking up three wickets in 20 overs conceding 51 runs. K V Sashikanth picked up two wickets.

A lot will now depend on Jani and the lower-order including captain Jaydev Unadkat if Saurashtra has to post a fighting total in the last-eight match.

Indian Eves begin chase for 1st ICC title

PTI ■ SYDNEY

The Indian women's cricket team will be aiming for much needed consistency when it opens its bid for an elusive ICC trophy with the T20 World Cup opener against defending champions Australia here on today.

Inconsistency has plagued India for a long time and a classic example was their performance in the recently held tri-series in Australia where they reached the final.

They won and lost a game against the more accomplished England and Australia before losing to the mighty hosts, who have won the T20 World Cup a record four times out of the six editions held so far.

India's middle and lower-order needs to do a lot better than what it has been doing to beat the likes of Australia and England in the knock-out stages, something that has been acknowledged star

opener Smriti Mandhana. The team needs to ensure that the frequent middle-order collapses are not repeated in the showpiece event.

The southpaw and 16-year-old Shafali Verma will have to get India off to a flying start more often than not in the competition.

Expectations are high from skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, who too has suffered from inconsistency and would like to correct that, beginning with the opener against Australia.

It remains to be seen if the other 16-year-old in the squad, Richa Ghosh, gets to play regularly as she made her international debut only in the final of the tri-series.

In the bowling department, they have heavily relied on spinners with not many quality pacers to choose from.

Shikha Pandey, who is often the lone pacer in the playing eleven full of spinners, has the crucial task of providing early breakthroughs.

Australia vs India
Live from 1:30pm IST
STAR SPORTS 2 NETWORK



The squad is expected to reach the last four as it had two years ago but the growing women's game in India will get a further fillip only if they go all the way.

Long gone are the days when women cricketers were a neglected lot and have all the facilities at their disposal.

They take on Australia, who could not have asked for a better build-up to the tournament than winning the preceding tri-series.

If you want to do well as a team, you need to come up together and do well for the side. Through past tournaments, we have learnt that you cannot depend on just one or two players to win the game for you

— HARMANPREET KAUR

There's no one quite the same as Tayla so we will have to slightly tweak how we are going to go about it. But generally our plans are pretty flexible anyway, so we don't feel like it's going to be too much of a disadvantage

— MEG LANNING

However, they suffered a big blow on the eve of the tournament opener as their lead pacer Tayla Vlaeminck, who had troubled the Indian batters in the tri-series with extra pace, was ruled out of the competition due to a foot injury. Off-spinner Molly Strano was named her replacement.

Saina, Sameer in Barcelona quarters, Srikanth loses



Saina Nehwal plays a return shot

PTI ■ BARCELONA

London Olympics bronze medallist Saina Nehwal secured a straight game win over Ukraine's Maria Ulitina to storm into the women's singles quarterfinals of the USD 170,000 Barcelona Spain Masters here on Thursday.

Saina, who is facing a race against time to qualify for her fourth Olympics, brushed aside Maria 21-10

21-19 in the second round to set up a last-eight clash with Thailand's third seed Busanan Ongbamrunphan, who has beaten the Indian twice in the last two encounters.

Sameer Verma also made it to the last eight with a hard-fought 21-14, 16-21, 21-15 win over Germany's Kai Schaefer. He will face either Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn or Ireland's Nhat Nguyen in the men's singles quarterfinals.

However, former world No 1 Kidambi Srikanth's wretched run continued as he went down 6-21, 17-21 to fellow Indian Ajay Jayaram, dashing his hopes of qualifying for the Tokyo Games.

Srikanth, who had lost in the first round in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, desperately needs to win a tournament or make it to the quarters and semifinals consistently to qualify for the Olympics.

N Sikki Reddy also endured a difficult day as she lost both the mixed doubles and women's doubles to bow out of the competition.

Sikki and her women's doubles pair of Ashwini Ponnappa, who is coming back from an injury, lost 18-21, 14-21 to Bulgaria's Gabriela Stoeva and Stefani Stoeva, seeded third.

In the mixed doubles, Sikki and Pranaav Jerry Chopra went down fighting 16-21, 21-17, 11-21 to top seeded Malaysian pair of Goh Soon Huat and Lai Shevon Jemie.

India hope to continue fine run

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Hosts India would look to continue their fine form when they take on title holders Australia in their next FIH Pro League tie here on Friday.

India have made an excellent start to their maiden FIH Hockey Pro League season and are currently sitting third in the table with eight points from four games.

The Manpreet Singh-led side claimed five points from a possible six against the Netherlands before claiming another three in a stunning 2-1 victory over Belgium, the reigning World and European champions. The Red Lions bounced back with a 3-2 win in the second match.

Few would dispute that India, coached by former Australian international Graham Reid and captained by newly crowned FIH Men's Player of the Year Manpreet, are playing their best hockey in recent years.

It would also be India's penultimate home tie at the Kalinga Stadium here before they embark on a series of away games. But past records and statistics don't look promising for the hosts as Australia have an outstanding recent record against India.

The world no.2 Kookaburras have won 22 of their last 30 meetings against world no.4 India and have not faced a defeat since a 2016 Test match in Bendigo, Australia, when VR Raghunath scored twice in



Indian Hockey team players celebrate after winning the match

Manpreet Singh/Twitter

a 3-2 win.

Australia, managed by Colin Batch, who was recently named 2019 Men's FIH Coach of the Year, also have an imperious record at the Kalinga Stadium, a venue where they have not suffered a defeat in regular time since a semi-final loss at the hands of Germany at the Hero Champions Trophy in 2014.

The Australians were unbeaten in all six matches on the way to claiming the title at the 2017 Hockey

World League Final, and won five of their six matches at the Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2018, with only the Netherlands getting the better of them in a semi-final shoot-out after the regular time finished 2-2.

The Kookaburras will be in a confident mood coming into the tie after their recent performances against Great Britain in the FIH Pro League, where they claimed five points out of six.

India vs Australia
Live from 7:00pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

Indian women dominate with 3 Gold

Divya, Pinki and Sarita bag yellow metal in freestyle event of Asian C'ship

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On a fruitful day for India in women's competition of Asian Wrestling Championship at Indira Gandhi stadium here on Thursday, three female wrestlers — Pinki Rani (55 kg), Sarita Mor (59 kg) and Divya Kakran (68 kg) won Gold medals in the freestyle event. While Nirmala Devi (50kg) settles for Silver in the 50kg category after losing final against Japan's Migo Igarashi.

2018 Commonwealth and Asian Games Bronze medalist Divya was the star performer for the hosts on the opening day of freestyle event as she produced a strong performance by winning all her bouts, including against reigning junior world champion Naruha Matsuyuki in the fourth round.

She started the day by routing Kazakhstan's Albina Kairgelinova and then knocked out Mongolia's Delgermaa Enkkhsaikhan.

In the third round, against Uzbekistan's Azoda Esbergenova, she led 4-0 with consecutive rolls and then

pinned her opponent to finish it off in just 27 seconds.

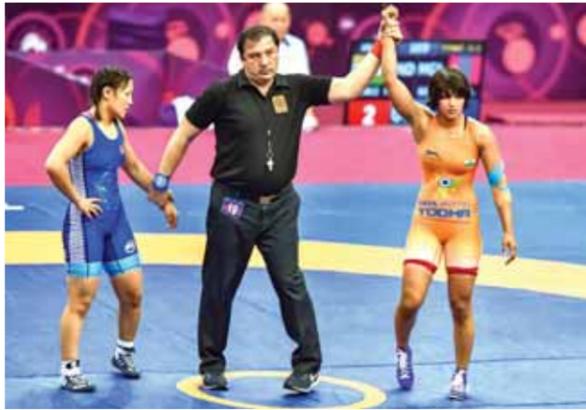
Against the Japanese junior world champion, with her strong left-leg attacks, Divya led 4-0 with a takedown and an expose move.

The Japanese made a solid start in the second period as she attacked the Indian's left leg initially but scored points with a right leg move to make it 4-4.

The Japanese almost pinned her but Divya wriggled out of the difficult position. She soon effected a move which led to her victory by fall.

"I had to win by fall to get five points from all my bouts because the Japanese was winning all her bouts by big margins, so I took a risk for big wins. My coach had said that I don't have to go for big throws all the time, but I went for it," said Divya.

"It did become tricky after I led 4-0 (in final). I was not in a great position (Naruha's lock) and it could have been very dangerous. But I took a risk



Referee raises the hand of wrestler Pinky after winning her bout against Mongolian Duluun Bolormaa PTI

and it paid off by God's grace."

Asked if the absence of Chinese wrestler helped, she replied in the affirmative.

"Yes, it did benefit. But if you have a five-wrestler group it becomes even

tougher, you have to fight everyone and win big. I won 4 bouts within 2 hours. It was tough on the body but the good thing is I have improved on my range, I made all kinds of attacks, *Irani*, *Kheme*, single-lead, double leg attacks."

Sarita, competing in her first Asian event since winning a Silver in 2017 in 58kg, won her first two bouts by technical superiority against Madina Bakbergenova (Kazakhstan) and Nazira Marsbekkyzy (Kyrgyzstan) before winning 10-3 against Japan's Yuumi Kon.

She edged out Mongolia's Battseteg Atlantsetseg 3-2 in the final. Sarita managed a push-out point to win her first Gold at this event after the scores were tied.

Pinki, competing at senior Asian for the first time, began by beating Uzbekistan's Shokida Akhmedova by fall but lost the next bout to Japan's Kana Higashikawa.

She won her semifinal against Marina Zuyeva 6-0 and beat Mongolia's Duluun Bolormaa 2-1 to grab the Gold. All the points scored in the final were on passivity.

"I was a bit careful because I had injured my elbow. I did not want to aggravate since important events are lined up," said Pinki.

Nirmala beat Mongolia's Munkhnar Byambasuren 6-4 and Uzbekistan's Daultebike Yakhshimuratova by technical superiority but lost the final 2-3 to Japan's Miho Igarashi.

SINGLES

LFC WORLD HEADS TO DELHI

NEW DELHI: Liverpool FC has confirmed Delhi as the next stop for its interactive roadshow, LFC World. The unique fan experience will arrive at the Select Citywalk Mall on March 7. Liverpool legends Emile Heskey and Jason McAteer will be in town. Reds in Delhi can also have their photograph with UEFA Champions League trophy and various iconic recreations of Anfield such as the Shankly Gates, *This Is Anfield* sign and the players' dressing room. Following a day of free LFC-themed activities, fans can be part of a BOSS nights gig featuring Jamie Webster — creator of the Reds famous "Allez allez allez" song — and share the match-day atmosphere at a viewing party as the team takes on Bournemouth in the Premier League back at Anfield.

FEDERER WILL MISS FRENCH OPEN

BASEL: Roger Federer has had surgery on his right knee and will miss the French Open and several other tournaments. Writing on his Facebook page on Thursday, the 20-time Grand Slam champion said his knee "has been bothering me for a little while" so he "decided to have arthroscopic surgery in Switzerland yesterday (Wednesday)." Doctors "are very confident of a full recovery," Federer said, before ending his post by telling his fans "see you on the grass!" as he targets a return for Wimbledon. Federer will skip tournaments in Dubai, Indian Wells, Bogota and Miami prior to the French Open, which starts on May 24.

SHARATH ENTER MEN'S & MIXED DOUBLES Q/F

BUDAPEST: Indian table tennis legend Achara Sharath Kamal on Thursday entered the quarterfinals of both men's doubles and mixed doubles at the ITTF World Tour Hungarian Open. The former Commonwealth Games Gold medalist showed tremendous grit and resolve as he partnered Manika Batra to a marathon 11-8, 9-11, 6-11, 11-9, 11-7 victory over home hope Adam Szudi and Szandra Pergel. Later, Sharath Kamal paired up with Gnanasekaran Sathiyar to register yet another hard-fought 11-6, 11-8, 8-11, 9-11, 11-9 win against Japan's rising stars, Shunsuke Togami and Yukiya Uda in men's doubles.

MUGURUZA SHOCKED BY QUALIFIER IN DUBAI

CHENNAI: Qualifier Jennifer Brady claimed a second seeded victim on Thursday, defeating Garbine Muguruza 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-4 to reach the Dubai C'ships semi-finals. The American who ranks just outside the Top 50 followed up on her first-round defeat of third seed and two-time champion Elena Svitolina at the Aviation Club. "I was able to find a way, I wasn't feeling my best," Brady said after seeing off the ninth-seeded Spaniard. "Maybe I didn't play my best tennis, but I stayed in there, competed and came out on top."

BARCA SIGNS DANISH FORWARD BRAITHWAITE

BARCELONA: Barcelona signed Denmark forward Martin Braithwaite to help fill its injury-depleted attack on Thursday. Barcelona agreed to pay the 18 million euros (\$19.4 million) buyout clause in Braithwaite's contract with Spanish league rival Leganes. Barcelona was granted permission to sign a Spanish league player after it was left without Luis Suarez and Ousmane Dembele for long periods due to injuries to both attacking players. Braithwaite will sign for the rest of this season plus four more, the club said. AGENCIES

Atalanta's night to 'remember forever' No bright side for Spurs

AFP ■ MILAN

Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini hailed a performance his club will "remember forever" after the Italian side crushed Valencia 4-1 on Wednesday to take a giant step closer to reaching the Champions League quarter-finals for the first time.

Dutch wing-back Hans Hateboer scored twice on 16 and 62 minutes, sandwiching goals from Josip Ilicic and Remo Freuler.

"This is an evening that we'll remember forever," said Gasperini. "It's an amazing result, full of emotion."

It was an extraordinary night for the side from Bergamo who travelled to the San Siro



Atalanta players celebrate after UEFA Champions League R16 first leg victory AP

with over 40,000 of their fans as their home stadium 55km away does not meet UEFA regulations. Denis Cheryshev pulled one back for Valencia in the first

leg of the last-16 tie at the San Siro, the same stadium where the Spanish side lost the 2001 final to Bayern Munich on penalties. Valencia, seventh in La Liga,

had finished top of their group after away wins over Ajax and Chelsea but were missing several key players through injury and suspension.

"It certainly complicates things a bit, it's a pretty overwhelming result, this 4-1," said Valencia coach Albert Celades.

"In the end it doesn't reflect much what we saw on the pitch."

Atalanta's run comes despite losing their opening three Champions League group games, before finishing second behind Manchester City.

"Three goals ahead is a nice reward," added Gasperini. "But there were a lot of dangerous situations, these are things we'll need to improve in Valencia."

"We are satisfied with this victory and above all with this advantage."

AFP ■ LONDON

Jose Mourinho fears his side's season is running out of gas after an injury-hit Spurs slumped to a 1-0 defeat at home to RB Leipzig in the first leg of their Champions League last 16 tie.

Spurs could be without the talismanic duo of Harry Kane and Son Heung-min for the rest of the season through injury and looked toothless against the Bundesliga contenders.

"We are in a very difficult situation," said Mourinho. "What worries me is this is going to be the situation until the end of the season."

Tottenham captain Hugo Lloris kept his side in the tie with a string of important saves, but he could not prevent Timo Werner from the penalty spot as the German international's 26th goal of the season gave Leipzig a lead to defend on home soil on March 10. "Over the 90 minutes we deserved



Timo Werner celebrates after he scores RB Leipzig opening goal against Tottenham AP

the win and could have won by more," said Leipzig boss Julian Nagelsmann.

"It's only the first game today. You have to perform at the same level in both games."



CROSS THE SHORES
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