

**WORLD 5**  
S KOREAN VIRUS CASES JUMP AGAIN, 1ST US SOLDIER INFECTED

**OPINION 6**  
THE ART OF HEALING

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## India has tremendous tourism potential: Gadkari Prahlad Patel, Piyush Goyal too showcase India as dream tourist destination at Pioneer Exotica summit

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

A wonder of the yore and a land of contemporary fascination, India holds enormous potential for both domestic and foreign tourists who have little explored its incredible diversity for want of promotion and infrastructure. This was the focal point of a day-long conference — The Pioneer Exotica Tourism Summit — where speakers, including Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari, Prahlad Patel and Piyush Goyal on Wednesday showcased India as a dream tourist destination.

Besides Punjab Cabinet Minister for Tourism & Cultural Affairs Charanjit Singh Channi, filmmaker Bharat Bala, fashion designer Ritu Beri, IATO president Pronab Sarkar, Air India ex-CMD Ashwini Lohani, Harkrit Ahluwalia of Citrus Country Foundation; Seema Bhat, vice president of the Ecotourism Society of India; Anil Chadha of ITC Hotel; Abu Sufiya of Delhi Tourism; Mandip Singh Soan, founder ibex expedition; Subhash Goyal, tourism policy expert; Raveen Singh Ahluwalia, Patiala Foundation Chief; Amar Nath of Neemrana Hotels; Sumitra Sernapathy,

CEO women on Wanderlust; Samil Malhotra, Turin Marketing were other participants at the summit.

The conference was divided in five different panels, the first being 'Dekho apna desh'. This was moderated by The Pioneer Editor-in-Chief Dr Chandan Mitra and addressed by Tourism Minister and chief guest Prahlad Patel.

Union Minister for Road, Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari was guest of honour at another panel discussion titled "Highway to heaven". Dr Mitra was the moderator.

Minister of Railways Piyush Goyal spoke on the theme "Deep into India's heart" in conversation with Dr Mitra.

In a speech heard with rapt attention, Prahlad Patel, Minister of State (independent charge) for Culture and Tourism, talked about involvement of all the stakeholders, including the Centre and State Governments, hotels, tour operators and locals, for the growth of tourism in the country. He said that by next five years, the Government aims to double the domestic tourist footfall.

"We all are responsible for the growth of the tourism sector and an individual cannot



The Pioneer's Editor-in-Chief Dr Chandan Mitra presents a plant to Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari at the The Pioneer Exotica Tourism Summit in New Delhi on Wednesday

individually promote it. All the sectors should come together for its growth," he said while speaking at the Pioneer Exotica Tourism Summit 2020 here on Thursday.

Patel was of the view that the tourism has never been given its due importance in the



Railway Minister Piyush Goyal addresses the gathering at the The Pioneer Exotica Tourism Summit in New Delhi on Wednesday

past. "Had it been, we would have witnessed tremendous progress in the North-East region where connectivity was never taken seriously. More than monetary benefits, it is the positive perception towards the tourism that matters. With our holistic approach, we aim to double our domestic tourist footfall within next five years,"

he added.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari suggested the stakeholders in the sector to adopt three basic formulas — the PPP model, fast environment clearances, and innovative ideas, besides a strong political will.

Gadkari said his Ministry is working on 22 green corridors, a dedicated Mumbai-Delhi Expressway, and direct road connectivity to Mansarovar. These will help in growth and generation of employment in the tourism sector, Gadkari said, adding India under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is on the path of being a "Tourism Giant".

Gadkari said tourism has great employment potential and this is the way forward to eradicate poverty from the country.

**Continued on Page 4**  
**Related reports on P2**

## CAA riots toll rises to 27, NE Delhi tense Doval visits violence-hit areas, assures people of complete peace

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Two days after the clashes in North-east Delhi, which claimed 27 lives, including a Delhi Police Head Constable, the situation remained tense but under control with heavy presence of the security forces in the riot-affected areas.

A few incidents of violence were reported in some other places, including Joharpuri area in northeastern part of Delhi bordering Uttar Pradesh, with shops set ablaze and the body of an IB staffer found in a drain near Maujpur with multiple stab wounds on his body. As police conducted flag marches and security personnel spread out across the northeastern edge of national Capital in a bid to quell the violence raging since Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his first reaction to the event appealed for peace and brotherhood.

More than 200 people have been reported to be injured in riots between the pro and anti-Citizen Amendment Act (CAA) groups, which took place in Maujpur, Gokulpuri, Gautampuri, Jafrabad, Shiv Vihar, Bhajanpura, Seelampur, Kardampuri and Chand Bagh areas in North-east Delhi.

Asserting that it was important that calm was restored at the earliest, Modi wrote on Twitter, "Had an extensive review on the situation prevailing in various parts



National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval interacts with locals during his visit to the riot-affected areas to assess ground situation, in North-east Delhi on Wednesday

of Delhi. Police and other agencies are working on the ground to ensure peace and normalcy."

The task of bringing the situation under control was given to National Security Adviser Ajit Doval. "What has happened has happened. Inshallah, there will be complete peace here," Doval said as he walked through the mostly mixed neighbourhoods of North-east Delhi and met locals.

On Tuesday, he undertook a late night tour with Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik and newly-appointed Special Commissioner (Law and Order) SN Shrivastava.

Shrivastava is believed to have been handpicked by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) after current police chief Patnaik faced flak for failing to curb the spiralling violence against the backdrop of US President Donald Trump's visit, sources said.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court scolded the Delhi Police on Wednesday for failing to act professionally and to check incidents of violence in north-east Delhi. The apex court lashed out at the law enforcing agencies for allowing the instigators of violence to get away and said they should act independently as per law without waiting for somebody's nod.

"If somebody makes an inflammatory remark, police has to take action," it said.

On Wednesday, the Delhi High Court also directed the Delhi Police to take conscious decision with respect to lodg-

ing of First Information Reports (FIR) against alleged hate speeches by three Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders in connection with the CAA violence and convey by Thursday. The three BJP leaders are — Kapil Mishra, Anurag Thakur and Parvesh Verma.

On day three of the trouble, the death toll rose from 13 on Tuesday to 24 on Wednesday. "The death toll has risen to 27," GTB Hospital Medical Superintendent Sunil Kumar said.

Calling the situation in North-east Delhi alarming, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the Army should be called in as police is "unable" to establish control.

Shops and schools were closed and many streets deserted with police making announcements that none should venture out of their homes. There was heavy deployment of force in Chand

Bagh with security personnel not allowing anyone to come out. The blackened walls of a mazaar in the locality spoke volumes of the violence the day before.

After two days of mobs marauding the streets, looting shops and setting property on fire, there was uneasy quiet in the locality on Wednesday.

However, in Gokulpuri, smoke darkened the skies with rioters setting on fire shops. Their livelihoods lost with their shops looted and their children in a state of panic after witnessing the bloodshed, many people were seen leaving their homes. Among them was a family that promised to be back, but said they did not know when.

"Of the 24 killed since Monday, four were brought to the hospital from the LNJP Hospital," a senior GTB Hospital official said.

**Continued on Page 4**



Famous fashion designer Ritu Beri and Union Culture & Tourism Minister Prahlad Patel share a light moment at the The Pioneer Exotica Tourism Summit in New Delhi on Wednesday

### IB official killed, body dumped in Chand Bagh drain

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The body of an officer of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) was found in a drain in Chand Bagh, one of the areas worst-hit by the communal violence that has rocked North-east Delhi, on Wednesday. The officer identified as Ankit Sharma, a resident of the area, was working as an IB security assistant.

Sharma's father Devendra, who also works with the IB, said Ankit returned home around 5.30 pm on Tuesday and soon left home to assess the situation outside. "When he didn't return, we started looking for him. We also went to the GTB and LNJP hospitals... We kept searching him till 3 am on Wednesday. Around 10 am, we got information that his body was lying in the Chand Bagh drain," said Sharma's father.

Ankit's brother Ankur said some women from their colony informed them that they saw people throwing his brother in the drain. "When the killers saw the women, they threatened them with dire consequences if they revealed about it. He sustained several stab wounds before being dumped into the drain," Ankur claimed.

**Continued on Page 4**

### CBSE XII exams put off in violence-hit areas

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The CBSE Class XII English exam on Thursday has been postponed in North-east district and parts of East Delhi in view of the turbulent situation due to violence, according to officials. Earlier the Delhi High Court raised doubt if board exams can be held in North-east Delhi, and asked CBSE to come up with a plan to re-schedule them or change the affected centres.

"Considering request of the Delhi Government and to avoid inconvenience to students, staff and parents, the board has decided to postpone the exam for Class XII in North-east part of Delhi," Central Board of Secondary Education Secretary Anurag Tripathi said.

The exam has been postponed at 73 centres in Northeast Delhi and seven centres in the eastern part.

"However, the exam in rest parts of Delhi shall be conducted as per scheduled. The next date of exam for affected students will be notified shortly," the official said.

Taking note of the "worsening situation" in violence-hit areas, the Delhi High Court



said it was doubtful that board exams could be held there and directed the CBSE to come up with a plan to reschedule them or change the affected centres.

For students who live in northeast Delhi, but have their exam centres in other parts, the CBSE officials have asked the students to approach their school principals. "The board is in regular touch with school principals and, in a case such as this, the principals can send details of students. Board will assess and take appropriate action," an official said.

The CBSE had also postponed Class X exam in North-east Delhi on Wednesday.

### CAPSULE

**BALKOT ANNIV: INDIA READY, SAYS RAJNATH**  
New Delhi: India's approach in dealing with terrorism has undergone a major change as its Armed forces now do not hesitate to cross the border to protect the country, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on the first anniversary of the Balakot air strike.

**AZAM, WIFE, SON SENT TO JUDICIAL CUSTODY**  
Lucknow: Samajwadi Party MP Azam Khan, his legislator-wife Tazeen Fatma and MLA-son Abdullah Azam surrendered before a Rampur court on Wednesday and were sent to judicial custody over Abdullah's allegedly fake birth certificate.

**NOW CISF TO GUARD SRINAGAR AIRPORT**  
Srinagar: The security of the strategic Srinagar international airport in Kashmir was on Wednesday taken over by the CISF, six weeks after a Deputy Superintendent of Police posted there was caught ferrying militants out of the valley.

**J&K INTEGRAL PART OF INDIA, UNHRC TOLD**  
Geneva: Jammu & Kashmir "was, is and shall forever" remain an integral part of India, a top Indian diplomat asserted at the UN Human Rights Council's meeting here on Wednesday.

## SC pulls up Delhi Police for failing to curb bloodshed

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday pulled up the Delhi Police for failing to act "professionally" and check "unfortunate incidents" of violence in north-east Delhi even as the Delhi High Court directed the police to take "conscious decision" with respect to lodging of FIRs against alleged hate speeches by three BJP leaders in connection with the CAA violence.

The three BJP leaders are — Kapil Mishra, Anurag Thakur and Parvesh Verma.

A High Court Bench of Justices S Muralidhar and Anup J Bhambhani took on record the assurance by Special Commissioner Praveer Ranjan



Charred remains of a vandalised property set ablaze by rioters in Gokulpuri area of the riot-affected north east Delhi on Wednesday

that he will sit with the Police Commissioner on Wednesday itself and view all video clips of their alleged hate speeches and take a conscious decision on lodging of FIRs.

The high court also issued notices to the parties concerned on the plea filed by the Centre seeking to be implead-

### Take 'conscious' call on FIRs against 3 BJP netas after verifying hate videos, asks HC

ed in the case. The matter will be heard further on Thursday.

Earlier, when the High Court asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to advise the Police Commissioner on lodging of FIRs against alleged hate speeches by the three BJP leaders, the SG pleaded that the court should wait for the response of the authorities concerned on the issue of lodging FIRs against alleged hate speeches by the BJP leaders.

The HC was hearing a plea seeking lodging of FIRs and arrests of those involved in the ongoing communal violence in parts of north-east Delhi over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. The hearing will continue at 2.30 pm.

**Continued on Page 4**

# TOURISM SECTOR HAS HUGE EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL: NITIN GADKARI

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Union Road and Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday spelled out his mantra to take the tourism sector in the country to newer heights. He suggested the stakeholders in the sector to adopt three basic formulas — the PPP model, immediate environment clearances and innovative ideas — that could, backed by a strong political will, go a long way in paying rich dividends.

Highlighting the work on 22 Green corridors, a dedicated Mumbai-Delhi Expressway and a direct road connectivity to Mansarovar which will help in the growth and generation of employment in the tourism sector, Gadkari said, India under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is on the path of becoming a tourism giant.

Speaking at the Exotica Tourism Summit organized by The Pioneer, Gadkari said tourism has great employment potential and this is the way forward to eradicate poverty from the country. Gadkari said the country's 'ethno structure' requires a great improvement if we need to augment tourism.

Known for dishing out numbers and statistics at will, the Union Minister said 22 projects comprising 7,500 km of Greenfield expressways and corridors, costing Rs 3.10 lakh crore, are planned to be completed by 2025 and all through different modes including PPP.

"We will complete the flagship Mumbai-Delhi Expressway in the next three years. This will be India's longest expressway at 1,320 km and will reduce travel time between Delhi and Mumbai from 24 hours to 13 hours," Gadkari said at the Summit sharing the dais with The Pioneer Editor Dr Chandan Mitra.

On his prime role as Road and Transport Minister, Gadkari said he

has been continuously working to take the load off 80 per cent traffic on road by making a total of 1,80,000 network of highways as against the present norm of 40 per cent traffic on only two percent of road infrastructure.

Talking about religious tourism, the Road Minister said his agenda for the current year is completing the about Rs 12,000-crore Char Dham project with weather connectivity roads to Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri.

He also said efforts are on to complete a highway through Uttarakhand for making the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra easy. "The work is about to be completed and will be commissioned anytime soon. People can visit Mansarovar through Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand," he outlined.

"I have also taken a keen interest in developing our very own Auli (Uttarakhand) near Joshimath which can be a destination like Davos in Switzerland. I am in talks with Uttarakhand government on this project so that several world-level conferences can be brought to the small place which is more scenic than Switzerland," said Gadkari, known to give the country's first Talled Expressway between Pune and Mumbai.

Gadkari also shared details of his inland waterway and ports projects which, according to him, have immense potential for the tourism sector besides the commercial aspects. He said very soon India will also become a destination for cruise tourism and pointed out that the present Varanasi to Haldia water project will be expanded till Bangladesh and further till Myanmar making it easier for freight movement right from Punjab till Myanmar which will be cost effective and above all less polluting.

On the occasion, Mitra, a former Rajya Sabha member, termed Gadkari as



Union Road and Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari speaks at the Pioneer Exotica Tourism Summit at Hotel Shangri-la in New Delhi on Wednesday. Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

the most competent and popular minister in the Modi cabinet and exuded confidence that the ambitious projects lined up and talked about so passionately

by the Minister will be completed within deadlines.

Gadkari, who is holding several portfolios including Shipping, received

a huge round of applause from the audience as Dr Mitra praised this ambitious project.

Tagged as the infrastructure man of

## Projects worth ₹55K cr on anvil to curb pollution

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Road and Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday said the Centre in coordination with Delhi and neighboring States are working on a war footing to contain the pollution in the national Capital.

Stating that "pollution and bad air environment" have been a deterrent to tourists in visiting Delhi, Gadkari said projects worth Rs 55,000 crore are on the anvil and under which 150 black spots have been identified other than taking away the vehicle movement from Delhi roads to the peripheral Expressways. Gadkari said this at the Exotica Tourism Summit organized by The Pioneer.

The Road Minister said that his ministry is in talks with the Delhi government, other stakeholders like the DDA and municipalities to expedite the work on these black spots which can be made accident free and pollution free and ensure good roads to motorists.

"I have already done the Dhaua Kuan area congestion free and reports have suggested that the air quality in the entire stretch has improved. Air pollution and local environment affects and impacts a lot on tourists' mindsets. My government is working on various projects worth Rs 55,000 crore to make the national Capital and neighboring areas pollution free," said Gadkari at the Summit.

The Centre is developing a Dwarka Expressway costing Rs 10,000 crore and also a dedicated road to connect Delhi airport from Dhaua Kuan, said Gadkari adding that his Ministry has hired a consultant to resolve the bottlenecks at the identified black spots.

The Union Minister also expressed his keenness in developing a Yamuna Riverside Front and in this respect he has already met Delhi L-G couple of times.

the country, Gadkari in his first tenure of the Modi government did a lot of work for Ganga Rejuvenation as part of the Namami Gange project.

# Aim to double our domestic tourist footfall by 2025: Prahlad

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

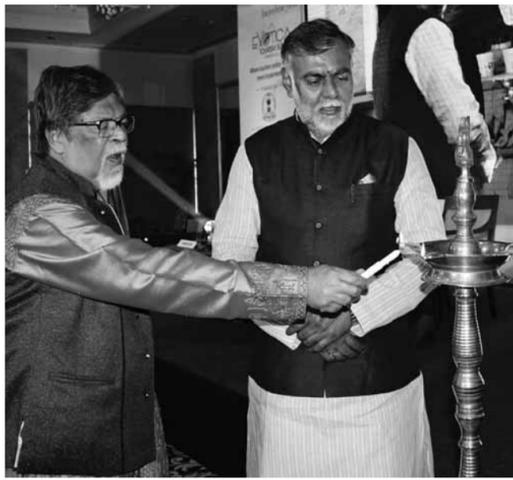
The Government aims to double the domestic tourist footfall in the next five years, Prahlad Patel, Minister of State (independent charge) for Culture and Tourism, said on Thursday but not before pointing out that all the stakeholders including the Centre and State Governments, hotels, media, tour operators and locals are equally responsible for the growth of tourism in the country.

"We all as stakeholders are responsible for the growth of the tourism sector and responsibility cannot be laid on one individual. All the sectors should come together for its growth," he said speaking at the Exotica Tourism Summit organized by The Pioneer here on Thursday.

India's domestic tourist footfall in 2018 was 1.85 billion.

Patel was of the view that tourism was never discussed minutely. Had it been, we would have witnessed tremendous progress in the North-east region where connectivity was never taken seriously. It was only during former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's regime that some efforts were made but they were never taken up in a sustained manner after that, he said.

"More than monetary benefits, it is the correct and positive perception towards the tourism that matters. With our holistic



approach, we aim to double our domestic tourist footfalls within the next five years," he maintained.

Acknowledging that there was a lot yet to be done to put India on the global map, he said the stakeholders can take advantage of the tourism vacuum that has been created due to China getting affected by the deadly coronavirus. We can become an alternate to China as a tourist destination, he said.

Patel, who was the chief guest

at the event, also spoke about relaxing norms in e-visa such as extending the facility from one year to five years, cutting down on e-visa fee and reducing GST for hotel rooms.

This apart, he said his ministry is also working extensively with the Ministry of External Affairs to shorten the e-visa format and drastically reduce the visa fees further which has been a concern for many foreign tourists.

The Pioneer Editor Dr

Chandan Mitra, who made the welcome remarks, said India has an immense tourism potential and the inaugural Summit dedicated to the sector is a step towards harnessing it. He said the problems faced by foreign tourists should be removed.

Mitra later moderated a panel discussion with Ashwani Lohani, ex-CMD, Air India, Pronab Sarkar, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) President, Ritu Beri, Fashion Designer and Anil Chadha, COO ITC Hotels.

Lohani, who has headed various senior posts in the tourism departments like ITDC at the Centre and Madhya Pradesh, pitched for domestic tourism saying that there was a need to catalyse people within the State and inter-States as well. He suggested putting up signages all over in a large scale, improving connectivity through roads and trains besides slashing the travel cost as measures to boost tourism.

Sarkar felt that tourism in the country can flourish only with the joint cooperation of States and the Centre. "But unfortunately, we don't even contribute 1 per cent share in the global tourism while small neighbouring countries are doing much better. We want to reach the magical figure of 20 million international tourists'

arrivals by 2020. For this, there is an urgent need to improve infrastructure, cut down GST rates further as tourism is not luxury but an economic activity that can create lots of jobs around a monument and a tourist spot," he said.

For her part, Beri recalled how she showcased India's culture through her work abroad. "We should be proud of our rich culture and we as Indians should first accept that we are above the rest of the world."

Chadha outlined how the visiting US President Donald Trump and his family loved the Indian cuisine that ITC Maurya served to them during their stay there to stress the fact that India has many strengths up its sleeves that could strengthen its tourism sector in multifarious ways.

INSET

As a measure to woo foreigners and for their convenience, the monuments or tourists hotspots witnessing more than one lakh footfall, will have signage in the mother tongue of that country. For instance, in Sanchi Stupa, which is visited by more than a lakh Chinese have signboards in their mother tongue. "Also, we plan to make it possible for tourists to scan a QR code at a location to listen to information about that place in their own language, said Tourism Minister Prahlad Patel.

# Now travel between Delhi to Shimla on single ticket: Goyal

CHANDAN PRAKASH ■ NEW DELHI

Passengers can now travel between Delhi to Shimla on a single ticket, said Railways Minister Piyush Goyal while speaking at 'EXOTICA Tourism Summit' organised by The Pioneer group on Wednesday.

Talking about efforts of railways' to promote tourism, the Minister said "We are running Ramayan Express which will connect sites associated with Lord Ram. Similarly there is a train called Saamanta Express which will cover prominent places associated with Gautam Buddha and chief architect of the Constitution Dr B R Ambedkar." The idea is also to take the railway to Chardham, he added.

The Minister said that as a nation we all must act together to bring the excitement back of promoting India. In fact the Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself suggested each of us to plan a visit of 15 places within the country in next three years.

"India has a huge potential and I am sure this initiative will go a long way in promoting tourism," he added.

The Minister also talked about energy potential of India, saying that the country is the fastest renewable energy growing and efforts are made to make it a power surplus country.

After Prime Minister took the office, he has been particularly focused on the north east to the extent that every minister trying to visit the region twice or thrice in a year and every month three to four cabinet minister would actually go to north east, he said.

"That is the level of engagement the Government had with the north east I am happy to share with the investment which has significantly



Railways Minister Piyush Goyal at the Pioneer Exotica Tourism Summit at Hotel Shangri-la in New Delhi on Wednesday. Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

ramped up on the railways and road front. We believe connecting all the faith of north east with the mainland," he added.

Goyal further said that train services are very critical and essential for development of north east. "Only four out of eight states are currently left out of services due to local pressure and problem. There are lots of trains running in Tripura but Arunachal Pradesh is not connected," he said.

"I am delighted that all the eight states of the north east are aligned to the vision of the Prime Minister for faster infrastructure development and in next two and half years, all these four states will be connected to the railway map of India. We will be able to take the railway to every parts of the region right to extreme end to Bangladesh," he said.

"We are also looking to working with Bangladesh to connect some parts so that a long circuit is cut off and actually travel through Bangladesh to other parts of the region," the minister said.

While responding to a question by The Pioneer editor Dr Chandan Mitra on privatisation of railways, Goyal asserted that India Railway is the property of the people of India and shall always remain.

The minister also received a great round of applause when he shared to the august gathering that there has not been even a single passenger death on Indian railway network from April 1st till date.

To a query from audience, Goyal said that a lot has been done on improving the on-board food quality through use of artificial intelligence. "Now you can track your food packets by scanning the bar coded meal boxes and gain access of the base kitchen where it has been prepared and packed. This can be done through a rail app," Goyal said.

The Railway Minister who also holds the Commerce portfolio appreciated The Pioneer for conducting a dedicated session on tourism as this sector has immense potential.



Cabinet Minister for Tourism & Cultural Affairs, Punjab, Charanjit Singh Channi expresses his views. (Right) Visitors at the Pioneer Exotica Tourism Summit at Hotel Shangri-la in New Delhi on Wednesday. Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer



Budget session of C'garh Assembly

# Paddy issue refuses to die down

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Opposition staged a walk-out in the Assembly and forced an adjournment on Wednesday, the third day of Budget session.

They raised the issue of agitating farmers demanding that the state government should come up with statement to procure the paddy from those farmers having been issued token.

Raising the issue BJP leaders Brijmohan Agrawal, Ajay Chandrakar, Shivratna Sharma, Dharamjeet Singh and others said their only demand is that Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel should announce procurement of paddy from farmers who were issued token. Former chief minister Raman Singh said farmers are seeking permission for



euthanasia, such had never happened during his tenure.

For last seven days and night braving rains, the farmers are continuing their agitation. To end it, government should come up with announcement, the Opposition demanded.

Speaker then adjourned the House for five minutes as rain continued. After it resumed, Agriculture minister Ravindra Choubey came up with suo moto statement stating non-seasonal rains and hail storms had affected crops in districts of Korija, Surguja, Surajpur, Balrampur, Jashpur, Bemetara, Kawardha, Durg, Rajnandgaon and Raipur affecting Rabi crops. Government has directed all collectors to provide compensation under RBC 6(4). Action for compensation is initiated for insured farmers,

the minister said.

Not satisfied with the reply, the BJP and other opposition leaders then walked out of the House in protest.

After they returned, Brijmohan Agrawal raised objection stating already a call attention motion has been moved on the same issue and it is a violation of rules of the House, which was countered by Choubey stating it was suo moto statement in favour of farmers. Treasury benches said opposition is adopting escape route from discussion. Leader of Opposition Dharamlal Kaushik read the call attention motion, Revenue Minister Jaisingh Agrawal then gave reply to it stating, government has initiated action to provide compensation to farmers affected by natural calamity.

# EOW registers FIR against Aman, spouse



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Economic Offence Wing (EOW) has registered an FIR against former principal secretary to chief minister Aman Singh, and his wife Yasmin Singh for allegedly accumulating disproportionate assets against their known income sources, sources said here on Wednesday.

According to a press release from EOW, Aman Singh and his wife Yasmin Singh were booked under sections of Prevention of Corruption Act and 120 (B). The FIR was filed on the complaint of a Raipur-based RTI activist.

"Aman Singh and his wife had amassed disproportionate assets in different cities like Raipur, Bhopal, Delhi and also in foreign nations which we are investigating," the press release mentioned.

The release further claimed that Singh has formed shell companies which were engaged in money laundering. "It was found that shell companies -Vyas Mines and Minerals, Samay Multi Trade, Shrishti Natural Resources, YN Singh Memorial Foundation and Kargil India Limited - was made by them and crores of money laundering was done," the

release said adding that Singh was himself a promoter of YN Singh memorial foundation even though he was a government employee.

Meanwhile, reacting over the action, Aman Singh termed it 'political witch-hunting'. In a statement he said "I have learnt that the state (Chhattisgarh) has lodged an FIR against me and my family. But I have applied for a copy but it has not been provided to me. Therefore, I am not aware of its contents. The FIR has clearly been done at the behest of the Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel and only to harass my family and to subvert the judicial process in the midst of the High Court's hearing on my petition in which I had challenged the mala fide and malicious EOW enquiry on a false and frivolous complaint."

The least the state could have done was to wait for honourable High Court's decision, he said.

"The present political dispensation is doing everything it can to falsely implicate me and my family, and I have petitioned the High Court to defend my fundamental rights," said Singh, who served as principal secretary to erstwhile chief minister Raman Singh.

# C'garh bags award for promoting startups and ease of doing business

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh on Wednesday bagged the second prize for outstanding performance in MSME.

Chhattisgarh was awarded with National MSME Award for promoting startups, providing ease of doing business, socio-economic development and creating employment opportunities at a function held at Pravasiya Bhartiya Kendra here.

Chhattisgarh Commerce and Industries Minister Kawasi Lakhma received the award from Union MSME Minister

Nitin Gadkari at the function organised by the ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises.

Shri Lakhma, who was a special guest at the function, also gave prizes to some of the awardees.

It is noteworthy, micro small and medium enterprises play a significant role in the economic development of Chhattisgarh. There are about 8.48 lakh small, micro and medium units in the state, in which over 17 lakh people have been given employment. Out of the total units, over 71 thousand units have been set up with assistance and contribution from women entrepreneurs.



The state has developed a transparent system for industrial development in ease of doing business. The government has been working towards expansion of "Mukhyamantri Yuva Rojgar Yojana" to ensure that more number of industries is being set up by youths resulting in employment generation. Commercial Court has been set up for speedy settlement of industrial disputes in the state. Also, Micro, Small Industrial Facilitation Council is functioning

smoothly in the state, in which pending payments are being settled systematically. E-market portal has been developed by the state to strengthen the marketing system of its industrial units.

The awards have been conferred under various categories such as - National MSME Awards Innovation in MSMEs, Micro Enterprises (Manufacturing), Special Award to Outstanding Women Entrepreneur in Small Enterprises (Manufacturing), Special Award to Outstanding SC/ST Entrepreneur in Small Enterprises (Manufacturing) etc.

## 'Two privilege motions against ministers under consideration'

RAIPUR: Chhattisgarh State Assembly Speaker Dr Charandas Mahant during the budget session of the assembly on Wednesday said the two privilege motions brought against two ministers are under his consideration. Raising the issue during Zero Hour, BJP member Ajay Chandrakar said he had moved a privilege motion against agriculture and water resources minister Ravindra Choubey for violating his oath of secrecy in office and announcing the contents of budget, which has not been tabled before the House. He further pointed out that in a function, Choubey had announced that ₹5000 crore provision has been made in the current budget for release of payment of remaining amount of paddy procurement to the farmers.



Chhattisgarh Governor Anusuiya Uikey, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel and Higher Education Minister Umesh Patel awarding degree to a student at the 25th convocation function of Pt Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur. Pioneer Photo

# Minister suspends six officials for 'substandard' E-way construction

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Minister for Public Works Tamradhwaj Sahu on Wednesday announced in the state assembly suspension of six engineers engaged in expressway construction.

A demand in this regard was raised by Janta Congress Chhattisgarh- Jogi (JCC-J) legislator Dharamjeet Singh. Singh alleged that these six engineers didn't have experience of road construction though they were engaged with the project, which resulted into substandard construction of the expressway. The minister admitted that the said six engineers did



not have proper experience of handling the road projects and hence they were being suspended with immediate effect holding them

accountable for the substandard construction. The minister also informed the House that the repairing work of the alleged

substandard construction would be done by the contractor, who was assigned the job by the previous BJP government.

# Compensation announced for crop damage by hailstorm

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Agriculture Minister Ravindra Choubey on Wednesday announced in the state assembly that compensation would be provided to the affected farmers within 15 days whose crops were devastated by the hailstorm and untimely rains in the months of January and February this year.

The issue was raised by Leader of Opposition Dharamlal Kaushik, BJP legislators Dr Krishnamurthy Bandhi and Rajnesh Singh by moving call attention motion. They charged that neither any survey was conducted for the damage to standing Rabi crop, nor did the government give any financial assistance to the



affected farmers.

Replying to them the Revenue Minister earlier informed that revenue department had already rook stock of the situation.

The Agriculture Minister further informed that Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel had already directed all the district collectors of the state to evaluate the damage caused to the crops due to unseasonal rainfall and hailstorm, and to submit the evaluation report within a week.

The minister informed that the Chief Minister has given instructions to provide financial aid to affected farmers as per the provisions of RBC 4-6, in case the crop damage due to natural calamity is more than 33%. Revenue Department has issued letters to all the collectors, directing them to send evaluation report of crop damage within a week in the prescribed format.

# Cop suspended for obstructing MLA from entering Assembly

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

A cop had to pay a hefty price for preventing an MLA from entering the assembly premises.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ravindra Choubey announced suspension of the officer with immediate effect when the issue was raised by Pamgarh legislator Indu Banjare.

According to the legislator she was stopped at the barrier when she was on way to enter the state assembly to attend the session on Wednesday morning. She was denied entry for more than 10 minutes by the cop for not having vehicle pass even though she introduced herself to

MLA Indu Banjare was denied entry for more than 10 minutes by the cop for not having vehicle pass even though she introduced herself to him as a legislator, she said.

After making her wait for more than 10 minutes, the cop let her go only after he took instruction from a senior official, she informed in the House.

Meanwhile, after taking cognizance, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister Choubey announced suspension of the cop with immediate effect.

# 'Self-Introspection by youth imperative for inner devpt'

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The three-day workshop by Nehru Yuva Kendra (NYK), Raipur concluded here on Wednesday. FANS Janjatiya Adhyayan Samuh National Chairman Dr Varnika Sharma addressing the concluding ceremony said to assess the full potential and to achieve success in life, youth must introspect.

"It is imperative to develop own inner self to contribute to community development. She further emphasised that youth should modulate their energy in the right direction and instil the rational approach in their lifestyle," she said.

The three-day workshop on leadership and community development was organised



from 24 February 2020 - 26 February 2020 at PNB Farmers Training centre at Jora gram in Dharsiva Block, Raipur.

Furthermore, the role of youth and community development was discussed by Master trainer and Social Activist Yogesh Chandrakar. He opined that community

can be developed only through able and just leadership.

Pokhan Thakur, one of the participants from Dharsiva, Raipur said that the workshop had helped him to overcome his fear of public speaking and instil self-confidence and self-belief in his abilities, which would help him to harness his true potential.

UNHRC MEETING

# J&K shall forever remain India's: Delhi to Pak

**Geneva:** Jammu&Kashmir "was, is and shall forever" remain an integral part of India, a top Indian diplomat asserted at the UN Human Rights Council's meeting here on Wednesday, a day after Pakistan sought the international community's intervention on the Kashmir issue.

Speaking at the 43rd session of the UN Human Rights Council which is being held here in Switzerland from February 24 to March 20, Vikas Swarup, Secretary (West), the Ministry of External Affairs,

described Pakistan as the "epicentre of global terrorism".

He called for decisive action against those who direct, control, fund and shelter terrorists, in an obvious reference to Pakistan, which is accused by its neighbours of providing safe havens to terror groups.

"It is more than a little ironic that a nation that has become the world's leading exporter of terror and violence seeks to lecture others about human rights..."

"Jammu&Kashmir was, is and shall forever remain an

integral part of India," Swarup asserted a day after Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights Shireen Mazarri alleged that India continues to violate the human rights of the Kashmiri people and demanded the immediate repeal of all actions by India on August 5 last year.

India abrogated the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 on August 5 and bifurcated it into two Union territories.

Pakistan has been trying to internationalise the Kashmir

issue but India has asserted that the abrogation of Article 370 was its "internal matter". New Delhi has also asked Islamabad to accept the reality and stop its anti-India rhetoric.

Swarup said the transformative changes "wrought by our Parliament last August were meant to strengthen the integration of the State... It was intended to ensure the extension of all progressive legislations passed for the entire country to cover this region, and to resume the pace of socio-economic development

in the Union Territory of Jammu&Kashmir."

Despite Pakistan's best efforts — over decades — to destabilise Jammu and Kashmir through externally-instigated terror and a campaign of canards and untruth, the situation on the ground is quite normal, he said.

"Most temporary restrictions — imposed solely to ensure safety of the people from Pakistani trained terrorist attacks — have already been removed, political processes have resumed, telecom facilities

have been largely restored, developmental activities are being undertaken at a rapid pace and there is access for all to education and healthcare," Swarup added.

He said schools, colleges and universities have resumed and regular examinations are being held. Hospitals, clinics and pharmacies are well-stocked and staffing is at full capacity.

"These have been achieved despite Pakistan's frenetic attempts to promote both violence within our territory —

with an 81 per cent increase in infiltration attempts since last August — and disinformation outside. Yesterday's speech was a good example of the latter," Swarup said, referring to Pakistani minister's speech.

Addressing the delegation from Pakistan, Swarup said India is a nation where democracy, including the right to protest, is vibrantly and noisily celebrated every day and where dignity of every human is protected by a robust Constitutional framework.

"It is Pakistan that would do well to look to its own house and introspect about the condition of its people, especially its minorities," he added.

He said India is making every effort for full and effective enjoyment of all human rights by all its people.

On Pakistan's warnings about the situation within India, Swarup invoked poet Robert Burns to say that "someone should give them the power to see themselves as others see them."

PTI

## Man killed in scuffle over ₹5

**Mumbai:** A 68-year-old auto driver was allegedly beaten to death by employees of a gas station in the western suburb of Borivali here following a spat over ₹5, police said on Wednesday.

Ramdul Sarju Yadav went to fill gas in his autorickshaw at a CNG station on Tuesday evening and telephoned his son Santosh to meet him there, an official said.

After filling the fuel for Rs 205, Yadav handed a note of Rs 500 to a gas station attendant but instead of returning balance amount of Rs 295, the man

gave Rs 5 less, he said.

When the Yadavs demanded Rs 5, attendant Santosh Jadhav abused the duo and other employees started hitting them, the official said.

The deceased fell unconscious and was rushed to a nearby hospital, where he was declared dead, the official added.

"We have arrested five gas station employees under section 302 (murder) and other relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code," senior inspector Namdev Shinde of Kasturba Marg police station said.

PTI

## 79 held in RPF's crackdown on illegal e-ticket rackets

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) has busted countrywide illegal e-ticket booking rackets and arrested 79 persons, a top official said here on Wednesday.

It has also identified 16,735 user IDs - through which tickets were booked illegally - for blacklisting besides blocking 27,948 tickets worth ₹7.96 crore for upcoming journeys, said Arun Kumar, director-general of the RPF.

ANMS and MAC, the illegal softwares which the racketeers used for booking e-tickets fraudulently by getting around One Time Password (OTP) and CAPTCHA systems, were completely "neutralized" by RPF sleuths, he said.

"Tickets valued around ₹ 30 crore, which were already used by passengers, were also seized," he said.

The racket existed since 2012 but became more active in the last two or three years, Kumar said.

As many as 79 persons have been arrested in connection with the rackets which were suspected to have links to terror financing, he added.

The arrests were made in various parts of the country and the accused included owners of the illegal software.

No agents have been arrested yet, he said.

RPF sleuths deactivated ANMS software on January 23 and MAC on February 8, he said. Similar softwares had been deactivated in the past, he said.

The illegal ANMS software had captured nearly 80 per cent of the ticket booking market, Kumar said.

The "master" or the owner having a password and ID for the software would sell "layers" of the software to agents for a specific time slot for booking tickets, the RPF DG said.

Some other illegal softwares are available in the market but they do not work, Kumar claimed.

"We are aware that some

softwares are still there in the market. We are working on them and trying to neutralize them as well," said Kumar.

The RPF was working closely with the Centre for Railway Information System (CRIC), IRCTC and the commercial departments of the railways, and CRIS keeps updating security features and disrupting the function of such softwares, he said.

The RPF top boss also said that investigation revealed that these softwares also bypassed OTP systems used for online transactions, and it was brought to the notice of the Reserve Bank of India, asking it to make online payment for railway ticket booking more secure.

For online payments upto Rs 2,000, OTP is not required, he said.

"We have taken up this with RBI and told them that as far as railway tickets are concerned, single payments (without OTP) should not be bypassed (allowed)," Kumar said.

## MP minor immolates self citing rape; 3 held

**Betul:** A 14-year-old girl died of severe burn injuries on Wednesday after she immolated herself, alleging rape and harassment by three persons in Madhya Pradesh's Betul district, police said.

The police have arrested all three accused, an official said.

The Class 8 student poured kerosene and immolated herself at her home in Devgaon village on Tuesday evening and died while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Nagpur, additional superintendent of police (ASP) Shradha Joshi said.

The girl suffered 90 per cent burns and was first taken to the district hospital, from where she was referred to a hospital in Maharashtra's Nagpur city, Joshi said.

In her statement, the victim had named three persons accusing them of raping and harassing her, the senior official said.

On the basis of girl's statement, the police arrested Sandeep Hisare (23) and Nitesh Nagle (21), while another accused identified as Ajay (was nabbed from Kamla Nagar area of Bhopal, Joshi said.

The trio has been booked under section 376D (gang rape) and other relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, she said.

The victim has also left a note in which she has held Hisare responsible for her death, the official said, adding that further probe is underway. PTI

## Guruvayur temple elephant dies at 84

**Thrissur(Ker):** An elephant credited with carrying the "Thidambu"—the miniature of the presiding deity of Lord Krishna of Guruvayur Temple - for several decades during temple rituals died on Wednesday at the age of 84, a top Guruvayur Devaswom official said.

The elephant named Guruvayur Padmanabhan, who gained the title of 'Gajaratnam' due to his attractive features like long trunk touching the ground and well-curved shape, died at 2.10 pm, Guruvayur Devaswom Chairman K B Mohandas told PTI.

He said the tusker had been undergoing treatment for the last few weeks after it suffered swelling on its body.

With the death of Padmanabhan, the number of pachyderms in the elephant sanctuary managed by Guruvayur Devaswom has come down to 47, he said.

Padmanabhan, one of the oldest elephant in the captivity, was much sought after during the temple festivals across the state including famous Thrissur Pooram.

He got the highest pay of Rs 2.22 lakh in 2014 for participating in famous Nemmara-Vellangi Vela festival in Palakkad district in 2004, temple officials said.

The elephant was kept at Anakkotta (the elephant sanctuary) located in the vicinity of the Guruvayur Temple.

PTI

## IB officer killed...

**From Page 1**

Sharma's mother Sudha was inconsolable and said she never thought "destiny would be so cruel to her".

"I can't live without him," Sudha said repeatedly as relatives and friends tried to console her. On Tuesday evening, mobs roamed Chand

Bagh and other areas, pelting stones and setting property on fire.

Sharma, one of the 27 killed in the communal violence over the citizenship amendment law, is survived by his parents, brother and sister. He joined the service in 2017.

"Violence is ending. Investigation is on to find out the truth and identify culprits... At such a time, attacking Government and politicising violence is dirty politics," said Union Minister Prakash Javadekar, adding that it also demoralises police.

In a midnight hearing, the Delhi High Court directed police to ensure safe passage to Government hospitals and emergency treatment for those injured in the communal violence erupted in northeast Delhi over the amended citizenship law. Meanwhile, the Delhi Police have arrested 106 people for their alleged involvement in the northeast Delhi violence and registered 18 FIRs.

According to Mandeep Singh Randhawa, the Additional Commissioner of Police, Crime, no untoward incident was reported on Wednesday and PCR calls from northeast Delhi have reduced.

Police also released two helpline numbers — 011-22829334, 22829335 — for people to reach out during distress.

cover prominent places associated with Gautam Buddha and chief architect of the Constitution Dr BR Ambedkar." The idea is also to take the railway to Char Dham, he added.

The Minister said that as a nation we all must act together to bring the excitement back of promoting India. In fact Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself suggested each of us to plan a visit of 15 places within the country in next three years.

"India has a huge potential and I am sure this initiative will go a long way in promoting tourism," he added.

Former Air India Chairman Ashwani Lohani underlined the need for promoting tourism by innovative means and greater connectivity. He also stressed the need for installing proper signages and create a literature bank of

tourist spots of the country.

Acclaimed filmmaker Bharat Bata displayed a short film on Punjab tourism and highlighted the importance of presenting tourism potential in short story format through audio-video presentation.

Fashion designer Ritu Beri talked about the need to promote domestic tourism and handicraft and said India offered a great potential to emerge as a mega tourist hot spot in the world.

In his interaction with the Ministers, Dr Mitra appreciated the vision of Tourism Minister Prahlad Patel in promoting tourism and said this will go a long way in tackling India's unemployment problem. Dr Mitra called Gadkari a visionary and said he is a Minister known to achieve whatever he sets out to do.

## NSA Robert O'Brien says Indians have friends in America and White House

**Washington:** US National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien has thanked the people of India who came out in support of President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania during their maiden visit to the country, underlining that they have friends in America and the White House.

The president was accompanied by a high-powered delegation comprising senior Trump administration officials including NSA O'Brien during his maiden official visit to India from February 24 to 25. They visited Ahmedabad, Agra and New Delhi before leaving for Washington on Tuesday.

O'Brien, on his way back to the US, thanked the people of India for their support to President Trump, his wife and the American delegation.

"Thanks to all the people of India that came out to support President Trump and the First Lady, Melania Trump, and the US delegation, affirming their friendship and partnership far into the future," O'Brien said in a tweet.

"You have friends in the USA and in the White House," the NSA said.

Separately, the White House in a tweet thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the people of India for their incredible hospitality.

The White House tweet said President Trump and Prime Minister Modi talked at length about the India-Pakistan relationship. In

a stern message to Pakistan, India and the US on Tuesday asked

Islamabad to ensure that no territory under its control is used to launch terror attacks and strongly condemned cross-border terrorism in all its forms.

A joint statement said the two leaders called on Pakistan to expeditiously bring to justice the perpetrators of 26/11 Mumbai and Pathankot attacks.

The two leaders also called for concerted action against all terrorist groups, including Jaish-e-Mohammad, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hizbul Mujahideen, the Haqqani Network, D-Company, Al-Qaeda, ISIS and Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan.

At a press conference, the US president also said that ways to deal with terrorism figured prominently in his talks with Prime Minister Modi who, Trump stressed, is determined to check the menace.

Meanwhile, The Foreign Policy magazine said that Trump left New Delhi without delivering on an "incredible" trade deal despite years of high-level negotiations.

"As Washington is discovering, it is not easy dealing with a country led by a populist leader with a strong mandate and a proclivity towards protectionism. Despite those hurdles, the broader trendlines in the US-India relationship continue to seem robust, as shown by the visit itself," the magazine said.

PTI

## Saluja brings privilege against Minister

**BHUBANESWAR:** Congress member Santosh Singh Saluja on Wednesday brought a Privilege Motion against Water Resources Minister Raghunandan Das in the State Assembly alleging that he misled the House by furnishing different information on irrigation on different days. Raising the issue during the Zero Hour, Saluja said that while he had asked three questions to know about the percentage of land irrigated in Tureikela block in his constituency's Kantabanji block, the Minister's data furnished in response to the separate questions were different.

PNS

## India has .....

**From Page 1**

Gadkari said the country's ethno structure requires a great improvement if we need to augment tourism.

Gadkari said the Centre in coordination with Delhi and neighboring States is working on a war footing level to contain the pollution in the national Capital.

Stating that pollution and bad air environment have been a deterrent to tourists in visiting Delhi, Gadkari said project worth Rs 55,000 crore are on anvil and 150 black spots have been identified to reduce the pollution.

Talking about efforts of Railways to promote tourism, Railway Minister Piyush Goyal said, "We are running Ramayan Express which will connect sites associated with Lord Ram. Similarly there is a train called Saamanta Express which will

cover prominent places associated with Gautam Buddha and chief architect of the Constitution Dr BR Ambedkar." The idea is also to take the railway to Char Dham, he added.

The Minister said that as a nation we all must act together to bring the excitement back of promoting India. In fact Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself suggested each of us to plan a visit of 15 places within the country in next three years.

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Former Air India Chairman Ashwani Lohani underlined the need for promoting tourism by innovative means and greater connectivity. He also stressed the need for installing proper signages and create a literature bank of

## CAA riots toll.....

**From Page 1**

Asked if the victims have been identified, he said, "Many people have been identified, some are yet to be. The gush of injured patients had reduced to a trickle."

"Patients have several kinds of injuries, including from gunshots, stones and other weapons and many were hurt while jumping from rooftops to escape the rioters," hospital authorities said.

Holding the Centre and the Delhi Government responsible for the violence -- perhaps the first time since 1984 that the city has seen such scenes of communal mayhem -- Congress president Sonia Gandhi called for the resignation of Home Minister Amit Shah.

"The conspiracy was witnessed during Delhi polls and BJP leaders gave hate speeches creating atmosphere of fear and hatred," she said.

Shah must take responsibility for the violence in Delhi and resign, she said.

The slugfest continued with the BJP, in turn, accusing Gandhi of politicising the violence.

"Violence is ending. Investigation is on to find out the truth and identify culprits... At such a time, attacking Government and politicising violence is dirty politics," said Union Minister Prakash Javadekar, adding that it also demoralises police.

In a midnight hearing, the Delhi High Court directed police to ensure safe passage to Government hospitals and emergency treatment for those injured in the communal violence erupted in northeast Delhi over the amended citizenship law. Meanwhile, the Delhi Police have arrested 106 people for their alleged involvement in the northeast Delhi violence and registered 18 FIRs.

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## SC pulls up Delhi....

**From Page 1**

During the hearing, the court asked Mehta and Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch) Rajesh Deo if they had seen the video clip of BJP leader Kapil Mishra making alleged hate speeches.

While the solicitor general maintained that he does not watch television and has not seen those clips, Deo said he has watched the video of BJP leaders Anurag Thakur and Parvesh Verma but has not seen that of Mishra.

On the submission made by the police officer, Justice Muralidhar remarked, "I am really amazed at the state of affairs of the Delhi Police and asked the court staff to play Mishra's video clip in the courtroom."

When the gathering in the jam-packed courtroom started hooting, the Bench asked them to maintain decorum or else it will hold an in-camera proceedings.

At the outset, the hearing witnessed heated arguments between Solicitor General Mehta and Delhi Government counsel Rahul Mehra, who raised objection over the appearance of the law officer on behalf of the Police Commissioner.

Mehra said the issue has been settled by the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on the powers of the Centre and the Delhi Government and everyone should respect the Rule of Law of the country.

Mehta contended that the Union of India is also a stakeholder in the matter and he has been instructed by the LG to appear.

"Don't create an ugly scene here. I am not addressing a rally. I am addressing the lordships here," he said, who was then allowed to advance arguments in the matter.

The SG urged the court to

implead the Centre as a party in the petition as the issue involves law and order and requested that the matter be heard on Thursday. He also said the statements by BJP leaders Verma and Thakur were made several days back and it was not urgent to be heard today.

The court observed, "Does that not make it even more urgent. When the Commissioner was made aware of such statements, does he need someone to approach him to take action. As a law officer you answer whether this prayer (for lodging FIRs against three BJP leaders) is not urgent."

Mehta replied, "I am not saying it is not urgent, but it can wait till tomorrow."

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court chastised the Delhi Police for failing to act "professionally" and check "unfortunate incidents" of violence in north-east Delhi.

**SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE**

**ICICI Bank** Branch office: ICICI Bank Ltd, Landmark Building, 4th Floor, 228A, AJC Bose Road, Kolkata 700020  
CIN No: L65190GJ1994PLC021012, www.icicibank.com

**Whereas** The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the 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/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Sunil Kumar Jain/ Kamal Kumar Jain, Sweta Jain, Mahendra Kumar Jain, Surendra Kumar Lodha, Vidhi Jain, Sunil Kumar Jain (HUF), Kamal Kumar Jain (HUF), Surendra Kumar And Sons HUF, Mahendra Kumar Jain HUF, & Madan Bai Lodha/ Shanichari Bazar Sadar Bazar Palsa Para Chhattisgarh Durg-491001/ LBBL00001888325	Nazul Sheet No 29/D, A Part Of Plot No 72, House No 78, B. No. 269 Shanichari Bazar Apapura Mouza- Khas Durg N.P.N. Durg, Tahasil And District Durg Chhattisgarh Durg - 491001 Admeasuring An Area Of Land Area 2175 Sq. Ft. Built Up Area 2823 Sq. Ft./ Date Of Symbolic Possession- 22.02.2020.	30.03.2019 Rs. 55,41,349/-	Chhattisgarh
2.	Anshul Tuteja/ Mandeep Singh Tuteja/ Flat No. 504 Block-D-2 Brahma Suncity Wadgaon Sheri Maharashtra Pune 411014/ LBRPR00002725671, LBRPR00002725673 & LBRPR00004409707	Plot No 23, Sheet No 4, Khasra No 29/1 30/1, Ph No 110/40, Mouza/ Village- Shankar Nagar, Mohalla-new Shanti Nagar, Tahasil And District- Raipur, Ward No. 31, Shankar Nagar Ward, Chhattisgarh, Raipur Admeasuring An Area Of Land Area 1665 Sq. Ft./ 164.74 Sq. mtr. Constructed Area Ground Floor 1250 Sq Ft/ 116.17 Sq. Mtr, First Floor 150 Sq. Ft/ 13.94 Sq. Mtr./ Date Of Symbolic Possession- 22.02.2020.	23.11.2019 Rs. 70,61,198/-	Chhattisgarh/ Maharashtra
3.	Sriram Sarita Builders & Colonizers Private Limited/ Ashish Gupta & Sarita Gupta/ Shubhadra Niwas Sai Residency Arvind Nagar Nutan Chowk Sankarida Chhattisgarh Bilaspur 492115/ LBRPR00003338938	Shop No A-701 Babylon Tower 7th Floor Village- Telibandha P.H. No. 64 R.I. Circle- Raipur 2 Maharishi Vatsiki Ward No. 28 Raipur Tahasil And District- Raipur Part Of Khasra No 579/1 580/13 Chhattisgarh Raipur Admeasuring An Area Of 577 Sq. Ft./ Date Of Symbolic Possession- 22.02.2020.	31.10.2019 Rs. 16,38,987/-	Chhattisgarh

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : 27-02-2020  
Place: Chhattisgarh

Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited

**Public Works Department**  
Sector-19, North Block, Nava Raipur, Atal Nagar Distt.-Raipur (C.G.)

**E-Procurement Tender Notice**  
E-mail : tenders-pwd.cg@gov.in

NIT No. 266/TC/EinC/ PWD/2019-20 Dated 22.02.2020

**The Engineer-in-Chief, Public Works Department** on behalf of **Governor of Chhattisgarh** invites percentage rate bids on electronic tendering system under RCLWE RRP-II in the divisions of **Narayanpur, Kanker** for construction & up-gradation of Roads with estimated cost amounting **Rs 1953.52 Lacs** including their maintenance for five years from the contractors registered with unified registration system (e-registration) in Chhattisgarh. Non registered bidders may submit bid; however the successful bidder must get registered in appropriate class under "Unified Registration System (e-Registration) of Chhattisgarh before signing the agreement.

The bid document shall be available to bidders online free of cost and should be submitted online e-procurement system of government of Chhattisgarh in <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>. Bids form will be available on the website from 24.02.2020 and may be submitted up to 17:00 Hrs. on 05.03.2020

For participating in bidding process, bidders are required to register in the above web-site with nominal fee of Rs 500/- to be paid online to service provider. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have a valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from authorized certifying authorities.

The bidders are required to submit (a) original bid security in approved form and (b) original affidavit duly verified and notarized as per clause 4.4 B (a) (ii) and 4.4 B (c) to **Chief Engineer, Tender Cell, First Floor, Nirman Bhawan, PWD, North Block, Sector-19, Nava Raipur, Atal Nagar Distt.-Raipur (C.G.) 492-002** as per provisions of bid document through **Speed/ Registered post**, failing which the bids shall be declared non-responsive.

Detailed schedule of important dates may be seen on notice board of offices and also available on website of Public Works Department <http://pwd.cg.nic.in>

Engineer-in-Chief  
O/o Engineer-in-Chief, PWD  
Nirman Bhawan, Sector-19, North Block  
G- 7733/5 Ryp/Dtd 26.2.20 Nava Raipur, Atal Nagar Distt.-Raipur (C.G.) 492-002

# S Korean virus cases jump again, 1st US soldier infected

**Seoul:** South Korean virus cases jumped again on Wednesday and the US military confirmed its first case among American soldiers based in the Asian country, with his case and many others connected to a southeastern city with a growing illness cluster.

South Korea's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said 216 of the 284 new cases were in Daegu, where the government has been mobilizing public health tools to contain the spread of the outbreak, and in neighbouring towns. The US military said the 23-year-old soldier was in self-quarantine at his off-base residence. He had been based in Camp Carroll in a town near Daegu, and visited both Carroll and nearby Camp Walker in recent days, according to the statement.

South Korean authorities and US military health professionals were tracing his contacts to determine if other people may have been exposed. About 28,500 US troops are stationed in South Korea as a deterrent against potential aggression from North Korea. United States Forces Korea previously said a widowed dependent had the virus, the first case involving a USFK-related indi-

**DEATH TOLL: 2,715 TOTAL CASES: 78,000**

vidual. South Korea's 600,000-member military has reported 18 cases and quarantined thousands of soldiers as a precaution.

Bowling alleys, movie theatres and a golf course at four US bases were closed after the soldier's case was confirmed, Colonel Edward Ballanco, commander of the US Army Garrison Daegu, said.

All restaurants at the bases, and at Camp George in Daegu, could now provide only takeout meals with soldiers and family members prohibited from dining there, he said.

"This is a setback, it's true, there's no getting around that, but it's not the end of the war," he said on a video message posted on Facebook.

"We are very well equipped to fight this thing off. I am certain that, that soldier that has tested positive, he's on his way up to Camp Humphreys today, is going to get better medical care than anyone else in Korea who has the coronavirus."

South Korea now has 1,261 confirmed infections of the virus and 11 fatalities from the COVID-19 illness it causes. The national government has been channelling medical per-

sonnel, protective suits and other supplies to Daegu, and there are concerns the local hospitals are being overwhelmed and fatigued doctors are becoming vulnerable to infections.

"This week will be critical in the fight to combat the illness," Prime Minister Chung Se-kyun said at a meeting in Daegu City Hall to discuss quarantine efforts. **AP**

## ROUHANI SLAMS US FOR SPREADING 'FEAR' OVER VIRUS

**Tehran:** President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday accused the United States of trying to spread "fear" in Iran over a deadly outbreak of the novel coronavirus. Coronavirus has claimed the lives of 19 people among 139 infections in Iran making it the deadliest outbreak outside China. "We shouldn't let America mount a new virus on top of coronavirus that is called... Extreme fear," Rouhani told a weekly cabinet meeting, a day after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo accused Iran of suppressing information about the outbreak. The Americans "themselves are struggling with coronavirus. Sixteen thousand people have died of influenza there but they don't talk about their own (dead)," Rouhani said. Iran has been scrambling to contain COVID-19 since Wednesday last week when it announced the first two deaths in Qom, a centre for Islamic studies and pilgrims that attracts scholars from abroad. **AFP**

## FRANCE REPORTS FIRST FRENCH DEATH

**Paris:** A 60-year-old teacher has become the first French casualty of the coronavirus, the Health Ministry announced on Wednesday. The man died overnight in a Paris hospital, bringing the coronavirus death toll in the country to two, said the Ministry's deputy head Jerome Salomon. The first victim was an 80-year-old Chinese tourist who died in hospital in mid-February. The latest victim, who worked at a junior-high school in the town of Crepy-en-Valois, about 80 kilometres (50 miles) northeast of Paris, is not believed to have travelled to an area affected by the global coronavirus outbreak, the education ministry said. Le Parisien newspaper quoted the mayor of the teacher's hometown of Vaumoise as saying he had "begun to feel ill at the start of the (mid-term) holidays and had been quickly hospitalised." Classes are due to resume in northern France on Monday. **AFP**

## Cyberpolice arrest 24 over rumours in Iran

**Tehran:** Iranian cyberpolice have arrested 24 people accused of online rumour-mongering about the spread of the coronavirus in the country, semi-official news agency ISNA reported on Wednesday.

The Islamic republic has been battling to control an outbreak of the novel coronavirus that has claimed 19 lives among 139 infections in the past week.

"Twenty-four people were arrested and handed over to the judiciary and 118 (internet) users were talked to and let go" after receiving warnings, said Vahid Majid, head of the Iranian police force's cyber unit.

The arrests were carried out after the establishment of a special unit to "combat rumour-mongers regarding the 'spread of coronavirus in the country'," he was quoted as saying.

"The police are monitoring all the news published in the country's cyberspace." **AFP**

## Virus kills 4 in Iran, toll reaches 19: Ministry

**Tehran:** Iran on Wednesday reported four more novel coronavirus deaths among 44 new cases in the past 24 hours, taking the total number of fatalities to 19 and infections to 139.

Health Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour called on Iranians to refrain from travel as he announced the new tallies on state television.

Fifteen new COVID-19 cases surfaced in the Shiite holy city of Qom, nine in Gilan, four in Tehran, three in Khuzestan, two each in Sistan and Baluchistan, Kohgiluyeh and

## Cases emerging faster outside China: WHO

**Geneva:** There are now more new cases of the coronavirus reported each day outside China than inside the hardest-hit country, the World Health Organisation said on Wednesday.

"Yesterday, the number of new cases reported outside China exceeded the number of new cases in China for the first time," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told diplomats in Geneva, according to a written version of his speech.

The UN health agency put the number of new cases in China at 411 on Tuesday and those registered outside the

country stood at 427. Governments worldwide are scrambling to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus after a surge of infections in Italy, Iran and South Korea.

Tedros said the "sudden increase of cases" in those countries was "deeply concerning", adding that a WHO team would travel to Iran this weekend to evaluate the situation.

While new case numbers and deaths are dwindling at the disease epicentre in China, the country remains by far the hardest hit.

Tedros said that as of Wednesday morning, 78,190 cases of COVID-19 had been

# Malaysia's Mahathir, Anwar in new showdown amid turmoil

**Kuala Lumpur:** Malaysia was plunged into a bitter power struggle on Wednesday as Mahathir Mohamad sought to form a unity government following his shock resignation, but old foe Anwar Ibrahim also pushed to become premier.

The developments deepened a crisis that began when the ruling coalition -- which included both men when it stormed to a historic poll victory in 2018 -- fell apart after a failed bid to establish a new government without Anwar.

Anwar was Mahathir's designated successor, but he would likely have been pushed out and blocked from becoming leader if the weekend bid had succeeded.

Their notoriously stormy relationship has shaped Malaysian politics ever since Mahathir -- during a first stint in office in the 1990s -- sacked Anwar as his deputy, and he was jailed on dubious sodomy and

corruption charges. They reconciled ahead of the 2018 polls to oust a corruption-plagued coalition led by Najib Razak, but many were sceptical Mahathir -- at 94, the world's oldest leader -- would stick to a vow to hand power to Anwar.

Mahathir quit on Monday as premier but it remains unclear whether he had a hand in the plot to topple the government, although analysts suspect he at least gave it his blessing. He has been named interim leader and initially appeared to have strong support to remain as premier.

But backing fell away early Wednesday and rumours swirled Anwar had garnered enough support from MPs for the top job, fuelling expectations that Mahathir might finally cede power.

The elderly leader, however, announced in a televised address to the nation that he wished to establish a unity gov-

ernment, and was willing to return as premier.

"Party politics must be put aside for now," said Mahathir. "If allowed, I will try to form an inclusive government, not siding with any political parties." "If I still have the support I will return. If not I will accept whoever is chosen," he added.

Moments later at a press conference at his party headquarters, Anwar said he had received backing from three parties in the "Pact of Hope" coalition -- the grouping in power until Mahathir quit -- to become premier.

Anwar, 72, said the coalition had invited Mahathir to a meeting on Tuesday evening aimed at reviving the coalition, but after he failed to show they decided to put him forward as their candidate. "Since the attempt to topple the government last week we have remained steadfast in defending the mandate of the Malaysian people," he said. **AFP**

## US ready to consider pact with Taliban that advances peace process: Esper

**Washington:** The US is ready to consider an agreement with the Taliban after they have agreed to dramatically reduce violence across the war-torn Afghanistan, US Defence Secretary Mark Esper told lawmakers on Wednesday.

The US plans to sign an agreement with the Taliban on Saturday in Qatar. The historic deal would see the US withdraw thousands of troops, winding down America's longest war which was launched after the September 11, 2001 attacks but has grown increasingly unpopular at home.

"If the Taliban demonstrate the willingness and capability to do so, the US is prepared to consider an agreement that advances the peace process," Esper told members of the House Armed Services Committee ahead of a hearing on defence posture statement. "Should, intra-Afghan peace dialogues progress, the US will reduce our force posture as appropriate, based on conditions on the ground," Esper said. In Afghanistan, he said, the US remain committed to ending the war through a political agreement that ensures Afghanistan cannot be used as a safe haven for terrorist groups to attack the United States. **PTI**

## Lanka notifies UN its withdrawal from war crimes resolution

**Geneva/Colombo:** Sri Lanka on Wednesday notified the UN about its withdrawal from a UNHRC resolution that called for accountability to human rights abuses committed during the nation's civil war with the Tamil separatists and pledged to appoint a new committee to review the reports of the previous probes which investigated alleged war crimes.

Sri Lanka co-sponsored the United Nations Human Rights Council's 2015 resolution along with 11 other coun-

tries, including the US and Britain, calling for an investigation into alleged human rights violations during the island nation's civil war, which ended in 2009 with the killing of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) chief Velupillai Prabhakaran by the Lankan army.

The resolution 30/1 on promotion on reconciliation in Sri Lanka was co-sponsored by the Lankan government headed by then President Maithripala Sirisena.

Dinesh Gunawardena, Sri Lanka's foreign minister, in his address to the 43rd session of the UNHRC in Geneva announced the withdrawal while accusing the previous government in erring with co-sponsoring the resolution.

He declared a commitment to achieve sustainable peace "through an inclusive, domestically designed and executed reconciliation and accountability process, including through the appropriate adaptation of existing mechanisms." **PTI**

## Israeli Foreign Min slams Sanders 'horrifying comment'

**Jerusalem:** Israel's foreign minister denounced Democratic front-runner Bernie Sanders on Wednesday for what he called his "horrifying comment" about Jerusalem, saying that those who support Israel would not back Sanders' presidential candidacy after such remarks.

At a contentious Democratic debate on Tuesday night in South Carolina, Sanders labeled Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a "reactionary racist" and said he'd consider reversing President Donald Trump's historic move of the US Embassy to Jerusalem and return it to Tel Aviv.

In a daring foray into American domestic politics, Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz said there was a not a Jew in the world who "hasn't dreamed of Jerusalem" and Sanders words were so severe that he had no choice but to retort.

"We don't intervene in the internal American electoral process, which is splendid," Katz told Israel's Army Radio, before noting that Sanders had a long history of attacking Israel and the things most sacred to its identity and national security.

"Naturally, people who support Israel will not support someone who goes against these things," he added. Sanders' comments at the debate came after he recently announced he would skip an appearance before the pro-Israel lobby AIPAC, which he called a "platform for bigotry." **AP**

## Syrian troops push into last rebel area, hit civilian sites

**Beirut:** Shelling and airstrikes by Syrian government forces killed at least three people on Wednesday in northwestern Syria, where dozens of villages, including major rebel strongholds in the last opposition-held area, have been captured over the past few days.

The new push by Russian-backed Syrian troops could worsen the humanitarian crisis that has displaced nearly a million people and left more than 300 civilians dead since the beginning of December.

The Syrian Response Coordination Group, a relief group operating in the country's northwest, said that Government forces had struck numerous civilian targets in the past 24 hours, including eight schools and three medical centers. **AP**

## SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a Lady namely **Nutan Devi, W/o Sunil Thakur, R/o Z-18A, Gali No. 01, Prem Nagar, 2nd Kirari Suleman Nagar, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped since 27.01.2019 from her residence. In this regard, **DD No. 33-A dated 29.01.2019 has been registered at P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi.** Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the missing/kidnapped lady but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the missing/kidnapped lady is as under:

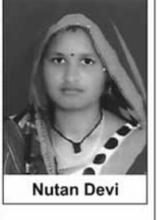
**Name:** Nutan Devi, **Gender:** Female, **Age:** 28 years, **Height:** 5'4", **Complexion:** Fair, **Face:** Round, **Wearing:** Red colour Saree, red colour sweater and slippers in her feet.

If anyone has any information regarding this missing/kidnapped lady, kindly inform SHO/Prem Nagar Delhi.

**E-mail :** ctc@cctbi.gov.in  
**Ph.:** 011-24368638, 24368641  
**Fax :** 011-24368639

**SHO**  
**P.S. Prem Nagar Delhi**  
**Ph. No.:** 011-25489080

**DP/08/RD/2020**



**Nutan Devi**

## Sharif declared 'absconder' by Pak for violating bail terms: Report

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has been declared an "absconder" by the government for violating the bail requirements by not presenting his medical report from his doctors in London, according to a media report on Wednesday.

Sharif, 70, left for London in November last for treatment after the Lahore High Court allowed him to go abroad on medical grounds for four weeks.

According to Sharif's physician, the three-time prime minister is suffering from complex multi-vessel coronary artery disease and substantial myocardial infarction and threatened myocardium for which he is due to undergo surgery.

The government on Tuesday decided not to extend the bail of Sharif and declared him an "absconder" for

violating the bail requirements by not presenting his medical report before a board formed on the order of the Islamabad High Court (IHC), Dawn Newspaper reported.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of the federal Cabinet presided by Prime Minister Imran Khan.

"After Nawaz Sharif failed to submit his medical report of any hospital in London, the medical board rejected a medical certificate sent by him and (the government) declared him an absconder," Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information Firdous Ashiq Awan said at a post-Cabinet meeting press conference.

"From today Nawaz Sharif is an absconder according to the law of land and if he does not return to the country he will be declared a proclaimed offender," Awan said. **PTI**

# Bangladesh again postpones Rohingya refugee island relocation

**Dhaka:** Bangladesh has yet again shelved a controversial plan to relocate some 100,000 Rohingya refugees to a flood-prone island in the Bay of Bengal, a minister said Wednesday.

Authorities have long sought to relocate some of the country's million-plus Rohingya population to Bhashan Char, despite warnings the silty strip of land was prone to violent and potentially deadly monsoon storms.

The move would take some pressure off the overcrowded border camps home to huge numbers of the persecuted and stateless Muslim minority, most of whom fled neighbouring Myanmar in 2017 after a brutal military crackdown.

But rights groups say that some refugees had been coerced into agreeing to relocation and the plan has been staunchly opposed by the Rohingya

community at large. Junior disaster management minister Enamur Rahman said Bangladesh would increase its focus on diplomatic talks aimed at returning the refugees home.

"The relocation plan has been postponed," he told AFP, adding that there had been "much progress" in repatriation discussions with Myanmar with China acting as intermediary.

Bangladesh and Myanmar have already signed a repatriation deal to send back some Rohingya to their homeland -- but safety fears mean very few have agreed to return.

Thousands are suspected to have been killed in Myanmar during the 2017 Rohingya crackdown and refugees brought reports of widespread rape and arson by soldiers and ethnic Rakhine mobs. **AFP**

## PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified for the information of general public that my client Mr. Ajay Ahuja & Mrs. Neelam are the owners of Property No. 180/A, measuring 59.3631 sq. mtr., Plot No. 208, Kharsa No. 511, Khatoni No. 582, Khasra No. 590, Village-Chandrawali alias Shahdara, Bholia Naih Nagar, Gali No. 9, Shahdara, Delhi, who purchased from Mr. Rameshwar Dayal, Mr. Gopal, Mr. Rajesh Kumar, Mr. Virender Kumar Sharma & Mr. Amit Sharma vide Sale Deed dated 29.06.2019. Mr. Amit Sharma, Mr. Gopal Sharma, Mr. Rajesh Kumar & Mr. Virender Kumar Sharma because of the owners of subject property by virtue of law of inheritance & Relinquishment Deed dated 17.05.2019 & 23.05.2016 after death of Late Bhagwati Devi & Late Surender Kumar Sharma. Survivor Certificate of Late Bhagwati Devi & Late Surender Kumar Sharma has not been obtained. Any person having any right or interest on below mentioned address within 15 days from the date of publication hereof together with copies of all documents on the basis of which claims are made, failing which any such right, title, interest or claim, if any, will be deemed to have been waived and not binding on our Clients. **C.K. JHA (Advocate)** E-524, Karkardooma Courts, Delhi-110032(M) - 9811295674

## PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that **Ramesh Kumar and Rajender Kumar 'Seller'** who claims to be owner and in possession of H.No.138-A at Sunlight Colony Phase-II, N.D.14 (hereinafter called the said property) by virtue of Conveyance Deed Dated 12.12.2019. Doc. No. 6508 and have inherited the said property from late Mawaz Ram and has agreed to sell the said property to Chandra Kant Mani And Said Chandra Kant Mani has agreed create mortgage of the said Property in favour of our clients, **IDFC First Bank Limited, having its office at ITO.** All persons/Institutions having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage, or otherwise, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 10 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan against the said property and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof. **Vishal Diwan (Advocate)** For Director and Company Secretary, LLP, Advocates and Solicitors House No. 2 (LGF), NRI Complex, New Delhi-19 Mobile No. 9818399999

**बिहार सरकार**

**जल संसाधन विभाग**

**कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय**

**बाढ़ नियंत्रण एवं जल निस्सरण प्रमण्डल, एकंगरसराय**

**अतिरिक्तकालीन निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या - 03 580 / 2019 - 20**

**(केवल ई-टेंडर पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाइट [www.eproc.bihar.gov.in](http://www.eproc.bihar.gov.in) पर)**

क्र. सं.	कार्य का विवरण	कार्य का नाम	प्रकल्पित राशि (लाख रु में)	अंशज की राशि (लाख रु में) (अंश लाईन अथवा फिजिकल/ नैचुरल मोड में मुआवते)	परिमाण - विपन्न का मूल्य (आवृत्तियों) (केवल ऑन लाईन मोड में मुआवते) रु में	बेट्टरों को देय विड प्रोसेसिंग की (अवृत्तियों) (केवल ऑन लाईन मोड में मुआवते) रु में	कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि
01.	हसन पईन का तल सफाई कार्य एवं एप्लाइंग का निर्माण कार्य, ग्राम मुनियाक से चौथा तक।		1207.16	22.08	10,000.00	17,700.00	15.05.2020
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2.	निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना निर्गत करने की तिथि				दिनांक - 20.02.2020		
3.	निविदा कागजात ज्ञापनलेख करने की अवधि				दिनांक 02.03.2020 से दिनांक 06.03.2020 के 3.00 बजे अपराह्न (सिर्फ वेबसाइट <a href="http://www.eproc.bihar.gov.in">www.eproc.bihar.gov.in</a> ) तक		
4.	प्री-बिड मीटिंग का समय, स्थान एवं तिथि				दिनांक-04.03.2020, 3.00 बजे अपराह्न में, मुख्य अभियंता का कार्यालय, बाढ़ नियंत्रण एवं जल निस्सरण, जल संसाधन विभाग, पटना।		
5.	निविदा अपलॉड करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय				दिनांक 07.03.2020 समय 3.00 बजे अपराह्न तक। (सिर्फ वेबसाइट <a href="http://www.eproc.bihar.gov.in">www.eproc.bihar.gov.in</a> ) पर)		
6.	तकनीकी विड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय				दिनांक 12.03.2020 समय 3.30 बजे अपराह्न। (सिर्फ वेबसाइट <a href="http://www.eproc.bihar.gov.in">www.eproc.bihar.gov.in</a> ) पर।		
7.	बिनीय विड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय				समय पदाधिकारी द्वारा बाद में घोषित की जायेगी (सिर्फ वेबसाइट <a href="http://www.eproc.bihar.gov.in">www.eproc.bihar.gov.in</a> ) पर।		
8.	निविदा खोलने का स्थान				<a href="http://www.eproc.bihar.gov.in">www.eproc.bihar.gov.in</a> पर		
9.	निविदा की बैकल अवधि				120 दिन		
10.	विज्ञापनदाता का पदमम एवं पता				कार्यपालक अभियंता, बाढ़ नियंत्रण एवं जल निस्सरण प्रमण्डल, एकंगरसराय।		
11.	विशेष जानकारी प्राप्त करने हेतु वेबसाइट <a href="http://www.eproc.bihar.gov.in">www.eproc.bihar.gov.in</a> एवं <a href="http://www.prdbihar.gov.in">www.prdbihar.gov.in</a> पर देखा जा सकता है।						

**कार्यपालक अभियंता**

**बाढ़ नियंत्रण एवं जल निस्सरण प्रमण्डल, एकंगरसराय**

**मो: 7463889580**

**अधेश शराव एवं मादक द्रव्य के सम्बंध में शिकायत टॉल फ्री नं. 18003456268 या 15545 पर करें।**

## The court rap

While the SC pulls up the police, the Delhi HC seeks action on FIRs against BJP leaders spewing hate rhetoric



This has now become quite the norm in this country, the judiciary not only becoming the voice of reason in our collective heads but telling the executive what it knows but chooses to forget all too conveniently according to political imperatives. First, it was the Supreme Court, which rapped the Delhi Police for its failure to control violence and allowing the situation in north-east Delhi, arising out of protests over the citizenship law, to drift. Second, the Delhi High Court, too, shamed it and cautioned the authorities to remain alert so that the carnage of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots was not repeated. It further sought registration of FIRs in all cases related to hate speeches and pulled it up for not acting against BJP leader Kapil Mishra.

The top court came down hard on the police, lamenting its lack of professionalism and shaming it for waiting to take orders from the powers that be. No matter what, the court chided, it could not hide under the fig leaf of acting under the Government's direction and not dispense its basic, clinical duty, that of maintaining law and order. Undoubtedly, Delhi police has a tough balancing act to do, considering the fact that unlike other forces in the country, which report directly to the respective State Governments, it has to take orders from the Ministry of Home Affairs. But is the mandate to toe its political master's choice above its duty to keep the peace? One of the principles of good policing is that the forces should function without any fear and favour, which they haven't. The failure of the top brass, too, in guiding junior colleagues and building their preparedness to face a riot-like scenario is all too apparent. With Amulya Patnaik's tenure coming to an end this month, his successor SN Shrivastava, who will take charge as the Delhi Police chief early next month, has a grave challenge ahead: To neutralise the criticism, instill a sense of purpose and impartiality within the men in uniform and win back the trust of the community, which at this point of time is non-existent. The police has to appear to be above board and with images and videos in a digitally aware society, it has been seen as nothing but a wimp. Even in the latest bout of violence, the police failed to deploy its existing strengths optimally despite clear signs over the last three days that they would be needed in large numbers. Yet its active involvement in the violence speaks volumes about it being tardy and directionless in its approach. Excuses for the lack of preparedness would be far-fetched for in the present case, the BJP leader, whose provocative words were the turning point in protests becoming violent, issued an ultimatum right in front of a senior police officer. An armed man had the gumption to confront an unarmed police officer, intimidate him and force him back with his hands raised before he fired a few shots in the air. This acquiescence to a member of a Central ruling party seems shocking considering that the same force had barged into the premises of a hostel library, hunting down students with the use of lathis and tear gas, just because they represented dissent. It is this partisan conduct of the police that has sent the wrong message to lumpens who feel emboldened by the fact that they stand protected because of their ideology and the party they represent. Before the recent clashes, the Delhi police has been fairly consistent in its crackdowns, be it at Tees Hazari during the lawyer-police clashes, at the Jamia Millia Islamia University, Shaheen Bagh and the Jawaharlal Nehru University to name a few. So it cannot claim a defanged status now. Given the pathetic state of affairs in public administration and the feeble claims of the police, the top court's anguish is understandable. Which is why it deferred hearing the plea for shifting the Shaheen Bagh protesters until March 23. In doing so, it has given the executive a chance at dialogue and resolving the situation by simmering down tensions. This brings into the picture the role of the Government in containing inflammable situations that cost human lives. No matter how many reforms are brought about in the police force or how much the overhaul, the executive must have the political will to steer the discourse amicably. A confrontationalist approach works only when you are in the Opposition party and not when you are in governance. The BJP has lost Delhi for sure but it cannot cry over spilt milk. If indeed it wants to contain the damage done to its declared intent, then it must attempt a dispute resolution rather than passing on that agency to the courts. No citizen wants a Government which has to be sermonised. Every citizen expects a Government to be responsive, not abrasive.

## No gold rush

Claims of the mineral's deposit in Sonbhadra, UP, show us why we must not jump the gun or celebrate



Uttar Pradesh's Sonbhadra district recently "struck gold" with the district mining officer KK Rai claiming that his team found deposits amounting to 3,000 tonnes. However, the euphoria around the "find" faded soon enough after the Geological Survey of India (GSI) stepped in to clarify that the estimated reserve was actually a paltry 160 kg. Though the GSI's announcement was a disappointment for the country, it proved to be an even bigger blow to those who started celebrating and taking credit for the "big find." It

also was a lesson in circumspection for media houses, which pounced on the news the second the claims were made and did not bother to verify them. Consequently, quite a few of them were left red-faced when the GSI stepped in to clarify the truth. Had the news been true, the deposits would have been almost five times India's current gold reserves of 626 tonnes and would have been worth an estimated ₹12 lakh crore. It would be a lifeline for a cash-strapped Government.

The addition of 3,000 tonnes to the country's gold reserves would have made us the nation with the world's second largest stock after the US, which has the biggest gold stockpile in the world at 8,133 tonnes, upstaging Germany with 3,366 tonnes. A real discovery would have bolstered the economy of Sonbhadra district, encouraging mining and allied activities, which could have generated jobs. The find would have also cut imports significantly over the next five years, leading to immense foreign exchange savings, because despite India's gold imports falling in 2019 to 646 tonnes, it still remains the largest importer of the yellow metal after China and imports 800-900 tonnes annually. Apart from that, had the quality of the gold been good enough, it could have been used as instant collateral for long-term loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), like it was done during the economic crisis of 1991. The only way to save the economy and Government from defaulting on the India debt of payments at that time was to secure a loan of \$2.2 billion from the IMF. Balach had then pledged 67 tonnes of its bullion. This helped the country raise \$600 million (more than ₹4,000 crore today) and by 1992-93 the economy started to improve. After 18 years, the Indian Government got back 200 tonnes of the yellow metal (almost three times of what was pawned) from the IMF. This ultimately led to our economy to be the force to be reckoned with it is today.

# The art of healing

In times when the Government is talking about oppressed minorities in neighbouring nations, should we be harassing Tibetans who have sided with India even in difficult times?



CLAUDE ARPI

India prides itself on its traditional systems of medicine that have now received the Government's support, too. In a major push to the healthcare sector, a separate Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) was set up in November 2014 "to ensure the optimal development and propagation of AYUSH systems of healthcare." It was earlier known as the department of Indian System of Medicine and Homeopathy (ISM&H). Its objective was to focus on the development of education and research in indigenous systems of medicine. Later, Sowa-Rigpa (the art of healing), a traditional Tibetan system of medicine practiced in the Himalayan belt, was added to it.

Men-Tsee-Khang, the Dalai Lama's Tibetan Medical & Astro institute based in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, is the main training and research center for Sowa-Rigpa. The institute recently prepared a "precious pill" called the Chulen Rilbu, which could allegedly prevent the spread of infectious diseases, including the dreaded Coronavirus (a concerned Dalai Lama had earlier given mantras for the purpose).

It is in this background that a shocking incident took place last week in Dharamsala. Dr GD Gupta, the local chief medical officer, decided to stop the distribution of Chulen Rilbu that was being sold for ₹5 to those interested. Local authorities cited reports of public disturbance and commotion created by the public demand for the pill. Though the Rimsung Rilbu is distributed in other centers all over the country, it is true that there were long queues at Dharamsala.

On February 16, the CMO visited the McLeod Ganj branch of Men-Tsee-Khang and verbally issued orders to stop the sale of the pill. He even threatened the Tibetan institute that non-compliance may result in fines up to ₹10 lakh and closure of clinics. This, obviously, was not in the CMO's power as the Ministry of AYUSH and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare are two separate Government entities. Further, the CMO does not have the capacity to judge the potency of the pill, which needs to be used as an amulet (the smell prevents the infection, according to Tibetan doctors). Did the CMO then possess special competence in law and order problems to act?

Under pressure of insensible local authorities, Men-Tsee-Khang's director, Tashi Tsering, had no choice but to issue a public notice, saying that the pill would not be sold at Tibetan clinics in Kangra district (it is still being sold in Delhi and elsewhere). According to *The Tibet Sun*, Tashi maintained that the institute had never made any claim regarding the pill having properties to prevent contagious diseases. He said, "The pill having prophylactic properties is prepared as per formulations given in the ancient Buddhist texts and has been around for centuries."

Many believe that the CMO's actions were only an act of jealousy. Men-Tsee-Khang is



a reputed institution established in 1916 in Tibet. It was re-established in Dharamsala by the Dalai Lama in 1961 and its main objective is to preserve, promote and practice Sowa-Rigpa.

Tibetan doctors are no quack. Dr Yeshe Dhonden, who recently passed away at the age of 92, was awarded the Padma Shri award by the President of India in 2018 for his contributions to Sowa-Rigpa. For years, Dr Dhonden served as Men-Tsee-Khang's director and from 1963 to 1980 as personal physician to the Dalai Lama.

Sowa-Rigpa is today famed across the world. According to the AYUSH Ministry's website, it is "one of the oldest, living and well documented medical tradition popular in the world. It is an ancient Indian medical system which was enriched in the entire Trans-Himalayan region." The medical treatise, the *Gyud-chi* or four tantras, written in Sanskrit, was enlarged between the 8th and 12th Century by scholars with inputs from China, Turkestan, Persia and Greece.

The implications of the threats uttered by the CMO are multiple. First, Sowa-Rigpa is popular all over the Himalayan belt, particularly in Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh (Lahaul, Spiti and Kinnaur), West Bengal (Darjeeling and Kalimpong), Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. It is also practiced in countries like Bhutan, Mongolia and Russia. It is an insult to the beliefs

**“ A SHOCKING INCIDENT TOOK PLACE LAST WEEK IN DHARAMSALA. DR GD GUPTA, THE LOCAL CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER, DECIDED TO STOP THE DISTRIBUTION OF CHULEN RILBU THAT WAS BEING SOLD FOR ₹5 TO THOSE INTERESTED. LOCAL AUTHORITIES CITED REPORTS OF PUBLIC DISTURBANCE AND COMMOTION CREATED BY THE PUBLIC DEMAND FOR THE PILL ”**

of the populations of these areas.

The greatest irony is that China is extensively using this system in its fight against the dreaded Coronavirus. *Xinhua*, quoting an official in Qinghai province said: "Tibetan medicine has played an active role in the virus treatment." The news agency said that the Chinese authorities are using Tibetan medicine "to help fight the Coronavirus in northwest China's Qinghai province."

Huang Licheng, an official with the provincial health commission, confirmed that "of Qinghai's 18 confirmed cases, 17 have received treatment involving traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and Tibetan medicine has played an active role in the treatment."

The province has officially incorporated allopathic and TCM treatments since the outbreak: "TCM doctors heavily participated in rescue work, especially those practicing Tibetan medicine."

*Xinhua* further reported: "The provincial hospital of Tibetan medicine produced a batch of anti-virus medications featuring Tibetan medicine, with 1,000 of them already sent to the front lines in Hubei Province." It added that "local Tibetan medicine hospitals have also produced medications to prevent virus infection and distributed them to the public for free."

There is another larger implication of the intolerant

attitude of the authorities in Himachal Pradesh. One can understand that with this type of behaviour, more and more Tibetan refugees want to leave India. At a time when the Central Government is taking up the defence of the oppressed minorities in neighbouring countries, why harass the Tibetans, who since they left their country, have sided with India even in difficult times? Remember the Tibetan Special Frontiers Forces' participation in the Liberation of Bangladesh in 1971?

The situation is already dismal. *The Tibet Sun* wrote: "The demographic landscape of the Tibetans in exile has drastically changed, with more than half the population shown by survey to have moved from India to Western countries." At one point, more than 1,35,000 Tibetans lived in India. The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) recently confirmed that the number of Tibetans in India has reduced drastically (to 72,000 according to some sources).

Is it in India's interests to antagonise a population, which already feels let down? No, it is not. Let us just hope that the local authorities will understand that, even if they are unable to grasp the larger political scenario, with China trying hard to attract the Tibetans back to Tibet.

(The writer is an expert on India-China relations)

## SOUNDBITE

The country needs a positive attitude and hence students should nurture and develop positive attitude and not obstructive or destructive attitude.



**Vice President**  
—M Venkaiah Naidu

I've learnt how to deal with the industry, where merit isn't the sacrosanct. You have to understand this is how it is and get on with your work...



**Actor**  
—Kay Kay Menon

Thanks to Indians who came out to support President Trump and the First Lady, Melania Trump during their visit to India. You have friends in America and the White House.



**US National Security Advisor**  
—Robert O'Brien

Violence in Delhi is a chilling reminder of the communal genocide in Gujarat in 2002 when the current Prime Minister was the State Chief Minister.



**CPI(M) general secretary**  
—Sitaram Yechury

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### A test of governance

Sir — Even in regimented autocracy, dissent has never been known to disappear, it just simmers. In avowed democracies, the test of governance lies in the Government's capacity to listen, respond to it and then channel it for a greater purpose. The ongoing violence in parts of Delhi pales before the pilot scale fracas at the Jawaharlal Nehru University earlier. If the latter was predicated on ideological divides, the former has willy nilly been steered into a territory uncomfortably reminiscent of darker periods in our history. All the more reason that policing ought to be more proactive, professional and emancipated.

**R Narayanan**  
Navi Mumbai

### An unending battle for Dalits

The torture that two Dalits from Rajasthan's Nagaur district had to undergo once again showcases their continuing vulnerability to violent attacks. Breaching all limits of cruelty and depravity, the assailants thrashed one of the victims with a screw driver. But for the disturbing video footage of the assault and torture that went viral on social media, the Rajasthan police would not have booked the culprits, given the institutionalised bias against the Dalits. The latter were punished for growing a moustache, riding a horse or a bike and using a decorated wedding car and so on. At other times, they are usually subjected to the worst violence on mere suspicion of theft.

In this instance, as in others, it was knowledge of the low caste status of the victims that emboldened the attackers to presume guilt and take the law into their own hands. In BR Ambedkar's words, the caste system is "an ascending scale of reverence and a descending scale of contempt." Dalits as a community are still denied access to material resources, state



aid, education, occupational specialisation and legal protection. It is tough "to annihilate" caste sanctified by religious texts. Still it has to be done for human equality and dignity to triumph.

**G David Milton**  
Maruthancode

### Keep up the good work

Sir — It is curious as well as interesting to know that an event called "Period Feast" was recently organised by a Delhi-based Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) to bust myths around menstruation.

The event came days after students of a college in Gujarat's Bhuj were forced to strip to prove that they were not menstruating while they were cooking food.

Later, a video of a religious leader surfaced in which he was seen sermonising that "menstruating women who cook food for

their husbands will take birth as dogs in their next lives."

The event was organised by Dr Surbhi Singh, the founder of "Sachhi Saheli" to debunk common misconceptions. A group of 28 menstruating women cooked and served meals to over 500 people at the "Period Feast" wearing aprons with the tagline,

"I am a proud menstruating woman!" There are so many myths and superstitions entwined with the idea of a menstruating woman. Education alone is the solution to dispel and displace such deep-rooted myths from the minds of people.

**TK Nandan**  
Chennai

### Sensitive matter

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Delhi aflame" (February 26). Clashes in the capital are a matter of grave concern. BJP leaders were entrusted with the responsibility of convincing the people in favour of the Citizenship Act. It was expected of them to dispel doubts and apprehensions and not issue provocative statements like its leader Kapil Mishra has done. Leaders and Governments must be more sensitive with matters related to security.

**Sweta**  
Via email

### Anti-CAA protests

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Delhi aflame" (February 26). In the present surcharged atmosphere, leaders need to exercise restraint and refrain from making provocative comments. Instead, they must play a constructive role.

**Juhi**  
Via email

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

**FIRST COLUMN**

## Set a budget for success

The means to reach financial targets are through budgeting, the only weapon to control spending and improve saving



HIMA BINDU KOTA

As we go through life, our aspirations increase and we set ourselves different goals to achieve those dreams. Of the many targets, financial objectives, mostly driven by needs and desires, are the most important ones and goals are set for saving and spending. The means to reach financial targets is through budgeting, which is the weapon to control spending and improve saving. Budgets are generally created on a monthly basis and record both expected incomes and expenses. The aim is not only to control expenses but to make payments more efficient. Budgeting is an effective tool for achieving financial goals as it keeps track of your income and spending patterns by planning the proportion of money that you either spend or save. Although making a monthly budget may not sound exciting, it is crucial to keep finances in check. Spending less in one area can help save money that can be used in several ways like funding a bigger purchase, saving for an emergency, college education of children or retirement. So collect as much information as possible regarding your spending pattern and create a budget to stay on top of financial goals.

**Define your goals:** It is beneficial for any household to live on a strict budget, since savers have much less financial worries as compared to spenders. So defining goals is a great way to start the budgeting process. Research shows that psychology plays a crucial role in money matters and there is a greater possibility of achieving financial goals if a budget is created.

**Be as elaborate as possible:** Gather as much information as possible about all sources of income and expenditure including spending and income, like bank statements, investment details, utility bills or expenditure on entertainment.

**Calculate your income:** This is a fairly simple thing to do if you have a job and a secure monthly income. If you are self-employed or have any outside sources of income, be sure to record these as well.

**Make a list of current spending habits:** This is important if you want to develop a realistic budget as you must have a clear idea about where your money is going. You must track your expenses for at least 30 days to get a clear idea of the spending pattern. Some of the ways of tracking spending habits is to capture them into spreadsheets, using an appropriate app or keeping a tab of credit card statements. Apart from some regular expenses, some overheads are irregular like birthdays and vacations. Your calendar and past credit card statements will help you make a list of all expenses that crop up throughout the year. It is a known fact that people who borrow to cover holiday costs take a long time to repay as compared to those who budget throughout the year. Budgeting makes sure that you don't need to take a loan for vacations.

**Fixed and variable expenses:** Divide your expenses into regular monthly ones that are fixed in nature like home loan or rent, car instalments, fuel, school fees, credit card payments and so on. Some expenses are variable in nature like groceries, eating out, entertainment and gifts.

**Identify your long-term financial goals:** Identifying long-term goals will help in aligning the budget as it helps in deciding how much you need to set aside. Generally it is known that setting objectives increases motivation and achievement. You should follow the SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-based) strategy to set goals. For example, be specific and have a target of saving ₹5,00,000 for the down payment of the house instead of just "save for the house." Also include deadlines: When do you want to buy that house or purchase a new car or retire or send your kids to college? Set a target date by which you'll need to achieve your goal.

**Use a strategy:** One of the strategies that could be used is 50-30-20: Allocate 50 per cent of the income towards essentials like rent, food and so on, while 30 per cent should be assigned towards vacations and entertainment and the remaining 20 per cent should go towards savings.

**Stay on track:** It is highly recommended that you review your budget. Comparing the actual expenses versus the budgeted ones help you identify the gaps, make necessary improvements and stay on track.

So, you have now got a perfect budgeting process but can you get it right without making any mistakes? Generally, people get discouraged if they are not able to stick to their budgets. To save yourself from any frustration, it is important not to have unrealistic expectations and to realize that fixed expenses have a tendency to create havoc with your budget rather the variable ones. Although budgeting is an important aspect of financial planning, it might become overwhelming and quite challenging for people not used to financial discipline. With the steps discussed above everyone should be able to create a budget and try and stick to it. You will be surprised to know that once you live on a budget, save money for the future and spend guilt-free, you will experience a much happier life. (The writer is Associate Professor, Armita University, Noida)

## WHY WERE ADDITIONAL SECURITY FORCES NOT CALLED WHEN IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE SITUATION WAS BEYOND THE CONTROL OF THE DELHI POLICE?

—CONGRESS PRESIDENT SONIA GANDHI

## POINT COUNTERPOINT



## DELHI POLICE AND OTHER AGENCIES ARE WORKING ON THE GROUND TO ENSURE PEACE AND NORMALCY.

—PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

# Breaking the mud ceiling

The heroic stories of tenacious rural women scripting tales of success are great signs of a brighter tomorrow in the villages of India



MOÏN QAZI

In the last two decades, the gender landscape in rural India has been slowly greening and women are now on the cusp of a powerful social and political revolution. The harbinger of this change is a unique policy experiment in village-level governance that has brought transformative results for the weakest of the weak and the poorest of the poor: The village women. In 1993, India introduced the Panchayati Raj Act, mandating a three-tiered structure of local governance at the village, block and district levels with reservation of one-third of all posts in gram panchayats (village councils) at the bottom tier of India's decentralised governance system, for women. The vision was that these women-headed councils would bring greater transparency and better governance in their villages. It revitalised an age-old system of rural local Government whose name "panchayat" is drawn from Sanskrit, meaning the council of five wise men.

This new law was a step towards the fruition of Mahatma Gandhi's dreams of village-level self-governance with gender justice as a key pillar. Gandhi believed that, if implemented correctly, the Panchayati Raj system would alleviate the alienation of the common people from governance and also preclude the external intervention of higher-level civic officials, who might not be familiar with the concerns of local people. Earlier politics was considered a foul word and women were expected to keep a hygienic distance from it. However, development scientists and social activists now acknowledge that the modern development paradigm has a political salience and politics underpins all facets of development. It is politics which is the firing engine for all the cylinders of development. It is true that political power needs to be sanitised and has to be reinforced with ethical underpinnings in order to make it more benevolent. This can come about only when more educated and development-oriented individuals embrace politics as a critical arena for innovation and change. Politics is the fulcrum of governance and unless the quality of political timber is improved, governance will continue to limp.

Experience of this social and political experiment has shown that women are not just equal to the task but orientate public-good provision more towards the preferences of their gender, namely more water, health and roads. Though less politically-savvy and often only semi-illiterate, these women had an advantage in being actively mentored by the district bureaucracy. Several NGOs also designed programmes for skilling them in governance. Women face a host of difficulties handling political power: Cultural norms, social hierarchies and patriarchal practices — which together tend to favour and attract men and discourage the participation of women.

Several women who started their political careers as self-described "rubber stamp" officials are now asking questions about Budget allocations. They stride about in Government offices with polished informality sharing their concerns with officials in tones of supportiveness and also assertiveness. They are successfully challenging the traditional village male elite by defying petrified social codes of female bias and are now powerful aspirational symbols and role models. Women leaders today are more than just mouthpieces for their politically-savvy husbands. For most of them, reserved posts offer the only real opportunity to bring change to their communities. When these seats are coupled with new skills — from public speaking to development planning to budget management — they are better prepared to deliver development to their societies and negotiate within the political space that has opened for them. However, the path they have trodden after the im-



“SEVERAL WOMEN WHO STARTED THEIR POLITICAL CAREERS AS SELF-DESCRIBED 'RUBBER STAMP' OFFICIALS ARE NOW ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT BUDGET ALLOCATIONS. THEY MOVE ABOUT IN GOVERNMENT OFFICES WITH POLISHED INFORMALITY, SHARING THEIR CONCERNS WITH OFFICIALS IN TONES OF SUPPORTIVENESS AND ALSO ASSERTIVENESS. THEY ARE SUCCESSFULLY CHALLENGING THE TRADITIONAL VILLAGE MALE ELITE BY DEFYING PETRIFIED SOCIAL CODES OF FEMALE BIAS AND ARE NOW POWERFUL ASPIRATIONAL SYMBOLS AND ROLE MODELS. WOMEN LEADERS TODAY ARE MORE THAN JUST MOUTHPIECES FOR THEIR POLITICALLY-SAVVY HUSBANDS. FOR MOST OF THEM, RESERVED POSTS OFFER THE ONLY REAL OPPORTUNITY TO BRING CHANGE TO THEIR COMMUNITIES”

tial euphoria of winning the elections has not been easy. There have been growing pains and many early entrants retreated, never to emerge again. The avalanche of social and cultural mores rained heavily on them. Although the resistance is whittling down, it is clear that achieving gender equality in leadership will require sustained policy actions that favour women over a long time.

The vision is truly not as romantic as many would like us to believe. But, as women have shown, they have all that is needed to ride out these storms. The men know this very well but they don't want to concede that women possess the ability to be the better halves because they are afraid of losing their last refuge, politics.

In the long-term, the journey is going to be harder and tougher than policy wonks can imagine. The wait could potentially be eternal. But if bureaucrats can muster the will, they can succeed. They know from past lessons that they have the tools and they need to vigorously back reforms that can engender greater empowerment for women. For sustainable change to happen, women need to actively compete in the present political game. Legislation and policy pronouncements seldom penetrate the surface of social and political barriers. They are ultimately impotent against the grid of the established power structures inherent in most rural households and villages.

The great strength of democracy, according to Amartya Sen, lies in that, "it gives people in need a voice and, by so doing, plays a protective role against so many different forms of political and economic abuse". The Panchayati Raj is just a beginning; it is only one step on the way, but it is the right step on the right ladder.

These women are reconfiguring gender and social dynamics and have started exploring their wider responsibilities as stakeholders as citizens of a polity. However, decentralisation is not easy. The skill levels in impoverished communities

are very low. And, in a country where democracy has been established in a top-down manner, a feudal mindset may still prevail. The people may not be aware that the Government should be accountable to the people — not the other way around.

A lot of positive changes are coming in the better-governed villages. There are still large swathes where discriminatory traditions continue to dominate. Several factors constrain the effective participation of women leaders. Some of these relate to a patriarchal culture, which neither sees women as political entities nor allows them to develop their potential. The same cultural standards also prohibit women from envisioning themselves as political entities. Other related factors that constrain participation are a lack of basic familiarity of women with political governance and absence of legal literacy. Women need to be given adequate advocacy tools strengthening democratic engagement and gain control over local resources and influence over local governance. Village assemblies are a critical participatory institution in providing equal access to all members of the community to the deliberations and negotiations in local governance; but elite control of these bodies has prevented functional democracy from taking roots. It has been found that the average participants in such village assemblies are the less-poor households with the participation of the poor dwindling over the years. This is the reason why, in several remote and tribal pockets, Panchayat Raj has failed to enhance the social outcomes for most citizens.

The social pecking order of villages cannot be overturned easily and several challenges remain to fuller empowerment. Legitimately-elected women representatives remain vulnerable to manipulation and harassment and are often reduced to mere proxies, while the real decision-making authority remains with their husbands or power brokers from higher castes. There are also instances where a woman

belonging to a Scheduled Caste or tribe has been elected as head of a panchayat but is at the mercy of her upper caste landlord in the village for her livelihood. In such cases, too, the reins of power and decision-making clearly lie elsewhere.

At the policy level, we must understand the structural impediments in the full evolution of Gram Panchayats as functional governance units remain. The Panchayati Raj Act created these bodies but did not endow them with various governance functions — like the financial authority on provision of education, health, sanitation and water. Instead the law simply enumerated the functions that could be transferred and left it to the State Legislature to devolve them. There has been very little devolution of authority and functions till now. Gram sabhas were expected to be the primary legislature of rural governance with responsibilities to catalyse local planning by conducting 'needs assessment' exercises and devising plans for development projects that would be aggregated at the panchayat level. When further aggregated and rationalised at the district level, these would become official inputs into the State Government's annual budgeting process.

Gram sabhas did remain a pivotal institution in local planning; but had little real role in governance. Despite the noble intention, they have struggled to stay relevant. They continue to be plagued by low participation and frequent hijacking by influential interests and have not been able to mature into viable democratic units. The dip in popular participation and weak political will has had significant implications for the future of democratic decentralisation in India.

The heroic stories of tenacious women scripting tales of success are great signs of a brighter tomorrow. Women's empowerment is a journey, not a fixed point that yields to simple policies. (The writer is a well known development professional)

# US First Ladies leave their mark

While the American First Lady's role has evolved over the years, this is not the case in India. One just hopes that the spouses of future leaders of the country will come out from under the shadow of their husbands



KALYANI SHANKAR

The only visible programme arranged for the visiting US First Lady Melania Trump, apart from posing for photographs with the iconic Taj Mahal serving as a majestic backdrop and waving at the massive crowds lustily greeting the American First Couple in Ahmedabad, was a visit to a Delhi Government school on Tuesday. This was the first time that a US First Lady visited a school in India. The visit was arranged as Melania showed an interest in the "happiness curriculum" introduced by the Delhi Government as part of its innovative move to refine

the education system. It was launched on July 2, 2018 in the presence of the Dalai Lama, to help students remain stress-free. The curriculum is being taught to an estimated 10 lakh students in over 1,000 schools. The daily 45-minute "happiness class" is usually the first period for students in classes I to VIII, while Kindergarten children have classes twice a week.

The "happiness curriculum" has become one of the showcase projects of the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government in the education sector. In October 2019 Dutch King Willem Alexander and Queen Maxima also witnessed a "happiness class".

The US First Lady's role is not restricted to being just decorative and has evolved significantly since the days of Martha Washington who played hostess to visiting dignitaries during George Washington's presidency. They have always made use of their global visits in a positive manner.

Jacqueline Kennedy, who visited India in the '60s made a terrific impression on the people.

Indians were also so enamoured by Rosalyn Carter and her husband Jimmy that the village of Chuma Kheragaon in Haryana was renamed Carterpuri in honour of their visit. Hillary Clinton was a household name in the country and she continued her interest in India even after she ceased being the First Lady. Similarly, Michelle Obama enchanted India during her two visits.

Melania's visit also generated quite a bit of interest as she was one of the most glamorous First Ladies to visit the country and her carefully-chosen outfits created quite a stir, with the fashion police appreciating two and dissenting the third. However, apart from her obvious glamour quotient, she has kept a somewhat low profile. The Guardian newspaper once described Melania as "seldom seen and even more seldom heard. The former model may not be as popular as her predecessor Michelle

Obama, but she is far more popular than her husband."

Incidentally, many First Ladies have supported some special cause close to their hearts using their celebrity status. While Jacqueline Kennedy promoted American arts, Eleanor Roosevelt took up progressive causes, including civil liberties, Hillary Clinton came up with a new health plan, Laura Bush promoted literacy, Michelle Obama a better diets for children and so on. Melania Trump, too, focusses on issues affecting children. In the past four years she has made multiple visits to schools — both in the US and abroad. From participating in a Viking huddle class, in Michigan, to taking the Queen of Jordan to Washington DC's first public charter school for girls at Excel Academy, Melania showed her commitment to kids. During international trips, she has visited the American International School in Riyadh and took a calligraphy lesson with local children at a Kyobashi Tsukiji Elementary School

with Akie Abe while visiting Japan. Melania is also involved in an initiative to help American children that she launched in May 2018. The awareness campaign, called "Be Best", is dedicated to children's well-being, cyberbullying and opioid abuse.

According to *The New York Times*, though President Trump tried to dissuade her from getting involved in the initiative, Melania stuck to the cause. The Palm Beach Atlantic University in Florida honoured her this month as its "2020 woman of distinction." But Melania has faced criticism for not speaking out against her husband's tweets and actions, like the controversial separation policy where children caught on the border were split up from their parents and kept at detention centres.

However, unlike the US, there have been few visible and active spouses of Indian presidents and prime ministers. Not much is known about the wives of Presidents Rajendra Prasad and

S Radhakrishnan. Thankfully, VV Giri's wife Saraswati Bai took up a more public role and Abida Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed became an MP twice. Pranab Mukherjee's wife Suvra was unwell most of the time and Giani Zail Singh nominated his daughter as his hostess.

Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's wife Lalitha was more of a housewife and most of the others followed suit. However, Sonia Gandhi took interest in her role as the hostess and Manmohan Singh's wife Gursharan Kaur was more visible. PV Narasimha Rao declared his daughter as his hostess and the wives of JK Gujral and Deve Gowda kept a low profile.

Sadly, most of them did not utilise their position like the American First Ladies to promote any social cause or take active part in politics.

One just hopes that the spouses of future leaders of the country will come out from under the shadow of their husbands. (The writer is a senior journalist)



## JUSTICE AT LONG LAST

For too long movie mogul Weinstein considered himself beyond the law. This week his accusers — and the wider #MeToo movement — got the justice they had been seeking. His conviction has shown that even the most aggressive and victim-blaming defence tactics can be defeated. Vulnerable witnesses who do not conform to the mythical type of the "perfect victim" can still be believed. (The Guardian editorial)

# Sonia, NCP seek Shah's resignation for Delhi violence

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Opposition on Wednesday slammed the Centre over Delhi violence with Congress president Sonia Gandhi and NCP demanding the resignation of Home Minister Amit Shah and CPI(M) saying that the Delhi is a "chilling reminder" of the 2002 Gujarat riots. The Opposition also sought time from President Ram Nath Kovind to discuss the violence that has engulfed parts of northeast Delhi. CPI(M) general secretary Yechury has written a letter to the President seeking appointment for the group of leaders.

Calling for Amit Shah's resignation, Sonia held the Centre, the Home Minister and the Delhi Government responsible for the communal violence in the city. Senior Congress leaders including general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra participated in a party peace march from the AICC headquarters against the violence in Delhi and would submit a memorandum to President Ram Nath Kovind on Thursday.

Sonia spoke to the media after chairing a Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting, and alleged there was a "well-planned" conspiracy behind the violence, that has also led to injuries to more than 200 people over the past three days.

NCP MP Supriya Sule also demanded Amit Shah's resignation for the "huge security lapse" in connection with the violence in Delhi and also urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to conduct a "transparent" probe into the alleged security lapse.

"The Centre should be held responsible for what has happened in Delhi. Union Home Minister Amit Shah must resigning moral responsibility," Sule told reporters outside the Vidhan Bhavan (Legislature Complex) in Mumbai. "It is a huge security lapse during US President Donald Trump's visit. The home minister is responsible for it," she added. "There should be an impartial probe into it...It is my humble request that the PM carries out a transparent inquiry into the security lapse," the NCP leader said.

Talking to reporters separately, former Maharashtra chief minister Prithviraj Chavan said, "The Godhra model has been replicated in Delhi." He was referring to the 2002 post-Godhra communal riots in Gujarat, in which over 1,000 people, mostly from the minority community, were killed.

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury on Wednesday said the violence in Delhi is a "chilling reminder" of the 2002 Gujarat riots. He said there was no way to restore peace and normalcy in Delhi



other than by calling in the Army.

"It's clear that the violence in Delhi has the sanction of police and that of the powers that govern them. Adequate compensation should be provided to the kin of the dead and those injured by the Centre and the state government," he said. "I, along with the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, D Raja, President of the Loktantrik Janata Dal, Sharad Yadav, President of the Samajwadi Party, Akhilesh Yadav and prominent leaders of political parties like the DMK, NCP and others wish to seek an appointment with you at the earliest, preferably the 28th of February, 2020," Yechury said in his letter to President Kovind.

The Congress Working Committee (CWC) passed a resolution, demanding answers from both the governments, while also urging the people of

Delhi to "reject the politics of hate and do their best in healing the rifts caused by these shameful events".

"After reviewing the situation, the CWC is of the firm opinion that what has hap-

pened in Delhi is a colossal failure of duty for which the entire responsibility must be borne by the Central Government and particularly the Home Minister and (the CWC) calls upon the Home Minister to tender his resignation immediately," said Gandhi, reading out the CWC resolution.

She went on to attack the AAP dispensation, saying Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his government are "equally responsible for not activating the administration" to reach out to the people to maintain peace and harmony. "It is the collective failure of the two governments that has resulted in a great tragedy in the capital city which threatens to become worse by the day," she said.

## BJP rakes up '84 riot issue, says Cong has Sikh blood on its hand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Responding to Congress President Sonia Gandhi's demand for the resignation of Union Home Minister Amit Shah over the Delhi violence, the BJP on Wednesday raked up Sikh riots of 1984 saying the party whose hands are soiled with the blood of innocent Sikhs is talking about controlling violence and indulging in "dirty politics".

Senior BJP leader and Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said that Shah was continuously working with the police to control the situation in the national capital and demanding his resignation was "laughable".

"The Home Minister is continuously working with the police, helping their morale and directing them. Such comments and politics from the Congress will not help the morale of the police. We appeal to them to not do politics on the issue," Javadekar told a press conference.

He further said Shah had called a meeting of all political parties including the Congress over the communal violence in Delhi -- which has, so far, left at least 22 dead -- and asserted it is the responsibility of all parties to help maintain peace.

Javadekar said all parties should cooperate and work for peace at a time when violence is abating, notwithstanding the ongoing investigation.

Earlier, at a press conference here Congress President had held Union Home Minister for failing to check violence and demanded that he should step down.

The Home Minister is continuously working with the police, helping their morale and directing them. Such comments and politics from the Congress will not help the morale of the police. We appeal to them to not do politics on the issue

-Prakash Javadekar

"Playing a blame-game at this time is wrong. Politicising such violence is a wrong way always used by the Congress," Javadekar said, while asserting that culprits will be identified and no one responsible will be spared.

"At such a time, attacking the government and politicising violence is a dirty politics," he said, adding that it also demoralizes police.

He also raked up the 1984 anti-Sikh riots when the Congress was in power to hit back at the opposition party.

"Those whose hands are tainted with the bloods of innocent sikhs in 1984 are now talking about checking the violence...They themselves had supported the violence," Javadekar alleged.

## BJP slams Opp for boycotting Trump banquet at Prez house

New Delhi: Accusing the Congress of putting "family interest above national interest", the BJP on Wednesday attacked the Opposition party for declining to attend a banquet given in the honour of visiting US President Donald Trump at the Rashtrapati Bhavan because its president Sonia Gandhi was not extended an invitation.

Senior BJP leader and Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said his party presidents were also not invited for similar ban-



quets to honour US president George Bush and Barack Obama when they had visited India when the Congress-led UPA was in power.

The BJP had not boycotted

the events then, he said, noting that Rajnath Singh and Nitin Gadkari were the party president in 2006 and 2010 respectively during the visits of US presidents.

Prasad noted that Ghulam Nabi Azad and Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Congress leader in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha respectively, besides former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh were invited for the banquet given in Trump's honour.

# India will cross border in dealing terrorism: Rajnath

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India will not hesitate to cross the border in dealing terrorism, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Wednesday on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Balakot air strikes. The IAF jets on this day bombed Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terror camp in Pakistan in retaliation against the killing of 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) men in a suicide attack in Pulwama on February 14.

In his tweet message to mark the anniversary, the defence minister said India's approach in dealing with terrorism has undergone a major change as its armed forces now do not hesitate to cross the border to protect the country against the menace.

"I thank the Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi for bringing change in India's approach against terrorism & our ways to counter terror. The Surgical Strikes of 2016 and Balakote Air Strikes of 2019 are testimony to this change. This is certainly a New and Confident India in making," Singh said in a series of tweets.

He also said "India today celebrates the first anniversary of Balakote airstrikes."

It was a successful counter terror operation launched by

the fearless @IAF\_MCC air warriors," Singh tweeted.

He said the Modi government has adopted a new approach to combat terror reflecting a strong resolve to even carry out cross border strikes to protect India from the scourge of terrorism.

For his part, Air chief Marshal RKS Bhadoria flew a MIG 21 sortie of squadron 51 at Srinagar base. This squadron had taken part in the dog fight with Pak F 16s on Feb 27, a day after the Balakot strikes.

On September 29, 2016, the Army carried out surgical strikes on a number of terror launch pads across the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir in retaliation to an attack on its base in Uri that month.

A fleet of Mirage jets on February 26 early morning last year carried out aerial strikes against the JeM terrorist camp in Balakot. The next day Pakistan Air Force retaliated by crossing the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri and Poonch to target military installations.

However, the IAF jets thwarted the attempt and in the ensuing aerial battle one F-16 was downed by a Mig-21 flown by Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman. During the aerial combat, his

plane was hit by ground fire from Pakistan and he had to eject. The Pakistan Army captured him after his parachute landed across the LOC.

The IAF pilot returned to India three days later following diplomatic outreach by major powers and India's stern warning to Islamabad led to his release after two days, averting further escalation of the conflict.

It was the first time since the 1971 India-Pakistan war that the IAF jets crossed the LOC thereby signaling a doctrinal change in India's counter-terror approach as the strike was carried out deep inside Pakistan.



Chief of Army Staff General MM Naravane interacts with senior officials security forces on Wednesday in Srinagar. Pioneer photo

## Army chief reviews security in Kashmir

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General MM Naravane on Wednesday visited Kashmir for two days to review the prevailing security situation.

Accompanied by Northern Army Commander Lt Gen YK Joshi and Chinar Corps Commander Lt Gen KJS Dhillon, Naravane visited the formations and units deployed along the Line of Control.

The COAS was briefed by the local commanders on the situation prevailing in the Line of Control (LoC), ceasefire violations, India's retaliation, counter-infiltration operations and operational preparedness being maintained in the region.

During his interaction with the soldiers, Naravane praised the sharp vigil and alertness along the Line of Control (LoC) and the high morale of the troops.

He also exhorted the soldiers to remain alert for any eventuality. Naravane further reinforced the need to be prepared to meet emerging security challenges effectively at all times.

The COAS was earlier briefed by the Chinar Corps Commander at the Badami Bagh Cantonment on the overall situation pertaining to the Line of Control and the hinterland.

Naravane also interacted with senior officials of the administration and security forces besides meeting members of the civil society.

## CISF takes over security of pivotal Srinagar airport

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on Wednesday took over the security of the strategic Srinagar international airport.

The security unit will at the Srinagar airport be headed by a senior Commandant rank officer. The airport was earlier secured by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) that has major deployment in Jammu and Kashmir besides component of the Jammu and Kashmir police. With this induction, total airports under CISF security cover raised to 62 as on date.

Special Director General of CISF Airport Sector M A Ganapathy was the chief guest on the occasion. The function was attended by senior officials of Airports authority of India, CRPF and representatives of Airlines operators (Air India, Air Asia, Indigo, Spice jet, Go Air etc.) and other stakeholders, the CISF said in a statement.

During the ceremony, Airport Director, Srinagar airport, Santosh Dhoke handed over a key replica to Commandant Srinagar airport, Amandeep Singh Dhaliwal as symbol of handing over of security to CISF. In his address, Ganapathy emphasized that coordinated efforts should be made by all government agencies and stakeholders to ensure security of Srinagar airport. After the function, SDG,

Airport sector along with Commandant, Srinagar airport and Airport Director, Srinagar airport, AAI visited all the area of airport including terminal building and airside, and reviewed the security arrangement of the airport. Ganapathy also addressed the CISF personnel at the airport.

The CISF has deployed over 500 personnel to guard the premises, which includes frisking at the gate followed by comprehensive search ahead of boarding a flight.

The CISF, which has been tasked with security of all airports and government installations, will provide a "comprehensive anti-terror cover to the facility", a senior official said.

The CISF has deployed over 500 personnel to guard the premises, which includes frisking at the gate followed by comprehensive search ahead of boarding a flight.

The CISF is the designated Force for securing all the airports and other vital installations, including government buildings and industrial establishments in the defence and space sectors as also private sector. The CISF will provide a "comprehensive anti-terror cover to the facility", officials said.

The CISF will be guarding the airport premises while the CRPF and the Jammu and Kashmir Police will secure the outer perimeter.

## Prez Kovind to confer awards on five women scientists

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Ram Nath Kovind will be conferring awards on five women scientists for their research achievements and for application of technology for the societal benefits at the National Science Day (NSD) function at Vigyan Bhawan on February 28. The focal theme of NSD 2020 is "Women in Science".

Five women scientists will receive awards under two categories - SERB Women excellence awards and National Award for Young Woman Showing Excellence through Application of Technology for Societal Benefits. This year's awardees Under the Serb Women Excellence Award, are Dr Niti Kumar, Central Drug Research Institute Lucknow, Dr Deepa Agashe, National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Bangalore, and Dr K Geetharani, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, a senior official from the Ministry said.

Similarly, national award for Young Woman Showing Excellence Through Application Of Technology For Societal Benefits will be given to Dr Shweta Rawat, DRDO DIPAS, Delhi and Dr Shalini Gupta, IIT Delhi.

## Cabinet nod to surrogacy Bill; widows, divorcee women can benefit as well

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2020, which allows any "willing" woman to be a surrogate mother and proposes that widows and divorced women can also benefit from its provisions, besides infertile Indian couples.

Briefing media, Union Ministers Smriti Irani and Prakash Javadekar said that this bill incorporated all recommendations made by the Rajya Sabha select committee, which studied an earlier version of the draft legislation, and is aimed at banning commercial surrogacy and allowing altruistic surrogacy.

Irani said the bill proposes that only Indian couples, with both partners being of Indian origin, can opt for surrogacy in the country. She asserted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has led from the

front with a liberal view on the issues of reproductive rights of women, be it medical termination of pregnancy, the Assisted Reproductive Technology Regulation Bill or the surrogacy bill. The amended bill is reformed version of the draft legislation which was passed by Lok Sabha in August 2019 but its provisions, including that only a close relative of a couple can be a surrogate mother, had invited criticism.

The Government then agreed to send the bill to a Rajya Sabha Select Committee, which is headed by BJP MP Bhupender Yadav, for holding wide consultations with various stakeholders and making recommendations. Bill will be tabled in the forthcoming Session, starts from March 2.

Cabinet also approved setting up of a National Technical Textiles Mission with a total

outlay of Rs 1,480 crore with a view to position the country as a global leader in technical textiles. The Mission will have a four year implementation period from financial year 2020-21 to 2023-24. Irani said arrangements have been made under the Mission for skill development of 50,000 people in the field of technical textiles.

"We have mandated use of technical textiles in 9 ministries and 92 products and our hope is that with convergence of efforts with the technology group we will see a new future for especially MSME and technologists in the field of technical textiles, thereby making India self-sufficient specially in strategic fields like defence and aerospace," she said.

The Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi also approved bill to grant institution of national importance status to National Institutes of Food Technology at Kundli in Haryana and Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu.



## Look for house on rent in Mumbai: SC asks estranged wife of industrialist

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked Poonam Jaidev Shroff, socialite estranged wife of industrialist Jaidev Shroff, to search for a house of her "choice" in Mumbai in a week's time or it will direct the Bombay High Court registry to do the needful which will be binding on her.

The top court, which had earlier asked her to locate a premises of her choice as her husband agreed to pay the rent till final disposal of their divorce plea by a family court at Bandra, got irked when told that so far no suitable premises has been found for her stay.

"Do you want a house or not? You look for a house and come back next week. There are all kind of people living in Mumbai and for all kind of people, there are houses," a bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde said.

"We will treat it as lack of bona fide on your part if you do not get a house. You select a house, he (her estranged husband) will pay the rent... Otherwise, we will ask the Registrar General of Bombay HC to select an architect who will find a house for you," said the Bench. PTI

## BAI condemns Justice Mishra's open praise of PM

New Delhi: The Bar Association of India (BAI) has expressed concern and dismay over the use of "effusive terms of praise and adulation" by Supreme Court Judge Justice Arun Mishra for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying such an act served to dilute the perception of impartiality and independence of the judiciary.

It is a foundational obligation of the judges to maintain a discreet and dignified distance from the executive branch of the government, it said.

BAI President Lalit Bhasin said in a statement on Tuesday that such act also diminishes the confidence of the public as the judges of the apex court are expected to decide cases against the executive branch while upholding constitutional principles and the Rule of Law as paramount.

"The executive committee of the Bar Association of India is deeply concerned and dismayed by certain statements made by Justice Arun Mishra, Judge, Supreme Court of India, as part of his vote of thanks address in the International Judicial Conference... Bhasin said. PTI

## Aircraft to evacuate indians from coronavirus-hit Wuhan

### Deliver medical supplies to China

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday sent an aircraft to evacuate its nationals from coronavirus-hit Wuhan and deliver a consignment of medical supplies to China. In the meantime, India has also issued a fresh travel advisory to avoid non-essential travel to Korea, Iran and Italy due to incidences of coronavirus (COVID-19) infections in those countries.

Sources said that an Indian Air Force special flight carrying around 15 tons of medical assistance comprising masks, gloves and other emergency medical equipment has departed for Wuhan. This assistance has been provided in the wake of the Corona virus outbreak in China and the request by the neighbouring country to provide medical supplies.

The Flight will bring back over 80 Indians and around 40 citizens from neighbouring countries on February 27, the sources said. Meanwhile, the



ITBP officials said that quarantine facility is ready to receive the Indians and foreigners who are being evacuated from Wuhan.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had written to Chinese President Xi Jinping expressing the solidarity of India and also offered assistance to the affected country. The medical supplies will help augment China's efforts to control the outbreak of this infection which has been declared as a Public Health Emergency by the World Health Organisation.

A few days back, India had flown back two batches of evacuees from China, comprising 640 Indians and seven Maldivian nationals. Most of them were students studying

medicine there. They were taken directly to two special quarantine facilities on arrival. All of them have been discharged after testing negative for the virus.

In the meantime, India has issued a travel advisory to avoid non-essential travel to Korea, Iran and Italy due to incidences of coronavirus (COVID-19) infections in those countries.

The new travel advisory, issued on Thursday will be applicable along with the existing advisories against travel to China. In addition, people coming from Republic of Korea, Iran and Italy or having such travel history since 10 February may be quarantined for 14 days on arrival to India, the advisory said.

# Ex-IPS DG Vanzara given post-retirement promotion by Gujarat Govt

**PTI ■ AHMEDABAD**  
Former IPS officer DG Vanzara, who was accused in the alleged fake encounters of Ishrat Jahan and Sohrauddin Sheikh and was later discharged in both the cases, has been given post-retirement promotion as the Inspector General of Police (IGP) by the Gujarat Government, six years after he retired from service.

night, he has been promoted as the IGP with effect from September 29, 2007. Additional secretary to the State Home Department, Nikhil Bhatt, on Wednesday confirmed that his department has issued a notification about Vanzara's promotion. Vanzara, a 1987-batch IPS officer, had retired as the Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) on May 31, 2014. He was suspended by the State Government in May 2007 after his arrest in connection with the alleged fake encounter case of Sohrauddin Sheikh.

Later, he was also made an accused in the Ishrat Jahan alleged fake encounter case. The former IPS officer was subsequently discharged in both the cases by special CBI courts, first in August 2017 in the Sohrauddin Sheikh case, and then in May last year in the Ishrat Jahan case. "Consequent to clean chit received from Judiciary in all Encounter Cases vch (which) were concocted by Anti-National Forces agnst (against) me & Gujarat Police, I am given Post-Retirement Promotion of Inspector General of Police



File photo

wef 29-09-2007. I am thankful to both Govt of India & Govt of Gujarat," Vanzara tweeted along with the copy of the Government notification. Vanzara was heading the Gujarat ATS when the alleged fake encounters took place. After his arrest in March 2007 by the state CID, Vanzara remained in jail for around seven years. The Sohrauddin case was transferred to Mumbai in September 2012. He was serving as Deputy Inspector General of Police of Border Range at the time of his arrest. Vanzara, who had joined

the police service as a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) in 1980, was promoted as an IPS officer in 1987. He served as Deputy Commissioner of Police of Ahmedabad Crime Branch and was later promoted as DIG. He also worked as DIG of Anti Terrorism Squad (ATS) in Ahmedabad. Sheikh was killed in an alleged fake encounter near Gandhinagar in November 2005, after which his wife disappeared. According to the CBI, she, too, was killed. The central agency had claimed that Tulsiram

Prajapati, Sheikh's aide and an eyewitness to the alleged encounter, was later killed by the police at Chapri village in Gujarat's Banaskantha district in December 2006. Ishrat, a 19-year-old woman from Mumbai near Javed Shaikh alias Pranesh Pillai, Amjadali Akbarali Rana and Zeeshan Johar were killed by Gujarat police in an alleged fake encounter on the outskirts of Ahmedabad on June 15, 2004. The police had claimed that they had links with terrorists.

## Azam Khan, wife, son sent to judicial custody

**PTI ■ LUCKNOW**  
Samajwadi Party MP Azam Khan, his legislator-wife Tazeen Fatma and MLA-son Abdullah Azam surrendered before a Rampur court on Wednesday and were sent to judicial custody over Abdullah's allegedly fake birth certificate. Rampur Superintendent of Police Santosh Kumar Mishra told PTI that the three Khan family members have been remanded in custody till March 2. The case relates to two birth certificates for Abdullah Azam, who allegedly also gave a wrong date of birth while filing his nomination papers for the Assembly elections in 2017. Abdullah's election was set aside by the Allahabad High Court last December. He then approached the Supreme Court, which is still hearing the case.

Rampur's Additional District Judge Dharendra Kumar on Monday rejected an anticipatory bail plea filed by the family and issued non-bailable warrants and a notice for attaching their property. On Wednesday, the three family members surrendered before the court, which sent them to judicial custody. In a tweet, the SP accused the ruling BJP of vendetta against the powerful politician. A Rampur BJP leader Akash Saxena had lodged an FIR at Gang police station on January 3, 2019 alleging fraud related to Abdullah Azam's two birth certificates. In April, police filed the charge sheet in court. It alleged that Azam Khan's son also had two passports and two PAN cards. In one birth certificate, issued by the Rampur municipality, Abdullah's birth date was mentioned as January 1, 1993. The other certificate



said he was born in Lucknow on September 30, 1990, according to the charge against him. A case was also registered against Azam Khan and his wife as they had submitted an affidavit testifying their son's second birth certificate. Azam Khan represents Rampur in the Lok Sabha and his wife is an MLA from the

Rampur assembly seat. Their son Abdullah won from the Suar assembly segment in 2017. The Allahabad High Court set aside Abdullah's election last December on a plea by defeated BSP candidate Kazim Ali Khan that the SP candidate was under 25 when he filed his nomination papers in 2017. Abdullah Azam allegedly used fake documents to claim that he had reached the age to contest the polls. In recent years, Azam Khan has also faced charges of encroachment of land around Rampur's Mohammad Ali Jauhar University, where he is the chancellor. The SP indirectly blamed the ruling BJP for the case against the politician, suggesting that it was vendetta. "The Samajwadi Party doesn't consider any action taken in revenge appropriate. Governments can't run on

bias," the party tweeted in Hindi. "The Samajwadi Party also trusts the judicial process. We have faith in court, we will get justice, it added. The Bharatiya Janata Party welcomed the development. "Azam Khan did politics for himself only. It is for the exploitation of the poor. We welcome the decision of the court to send him to the jail," BJP spokesperson Chandra Mohan said. He said SP chief Akhilesh Yadav should give an explanation on the kind of people associated with him in politics. The Supreme Court had on January 17 refused to stay the Allahabad High Court verdict annulling Abdullah's election to the UP Assembly. A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde had sought the response of the Election Commission and the defeated BSP candidate on the matter.

## 24 killed, 5 injured as bus carrying wedding party plunges into river

**PTI ■ KOTA (RAJASTHAN)**  
Twenty-four people were killed and five others sustained injuries after a private bus carrying a wedding party fell into a river on Kota-Dausa highway in Bundi district on Wednesday morning, police said. The wedding party with at least 29 persons on board was headed to Sawai Madhopur from Kota when driver Shyam Singh apparently lost control of the bus around 9:30 am while on a bridge near Padi village under Lakheri police station limits, Lakheri Sub-Inspector Rajendra Kumar told PTI over phone. The bus, then, plunged into Meji river from the bridge that had no wall or railing, he said. Thirteen people died on

the spot including the driver while the others succumbed to their injuries on the way to a hospital in Lakheri town, the policeman added. Reacting to the incident on Twitter, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said, "I am deeply saddened to learn about the tragic incident in Bundi in which 24 persons have lost lives after the bus fell into river Meji." He shared his condolences to the bereaved families and wished for speedy recovery of those who were injured in the incident. Gehlot also announced a compensation of Rs 2 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased. Bundi District Collector Antar Singh Nehra told PTI that the 24 people who died include 11 women, 10 men and three children while a woman and a minor girl were among

the five injured. He said three of the injured are in a state of trauma and have been sent to hospital in Kota for treatment. Two of the injured were discharged after receiving treatment, Nehra further said. After being discharged, the two persons claimed that the bus lost control as one of the wheels came off, the collector quoted them as saying. However, it has not yet been confirmed as the reason behind the accident, Nehra clarified. The five injured persons were identified as Murli (55), a resident of Basant Vihar, Ganeshpura area of Kota city; Deepak Sindhi (18), son of Narayan; Amit (35); Kanu (13), daughter of Suresh; Manju (35), wife of Mahavir Dhobi, Lakheri SI Kumar said.

## ADITYANATH ON AZAM'S ARREST

### Yogi Govt cleaning 'dirt' whichever form it may be'

**PTI ■ LUCKNOW**  
On a day Samajwadi Party MP Azam Khan and his family surrendered before a Rampur court in a fake birth certificate case, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday said his Government was cleaning all the "dirt", whichever form it might be. Speaking in the State Assembly, the Chief Minister noted, "Virus grows in dirt. There is a campaign to clean this kind of dirt." He was apparently referring to the arrest of Azam Khan and the BJP-led State Government's resolve to punish corrupt leaders.

Samajwadi Party MP Azam Khan, his legislator-wife Tazeen Fatma and MLA-son Abdullah Azam surrendered before a Rampur court on Wednesday and were sent to judicial custody over Abdullah's alleged fake birth certificate. Rampur Superintendent of Police Santosh Kumar Mishra told PTI that the three Khan family members have been remanded in custody till March 2. The case relates to two birth certificates for Abdullah Azam, who allegedly also gave a wrong date of birth while filing his nomination papers for the assembly elections in 2017. Abdullah's election was set aside by the Allahabad High

Court last December. He then approached the Supreme Court, which is still hearing the case. Rejecting the opposition Samajwadi Party's claims of vendetta politics, the chief minister asserted that his government has never discriminated against anyone. "We have never discriminated. Our minister came and asked whether power has to be supplied to Rampur and I said it should be as it was in the past," Adityanath said. Without taking names, the chief minister said, "Bijli to ab bahut chamak rahi hai wahan par. Bahut tezi se chamak rahi hai. Jab chamakti hai to faltu virus nahi panapte."

## CBI to register FIR against PC family's hotel grabbing

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
There's more trouble coming in former Finance Minister P Chidambaram's way. The CBI on Wednesday informed the Delhi High Court that it will register an FIR in the hotel grabbing case involving Chidambaram's family members and bank officials. The CBI had in November 2017 registered a preliminary enquiry on a complaint by an industrialist Dr Kathirvel accusing Chidambaram's wife Nalini and her sister Padmini for grabbing his hotel in Tirupur in Tamil Nadu by conniving with Indian Overseas Bank officials. The CBI informed the High Court they will file the detailed probe report by next hearing scheduled on April 21. Arguing before Justice



Rajnish Bhatnagar, advocate Yatinder Chaudhary pointed out that for the past three years, CBI's delaying the case. The CBI's counsel told the court that the agency has finished the probe and decided to register FIR on the hotel grabbing case and will file detailed probe findings by the next hearing. According to Kathirvel's complaint, in 2008, his hotel

Comfort Inn was grabbed by Padmini by conniving with IOB officials. He said that his business were illegally declared by the Bank as NPA and conducted auction and granted the hotel to Padmini. Those days Chidambaram was Finance Minister. Kathirvel produced before the CBI and HC the letters from Chidambaram to him on the issue and Nalini's conversation records with him to settle the case. He also produced a cheque given by Nalini to the agencies and court. Soon after the CBI registered the probe, Padmini passed away and CBI had questioned many senior bank officials involved in the illegal auction of Kathirvel's hotel facilitating auction, leading to ownership of the hotel to Padmini.

## Travelers from Iran, Italy too will be screened

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**  
Passengers arriving at the Mumbai International Airport from Iran and Italy will also be screened for the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) infection, Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope said on Wednesday. Passengers arriving from China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Nepal, Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia are already undergoing screening at the airport. Iran and Italy were added to the list on Wednesday on the instructions of the Union Government, Tope said. "Travelers from two more countries, Iran and Italy,

will be screened at the airport apart from those from ten other countries," the minister said. A total of 53,981 travelers who arrived here by 441 flights have been screened at the Mumbai airport so far since the outbreak of the coronavirus was reported in China's Wuhan city. As many as 91 travelers were admitted to isolation facilities in the state for suspected Covid-19 infection, but none of them tested positive, Tope said. Eighty-eight of these travelers were discharged while three are under observation at hospitals in Pune and Mumbai.

### CORONAVIRUS

## NIA conducts raids

**Jan 31 Nagrota encounter**  
**PTI ■ SRINAGAR**  
A fortnight after having been handed over the case, the National Investigation Agency on Wednesday raided seven places in South Kashmir's Pulwama district in connection with a probe into an encounter along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway last month that left three JeM terrorists killed, officials said here. The officials said the raids were conducted at the residence of Jaish-e-

Mohammed (JeM) commander Zahid Ahmad Wani at Karimabad and Sameer Ahmad Dar, a driver by profession and was arrested during Nagrota encounter on January 31. Dar, cousin of suicide bomber Adil Dar who killed 40 CRPF personnel in a deadly attack last year in Pulwama, was among the five arrested after the incident. The houses of three overground workers (OGWs) who were arrested from Pulwama in connection with the January 31 encounter - Suhail Javed Lone, Zahoor Ahmad Khan and Shoaib Manzoor - were also searched.

## Maharashtra Speaker rejects BJP's demand for resolution on Savarkar

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**  
Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Nana Patole on Wednesday rejected the BJP's demand for a State Government resolution honouring Hindutva icon Vinayak Damodar Savarkar for his contribution to the independence struggle, triggering protest from the Opposition party. Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnis also demanded that the Government ban "Shidori", the in-house magazine of the Maharashtra Congress for pub-

lishing "objectionable" references to Savarkar. He tore a copy of the magazine. Speaking in the Assembly, Fadnis demanded that the Government move a resolution on the death anniversary of Savarkar for his sacrifices and contribution to the freedom struggle. To this, deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar said that Fadnis, a former chief minister, had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 20, 2018 and January 17, 2019 urging the Centre to honour Savarkar with Bharat

Ratna. "I wonder why there had been a delay when the BJP was in power in Maharashtra and also at the Centre," he said. "Modi had been the PM for more than five years now while Fadnis had ruled the state for the last five years. Like today, Savarkar's death anniversary falls every year," he said. NCP ministers Chhagan Bhujbal and Jayant Patil objected to the references made to Savarkar by Fadnis while quoting from the magazine.

## 79 arrested in RPF's crackdown on illegal e-ticket rackets

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**  
The Railway Protection Force (RPF) has busted countrywide illegal e-ticket booking rackets and arrested 79 persons, a top official said here on Wednesday. It has also identified 16,735 user IDs - through which tickets were booked illegally - for blacklisting besides blocking 27,948 tickets worth ₹7.96 crore for upcoming journeys, said Arun Kumar, director-general of the RPF. ANMS and MAC, the illegal softwares which the

racketeers used for booking e-tickets fraudulently by getting around One Time Password (OTP) and CAPTCHA systems, were completely "neutralized" by RPF sleuths, he said. "Tickets valued around ₹ 30 crore, which were already used by passengers, were also seized," he said. The racket existed since 2012 but became more active in the last two or three years, Kumar said. As many as 79 persons have been arrested in connection with the rackets which

were suspected to have links to terror financing, he added. The arrests were made in various parts of the country and the accused included owners of the illegal software. No agents have been arrested yet, he said. RPF sleuths deactivated ANMS software on January 23 and MAC on February 8, he said. Similar softwares had been deactivated in the past, he said. The illegal ANMS software had captured nearly 80 per cent of the ticket booking market, Kumar said.

# 'Masterstroke' of Nitish Kumar leaves Opp in disarray; BJP bewildered

**PTI ■ PATNA**  
The unanimous resolution passed by the Bihar Assembly against the new format of NPR and NRC with more than 50 BJP MLAs in tow has thrown the Opposition Grand Alliance in disarray. Jitan Ram Manjhi, a bete noire of Kumar, appeared bowled over by Kumar's move as the former told reporters outside the Assembly on Wednesday, "He (Kumar) is most welcome to return to the Grand Alliance.. There will be no confusion over leadership if he comes back. He will be the obvious choice." The Bihar Assembly had

on Tuesday passed a unanimous resolution categorically stating that there is no need of NRC in the State and that the National Population Register (NPR) exercise be done strictly according to the 2010 format. The all-party resolution got the approval of the legislative Assembly in the post-lunch session following a debate on the adjournment motion moved by Leader of the Opposition Tejashwi Yadav and others in the House. Bihar is the first NDA-ruled State to categorically say no to the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and stating that the National Population Register (NPR) exercise be

done as per the 2010 format. The sudden development also seems to have bewildered the BJP, which is part of the ruling coalition in the state, with some of its leaders asserting that the resolution will take the wind out of the sails of the opposition, which had been sharpening its attack against the government on the emotive issue. Another section within the saffron party has been left wondering as to whether such a move was tantamount to a change in the party's stand. Congress MLA Awadhesh Singh echoed the sentiments of Manjhi, saying, "We know that Nitish Kumar is a secular leader who has his roots in the social-



ist movement. We would be happy if he leaves the NDA and comes back." The RJD, headed by its jailed founder Lalu Prasad Yadav, was, however, not impressed by showering of praises on Kumar. Lalu's wife and RJD nation-

al vice president Rabri Devi, who is also the leader of the opposition in the legislative council said, "We are not going to have any change of mind (about Nitish Kumar)." Notably, a couple of hours before the resolution was passed, her son Tejashwi Yadav, who is the leader of the opposition in the state assembly, had a 20-minutes long meeting with the chief minister inside Kumar's chamber in the Vidhan Sabha premises. The young RJD leader has been celebrating the resolution as a "success" of the opposition in Bihar in making the BJP retreat despite its central leadership's insistence on "not yielding

an inch" on the NCR-NPR issue. Congress MLC Prem Chandra Mishra, who is also an AICC panelist, also took a sceptical view of Tuesday's development and said, "Nitish Kumar should explain how come he can go on supporting the CAA while being opposed to NPR and NRC. All the three issues are connected." The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill was supported by the JD(U) in parliament. The chief minister has, however, remained steadfast in his opposition to a country-wide NRC. Regarding the NPR, the JD(U) leader had agreed that additional clauses like places of

birth of parents were causing anxieties among the people and got his MPs to request the Centre for dropping these besides writing on the issue himself, much before the resolution was passed. The alliance partner BJP, which has felt hamstrung under the shadow of the chief minister, has emerged a confused lot. Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi wrote on Twitter that the resolution should "silence the opposition trying to reap political benefits out of rumour-mongering on NRC and NPR". BJP MLC Sachchidanand Rai, one of the known detractors of Kumar, was visibly

peevish when he told a news channel, "I wonder if the party's central leadership was seized of the matter." State minister Vijay Kumar Sinha, who was in the House when the resolution was passed said, "It would have been better had the members been informed about the resolution in advance." With the deft move, the chief minister also appears to have won back the respect of election strategist Prashant Kishor, a staunch opponent of CAA-NPR-NRC, who was recently sacked from the party and had accused Kumar of capitulation before the BJP for continuance in power in Bihar.

# Monitoring virus impact on economy: Sitharaman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government is keeping a close watch on the impact of coronavirus outbreak on the Indian economy and various options are being gauged at various levels, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Wednesday.



The minister also said that the process of merger of public sector banks was underway as per the schedule. The government has announced to merge 10 state-run banks to create four big lenders.

The government is "closely monitoring" the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on the economy, she said. "We are very closely monitoring it. Secretary-level officials are engaging with their respective industries. I had informed you about various options we have including air-lifting raw material for some specific sectors, resourcing from other countries. "All these are being worked at the concerned department

level. We will have quick review of all departments coming back with specific help that they may require. We will collate all these and come back to you," Sitharaman said.

Over 2,700 people have died due to novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) while the number of those infected is around 80,000. In the wake of the virus outbreak, whose epicentre is China, many airlines, including Indian carriers, have cancelled some of their overseas flights.

On bank mergers, Sitharaman said there is "no uncertainty about bank merger" and the process is on as per the schedule.

# India's slowdown bottomed out: Niti Aayog's Panagariya

'Economy needs to be opened up for 10% growth'

PTI ■ NEW YORK

India's slowdown has bottomed out and now its economy needs to be opened up if the country wants to realise the ambition of a 10 per cent growth rate, former NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Arvind Panagariya has said.

In his keynote address at a discussion on India's Union Budget 2020, he said in the next fiscal year, India's GDP growth is expected to be 6 per cent and then it will get back to 7-8 per cent which has been the case in the last 15-16 year period.

"On the slowdown, my own assessment is that we have bottomed out," Panagariya, a Professor of Economics at the Columbia University, said at the discussion organised by India's Consulate General here in partnership with the US-India Strategic Partnership

Forum (USISPF) on Tuesday. "In the second half of the current fiscal year, which would be ending on March 31, we should see some bit of recovery, not a big one but certainly the second half (of the fiscal year) should look better than the first half," he said.

Panagariya noted that since about 2003, India has been growing at an average rate of about 7 per cent and the first five years of the Modi government was characterised by 7.5 per cent growth on an average.

Emphasising that the Indian economy "can do a lot better no doubt", he said that in his assessment, the main factor which led to the slowdown has to do with the financial markets and that translated into weakening of the balance sheets of both the banks as well as the corporates.

"I think you could criticise the government here for being a little slow in beginning the process of cleaning up of the bank Non-Performing Assets (NPAs). The problem was known actually by 2013..." but this particular problem of

NPAs never gets solved very quickly," he said. Sounding an optimistic note, he said as the clean up happens, "we should see the growth returning".

On the Budget, Panagariya welcomed positive steps taken by the government including on fiscal consolidation, fiscal deficit, corporate tax reduction, initiation of simplification for the personal income taxation as well as privatisation.

Pointing to a "negative" in the Budget, Panagariya said that one of the things that has been going on for the last 2-3 years is that India is turning more and more towards import substitution.

"Trade economists use a more aggressive term - protectionism. And I've been saying that this is something that should not only be stopped but has to be reversed.

"Unfortunately, this budget goes very far in the direction of raising duties and particularly disconcerting is the fact that a lot of the items on which the duties have been raised and that too quite a bit are all labour intensive products," he said.

## ₹ rises by 20p to end at 71.65/\$1, extends gains for second day

Mumbai: Extending gains for the second day, the rupee on Wednesday rose by 20 paise to settle at 71.65 against the US dollar in line with other Asian currencies, helped by lower crude oil prices.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 71.76 to the US dollar. During the day, the local unit saw a high of 71.59 and a low of 71.79. The domestic unit finally settled at 71.65, up 20 paise from its previous close. The rupee had settled at 71.85 against the US dollar on Tuesday.

"The rupee opened on a flat note and witnessed volatility after the RBI, yesterday,

announced two long-term repo operations (LTROs) for three-year tenors worth Rs 25,000 crore each to be conducted on March 2 and March 9," said Gaurang Somaiya, Forex & Bullion Analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

Also, forex traders said, easing crude oil prices supported the local unit. The global crude benchmark Brent futures fell 1.40 per cent to trade at USD 54.18 per barrel.

"Indian rupee, in line with other Asian currencies, gained amid lower dollar index and crude oil prices," said VK Sharma, Head PCG and Capital Markets Strategy, HDFC Securities. PTI

## Indian retail market pegged to reach at \$1.3 trillion by 2025: Study

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Notwithstanding a slowdown in consumption due to the sluggish economy, the Indian retail market is estimated to reach \$1.3 trillion by 2025, helped by multiple structural, socio demographic and economic drivers, says a recent study. According to a study jointly released by Boston Consulting Group and Retailers Association of India titled 'Retail 4.0: Winning the 20s', the retail market stood at USD 0.7 trillion in 2019.

"India's long-term consumption and retail growth drivers are expected to provide a strong foundation for future growth. Indian retail market is estimated to reach USD 1.1-1.3 trillion mark by 2025, reporting a CAGR of 9-11 per cent from 2019," it said.

The report noted that data and technology driven disruptions along with supply side innovations will shape the

future of the retail landscape.

"With the onset of digital revolution, it is imperative for retailers to embrace data and technology to shape consumer shopping preferences and minimise costs prompting retailers to up their game. Also, increased margin pressures, retail space crunch, rising costs are putting considerable strain on business models thus pushing retailers to innovate to win in the next decade," it said.

According to Abheek Singh, Managing Director and Senior Partner, BCG the Indian retail market is still fragmented and offers an opportunity for the top five retailers to more than double their share from less than five percent to over 10 per cent in the next decade.

"Winning in the 20s will require retailers to rethink their value proposition and operating model. Precipitating and participating in ecosystems will be a key driver of success," he added.

## Bank ATMs starts dispensing more notes of ₹500 instead of ₹2,000

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Banks have started dispensing more of ₹500 notes than ₹2,000 denomination notes, a move seen as gradual phasing out of the high denomination currency note.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in an RTI response last year had said that the central bank had stopped printing ₹2,000 denomination currency notes.

Although there has been no dictate from the Finance Ministry, banks on their own have decided to fill their ATMs with smaller denomination notes for the convenience of customers, sources said.

Some banks have already started recalibration of their ATMs and other banks will also follow the suit, sources said. State-owned Indian Bank has already announced that its has decided to stop using ₹2,000 notes in their ATMs.

When asked if the Finance Ministry has asked banks not to push ₹2,000 notes through ATMs, Union minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the ministry has not issued any instruction to banks in this regard.

"As far as I know, no such instruction has been given," the finance minister said on the sidelines of an event here. Getting change for a ₹2,000 note has become an issue and due to that some banks have

stopped using ₹2,000 notes in their ATMs, sources said.

According to the RBI's RTI reply, 3,542.991 million notes of ₹2,000 denomination were printed during 2016-17.

However, 2017-18 saw a substantial reduction in printing and only 111.507 million notes were produced, which further reduced to 46.690 million notes in 2018-19.

This indicates that while these high denomination notes would continue to be a legal tender but will be phased out eventually.

The move is seen as an attempt to prevent hoarding of the high-value currency and thus, curb black money. The government had in November 2016 demonetised ₹1,000 and ₹500 denominations notes.

Replying to a question in Parliament, Minister of State for Finance Anurag Singh Thakur in December said there is no proposal to withdraw ₹2,000 denomination notes.

"This is the real worry (about demonetisation) which has surfaced now. I think that you should not worry about it," Thakur told the Rajya Sabha while replying to a question whether the government was planning to withdraw ₹2,000 notes in future.

According to the reply, notes in circulation (NIC) as on November 4, 2016, were ₹17,74,187 crore which have now increased to ₹22,35,648 crore as on December 2, 2019.

## BUSINESS CORNER

### GANGWAR LAYS FOUNDATION STONE OF ESI HOSPITAL

New Delhi: Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Labour & Employment, Govt. of India laid the foundation stone of 100 bedded ESI Hospital, Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday.



Gummanur Jayaram, Minister for Labour & Employment, Training & Factories, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh was the Chief Guest of this function. Vanga Geetha Viswanth, MP, Kakinada presided the function. The other dignitaries to grace the occasion were Pili Subhash Chandra Bose, Dy. CM and Minister for Revenue, Stamps & Registration, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Pinipe Viswarup, Minister for Social Welfare, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Kurasala Kannababu, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperation Marketing Food Processing, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Sunkara Pavani, Mayor, Kakinada Municipal Corporation, Chikkala Ramachandra Rao, MLC, Dwarampudi Chandrar Sekar Reddy, MLA, Kakinada City and RK Kataria, Medical Commissioner, ESIC.

### NTPC TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR AIR QUALITY

New Delhi: NTPC Ltd, India's largest power producer, signed an agreement with Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to provide financial support for installation & commissioning of Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAAQMS).



NTPC will provide financial support of ₹80 crores for installation of 25 CAAQMS across 6 States and 3 Union Territories. The CAAQMS will be installed in Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Patna (Bihar), Varanasi, Lucknow, Kanpur and Allahabad (all in Uttar Pradesh), Pimpri - Chinchwad (Maharashtra) and Madurai (Tamil Nadu). Along with these cities, CAAQMS will also be installed in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Dadar & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu (Port Blair, Silvassa and Daman). The MoU was signed by Dr. Prashant Gargava, Member Secretary, CPCB and Ravi V Babu, General Manager (Corporate Environment Management), NTPC Ltd in presence of Shri Prakash Tiwari, Director (Operations), Ramesh Babu V, ED to CMD and B Basu, CGM(SSEA). Data garnered from these stations will be used as inputs for Air Quality Index evaluation for the respective cities. NTPC is continuously making efforts to curb pollution in varied ways.

### SRM ARTS & SCIENCE COLLEGE CELEBRATES ANNUAL DAY

New Delhi: SRM Arts and Science College, Kattankulathur celebrated its 26th Annual Day on 24th February 2020 in the College Campus. The Programme started with the prayer song followed by the welcome address by K Mathiyazhagan, Head, Department of Tamil. The Principal of the College, Dr R Vasudevaraj, read the Annual Report who highlighted the students' achievements in Academic, Co-curricular, Extra-curricular activities and Placement. Dr.K.Subburam, Director (Academics), SRM Arts and Science College in his special address encouraged the students to have passion in their chosen fields and chase their dreams.



Dr.T.P.Ganesan, Pro Vice Chancellor, SRM Institute of Science and Technology in his presidential address stated how the college has been fulfilling the needs of the students and instills the social responsibilities in them for a better society.

## IndiGo: Have responded to all Sebi queries on related party transactions

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

IndiGo on Wednesday said it has responded to all queries from markets regulator Sebi regarding related party transactions and asserted that they were entered into in the best interests of the company.

InterGlobe Aviation, parent of the country's largest airline IndiGo, also said it has strong processes for ensuring arm's length dealings with related parties.

On Tuesday, sources told PTI that a preliminary probe by Sebi has suggested prima-facie violations of corporate governance and listing disclosure norms in certain related party transactions involving InterGlobe Aviation.

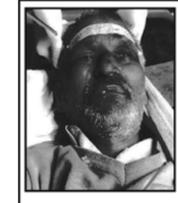
In a statement, IndiGo Whole Time Director and CEO Ronojoy Dutta said it has not

received any communication from Sebi regarding any outcome of any preliminary enquiry by the regulator.

"Further, IndiGo strongly denies any allegations of wrongdoing or avoidance of processes. It reiterates that it has strong processes for ensuring arm's length dealings with related parties and that such transactions were entered into in the ordinary course of business and were in the best interests of IndiGo," he said.

According to him, IndiGo has responded to all queries from Sebi regarding these matters and remains confident that its position would be accepted. "If and when Sebi conveys transaction to IndiGo any outcome of an enquiry, IndiGo being confident of its compliance record, will deal with it appropriately," he added.

## APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that one unknown male, Age about 60 years, Height 5'8", Complexion Wheatish, Wearing Brown colour sweater and black colour lower has been died during treatment in Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital, Delhi on 20.02.20. In this regard a DD No. 86-A dated 20.02.20 has been lodged at PS Narela, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly be informed to the undersigned.

SHO PS: Narela, Delhi Ph.: 27280435, 986862390

UTTAR HARYANA BIJLI VITRAN NIGAM LIMITED CORRIGENDUM NOTICE						
SR NO.	NAME OF DEPART MENT/ BOARD/ CORP/ AUTH	LETTER / MEMO NO. & DATE	OLD REFERENCE E / NIT / TENDER NO.	NATURE OF CORRIGENDUM	WEBSITE OF THE DEPT/ BOARD CORP/ AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/ CONTACT DETAILS/ EMAIL
1	Uttar Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited	Ch- 33X/ENP-J/ MM/QH-I/ 25-02-2020	Notice Tender No. 80/UH/V/MA-102/03/2020 dated 19-01-2020	Part-I date of submission extended upto 02.03.2020 (15.00 P.M.)	uhbv.org.in extenders.trc.nic.in	cmnm@uhbv.org.in 9357189013

RD NO. 80054 Dt. 26-02-2020

## WESTERN RAILWAY

CORRIGENDUM TO TENDER NO. S/05/19/3111 Due on 24.02.2020 (Sr. No. 69 of Tender Notice No. S/03/2020 dt. 27.01.2020) is as under :

Details of Corrigendum	Existing	Revised
Tender Opening date	24.02.2020	05.03.2020
Consignee & Qty.	AMM-G-MX = 43239 THSND, DY.CMM-GS-SBI = 1120 THSND	AMM-G-MX = 20000 THSND, DY.CMM-GS-SBI = NIL
EMD	₹ 229530/-	₹ 103490/-
Delivery Period	Existing	Within 4 Months. Rate of 10000 THSND after every month
Quantity Option Clause	Existing	Deleted
Quantity Splitting Clause	Existing	Deleted

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## PRESS NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

- The Executive Engineer, Urban Development Department, Sakuntala road, Agartala on behalf of the 'Governor of Tripura', invites online percentage / item-rate e-tender from the eligible Central & State public sector undertaking / enterprise and eligible Contractors/Firms/Agencies of appropriate Category registered with PWD/TTAAD/C/MES/CPWD/Railway/ Other State PWD for the following work:
- NIT No.: 12/EE-IV/UCD/EW/2019-20 dated 24/02/2020
- Name of work: Protection Work of the West Side of Road of Banamalipur Pond
- Estimated Cost: ₹ 36,26,452.11
- Earnest Money: ₹ 73,000.00
- Bid Fee: ₹ 1,000.00
- Period of completion: 4 (four) Months
- Last date & time for online Bidding: 26/03/2020 up to 3:00 pm
- Date & time for online Bid opening: 26/03/2020 at 4.00 pm

Notes: -  
1. All the above-mentioned online activities should be done in the e-procurement portal <https://tripuratenders.gov.in>  
2. All the above-mentioned date & time are as per server clock date & time of e-procurement portal <https://tripuratenders.gov.in>  
Sd/- Executive Engineer Urban Development Department, Sakuntala road, Agartala  
ICA/C-2661/2019-20

## APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General Public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male Namely Unknown S/O Unknown, R/o Unknown Age: 45 years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Wheatish, Built: Normal, Face: Oval, was found unconscious from Jhuggi Sector-4, Noida, UP. He was admitted in Lal Bahadur Shashtri Hospital, Delhi and died during treatment, vide MLC No. 1504/20. Dead body has been preserved for 72 hrs. at Lal Bahadur Shashtri Hospital Mortuary, Khichri Pur, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 55A dated 18.02.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Kalyan Puri, Delhi.



If any one having any clue about deceased male may kindly inform the undersigned and contact on following numbers.  
SHO P.S. Kalyan Puri, Delhi Ph.: 011-22772287, 22772251 Mob.: 8750871830  
DP/11/ED/2020

## SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one person namely Rajesh Kumar S/o Ram Das R/o F-75, Meer Vihar Madan Pur Dabas, Delhi, has been missing/kidnapped from the area of P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi Since 16.02.2020. In this regard, a case vide DD No. 33-A dated 17.02.2020 has been registered at P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi. The description of the missing person is as under.



Age: 40 Years, Complexion: Fair, Height: 5'4", Face: Round, Wearing: Black Colour Jacket Black Colour pant. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out him but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing person then please inform P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi at following Tel No. / e-mail: cbc@cbi.gov.in and Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>  
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 Fax No. 011-24368639  
Sd/- S.H.O. P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi Ph: 011-25489800  
DP/32/RD/2020

## Auction of Nirav's assets postponed; live auction on March 5

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Are paintings, exquisite wrist watches and luxury cars belonging to fugitive diamantaire Nirav Modi will be auctioned next month, auction house Saffronart said on Wednesday. The sale of 112 assets is being done by Saffronart on behalf of the Enforcement Directorate through a live auction, while 72 other items would be sold through an online auction. Modi, who has allegedly defrauded state-run Punjab National Bank of over ₹14,000 crore, is currently lodged in a British jail.

Saffronart, which had conducted an auction of some artworks belonging to Modi in March last year that fetched over ₹55 crore, initially said there would be a live auction of 112 items on Thursday (February 27) and an online auction next week. In a late evening statement on Wednesday, Saffronart said the live auction has been postponed to March 5 on "instructions from the Enforcement Directorate". The online auction would be held as scheduled earlier on March 3 and 4. A 1935 painting by Amrita Sher-Gil titled 'Boys with Lemons' is expected to be the biggest draw at the live auction and could fetch anywhere between ₹12-18 crore.

## Govt decides to lift ban on onion exports

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday decided to lift the nearly six-month-old ban on export of onions in a bid to protect the interests of farmers as prices are likely to fall sharply due to bumper rabi crop.

Sources said the decision was taken at a meeting of a Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Home Minister Amit Shah.

"Since the price of onion has stabilised and there is bumper onion crop, government has decided to lift ban on export of onions. Expected monthly harvest in March is over 40 lakh MT compared to 28.4 lakh MT last year," Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said in a tweet on Wednesday. The lifting of ban would be effective once the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) issues a notification in this regard.

The GoM on Wednesday also deliberated on whether to reduce or scrap the Minimum Export Price (MEP) on onion to facilitate outbound shipments, the sources said. The MEP is the rate below which no exports are allowed. Paswan, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba were present at the meeting.

## RBI to banks: Link floating rate loans for medium enterprises with external benchmarks

PTI ■ MUMBAI

All new floating rate loans given to medium enterprises will be linked with external benchmarks from April 1, according to the Reserve Bank of India.

With respect to micro and small enterprises, floating rate loans are already linked with external benchmarks. In a circular issued on Wednesday, RBI said it has now decided that all new floating rate loans to the medium enterprises extended by banks from April 1, 2020, "shall be linked to the external benchmarks". The move is aimed at further strengthening monetary policy transmission so that benefits of reduction in key

lending rate (repo) can be passed on to medium enterprises also, the apex bank said. Floating rate personal and retail loans have already been linked to external benchmarks. RBI repo rate, treasury bill yields, and other market interest rate published by FBIL (Financial Benchmark India Private Ltd) are among the benchmarks. According to the RBI, subsequent to the introduction of an external benchmark system, the monetary policy transmission has improved in respect of the sectors where new floating rate loans have been linked to external benchmarks. Since February 2019, the RBI has reduced the repo rate or short term lending rate by 135 basis points.

# Gnabry 6 London 2

## Serge's double strike sinks Chelsea at Bridge

AFP ■ LONDON

Serge Gnabry fired Bayern Munich to the brink of the Champions League quarter-finals as the German's double inspired a superb 3-0 rout of Chelsea in the last-16 first leg at Stamford Bridge on Tuesday.

Gnabry had tormented Tottenham Hotspur with four goals in Bayern's 7-2 victory in north London earlier this season and the former Arsenal winger returned to the English capital to push Chelsea to the brink of elimination.

The 24-year-old's time with Arsenal was a disappointment and he even flopped during a loan spell at West Bromwich Albion.

But he has been reborn with Bayern and his two goals in the space of three minutes left Hansi Flick's side within touching distance of the last eight.

Robert Lewandowski got Bayern's third before Chelsea defender Marcos Alonso was sent off in the 83rd minute.

Chelsea will need another Munich miracle in the second leg on March 18 to overturn the deficit at the Allianz Arena, where they famously beat the German club in the 2012 Champions League final.

"I have a lot of friends here. A lot of them were in the stands and I think they were giving me good power," Gnabry told BT



Serge Gnabry celebrates after scoring Bayern Munich's second goal against Chelsea

Sport of his London goal streak. "Three goals should give us a lot of confidence. But we need to be prepared for the second leg and we can't take it serious enough.

"We saw last season with Liverpool beating Barcelona, we know we have to be careful and focus."

This hasn't been a vintage year for Bayern, but they have been energised since the exit of disliked boss Niko Kovac and outclassed Chelsea in all phases.

None of the previous six teams to have won all of their Champions League group games have lifted the trophy that season, but five-time winners Bayern will fancy their chances of breaking that duck if they can maintain this form.

Chelsea boss Frank Lampard admitted his young team were "underdogs" against a club of Bayern's vast European experience and his pre-match prediction proved spot on in a chastening defeat.

"The performance was poor and sometimes you have to be brutally honest. They outclassed us in every department and it's quite sobering," Lampard said.

"I'm disappointed we couldn't do more against them. We have to take it on the chin and work towards getting back to the levels we want to be at."

# Griezmann rescues Barca

NAPLES: Antoine Griezmann rescued a 1-1 draw for Barcelona at Napoli in the first leg of their last-16 tie on Tuesday.

Frenchman Griezmann struck just before the hour mark in Naples after Dries Mertens had put the hosts ahead in the 30th minute with his 121st Napoli goal, drawing level with Marek Hamsik as the club's all-time top scorer.

Barcelona ended the game with 10 men after Arturo Vidal was sent off with two minutes to go after picking up two yellow cards, following an angry clash with Napoli defender Mario Rui.

"In the end it's a draw that is a good result considering that we have another home game," said Barcelona coach Quique Setien, with his side in a strong position ahead of the second leg at the Camp Nou on March 18.

The clash was the first between the two teams and also a CL debut for both Setien and Napoli counterpart Gennaro Gattuso, who took over after the group stage.

"They didn't hurt us, they tickled us," said Gattuso. "It went wrong in one moment and they punished us." Napoli captain Lorenzo Insigne added: "We could have won, so we're a bit disappointed. It was emotional to face players like (Lionel) Messi."

Messi failed to score on his first appearance at the Stadio San Paolo, where Napoli legend Diego Maradona reigned supreme three decades ago.

The 32-year-old Messi scored four goals at the weekend in Barcelona's 5-0 win over Eibar that put the Spaniards back top of La Liga, but could not add to his 114



Dries Mertens (14) celebrates with Lorenzo Insigne (24) after scoring Napoli's opener

Champions League goals.

"If Barca didn't do today what they did three days ago (against Eibar) it's to Napoli's credit," said Gattuso.

"I hope that no one thinks it's over. We know it will be very hard but nothing is finished yet.

Messi fired over on nine minutes after combining well with Frenkie de Jong but Gattuso's side piled the pressure on the Catalans.

Their pressing paid off on the half-hour mark, with Piotr Zielinski breaking free down the right before finding Mertens, who curled a magnificent finish past Marc-Andre Stegen.

He equalled Hamsik's record and is now six goals clear of Maradona, but was forced off early in the second half after a Sergio Busquets tackle for which the

Spaniard will be suspended for the second leg.

Barcelona did not waste much time in getting on level terms, as Messi and Busquets combined to send Semedo into the box in the 57th minute.

The Portuguese full-back crossed low for Griezmann to power home right-footed.

"At first we found it hard to find space, or create space or get shots on goal," said Griezmann.

"But the more we saw that they were tiring, the more we were able to push forward and make chances."

Vidal was sent off after a sliding tackle on Rui before appearing to headbutt the Napoli defender.

The Chilean will also miss the return leg in Spain, with defender Gerard Pique a doubt after going off late on with an ankle injury. AFP

# Yufei, Marin headline star-studded int'l line-up

8 of the world's top 10 WS & 3 of top 10 MS players set to play in the 10th edition of Indian Open

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

World No 1 Chen Yufei and defending men's singles champion Viktor Axelsen will headline a star-studded international contingent when the 10th edition of the India Open Super 500 tournament will begin here on March 24.

With the Olympic qualification cut-off set to end on April 26, the \$ 400,000 event will see a galaxy of stars descending at the Indian capital, making the upcoming edition of the Super 500 event one of the best ever.

Yufei will be leading eight of the world's top 10 women's singles shuttlers with the others being Akane Yamaguchi, He Bingjiao, Carolina Marin, An Se Young, Michelle Li, three-time champion Ratchanok Intanon and India's very own world champion PV Sindhu, besides former World No 1 Saina Nehwal.

Among the men, while Axelsen will be gunning for his third title, he will have to contend with fellow top-10 players, Sai Praneeth and 2018 winner Shi Yuqi. 2012 champion and former World No 1 Son Wan Ho will be another of the star shuttlers vying for the title. Three-time world junior champion Kunlavut Vitidsarn, who reached the Barcelona Spain Masters final this month, will be one of the young guns capable of causing an upset.

For India's 2015 champions Saina Nehwal and Kidambi Srikanth, the tournament will be crucial as they look to bag some valuable ranking points and materialize their Tokyo Olympic dreams. 2014 Commonwealth Games Gold medalist Parupalli Kashyap, HS Prannoy, Sourabh Verma, Sameer Verma and Lakshya Sen are the other Indian shuttlers who will be showing their fireworks in the singles main draw.

For the 2017 champion Sindhu, the tournament will be the perfect battleground to test herself against the world's best in her quest for the Olympic Gold she missed at Rio the last time. With the draw having the planet's best shuttler, Chen Yufei, who began the season with the Malaysia Masters title, Sindhu is expected to put up a flawless show in front of the home audience.

The tournament will also give the biggest stars a chance to improve their ranking and, in turn, better their seeding at Tokyo — something the likes of Yamaguchi, Intanon, Marin will be hoping to do.

In doubles, all eyes will be on Thailand Open champions Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, who are currently ranked 10th and are almost certain of making the trip to Tokyo. The heavily-stacked draw has seven men's doubles pairs from the world's top 10, led by World No 4 Takeshi Kamura and Keigo Sonoda.

The Indian pairs of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy-Ashwini Ponnappa and Pranaav Jerry Chopra-Sikki Reddy need to show their best form in a mixed doubles field that sees the World No 1 combine of Zheng Si Wei and Huang Ya Qiong leading 9 top-10 teams.

The women's doubles section too is packed with eight top-10 teams where Sikki and Ashwini will be the Indian team looking to leave their mark.



Sonam Malik (R) with her coach Ajmer Malik

# Sonam makes cut for Oly qualifiers

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Proving her mettle yet again, young Sonam Maikl downed Sakshi Malik for the second time in a row, this time by pinning the Olympic medalist, to make it to the Indian team for next month's Olympic Qualifiers here on Wednesday.

Asked to re-appear in trials after not-so-strong performance at the Rome Ranking series event and the recently-concluded Asian Championships, the 18-year-old Sonam tore apart the challenge of established seniors in the 62kg competition.

She first got past Radhika and then carving little for reputations, Sonam beat the Asian Championship 59kg Gold medalist Sarita Mor (3-1) in the semifinals before winning by fall against Rio Olympics Bronze medalist Sakshi in the final.

She pinned Sakshi in the second period when she was trailing 1-2 and one minute left in the bout.

Nine wrestlers appeared in the 62kg trials, including 2018 World Championship Bronze medalist Pooja Dhanda and a few from upper weight categories.

"There was no nervousness before the bouts. I was determined to compete hard. I have fought against them before and I knew I had to battle it out. So I was prepared," Sonam said.

Sonam said she needs to hone her style before the Bishkek Qualifiers.

"I will try my best. I need to work on my leg defence and ground attack before the Bishkek Qualifiers."

Meanwhile, Kiran won the trial in 76kg.

The Asian Olympic Qualifiers will be held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan from March 27-29. The finalists will qualify for the Tokyo Olympics.

# Man City appeal against Euro ban

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City's appeal against their two-year European ban for breaches of financial regulations has been officially registered by the Court of Arbitration for Sport, CAS announced on Wednesday.

The Premier League club, who were also fined 30 million euros (\$32.5 million) by European football's governing body UEFA earlier this month, had immediately contested the "flawed" process and stated their intention to appeal.

CAS said in a statement on Wednesday: "The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has registered an appeal filed by Manchester City football club against the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA)."

"The appeal is directed against the decision of the adjudicatory chamber of the UEFA Club Financial Control



Pep Guardiola during Manchester City training session

Fair Play Regulations."

CAS said it was not possible to say when the matter would be resolved but it is expected to take several months.

The adjudicatory chamber said on February 14 City had broken the rules by "overstating its sponsorship revenue in its accounts and in the break-even information submitted to UEFA between 2012 and 2016."

Pep Guardiola's City face losing hundreds of millions of pounds in prize money, TV revenue, gate receipts and sponsorship income should their appeal fail.

Last week, City Football Group CEO Ferran Soriano said the club hoped to have their appeal heard by CAS before the start of next season's Champions League.

If the ban stands, it could raise questions about the future of Guardiola and key players.

# Goodbye, tennis: Sharapova announces retirement

AFP ■ MOSCOW

Five-time Grand Slam winner Maria Sharapova, one of the world's most recognisable sports-women, on Wednesday announced her retirement at the age of 32.

"Tennis — I'm saying goodbye," Sharapova said in an article for *Vogue and Vanity Fair* magazines.

"After 28 years and five Grand Slam titles, though, I'm ready to scale another mountain — to compete on a different type of terrain."

Sharapova burst onto the scene as a supremely gifted teenager and won her Grand Slams before serving a 15-month ban for failing a drugs test at the 2016 Australian Open.

The Russian former world number one's ranking is currently 373rd.

Sharapova has hardly played in the past year because of long-standing shoulder problems.

When she did play she lost as



Maria Sharapova kisses US Open trophy

many matches as she won and was dumped out in the first rounds at Wimbledon, the US Open and, most recently, the Australian Open in Melbourne.

Sharapova shot to fame as a giggly 17-year-old Wimbledon winner in 2004, the third-youngest player to conquer the All England Club's hallowed grass courts.

She became world number one in 2005 and won the US Open the next year.

"One of the keys to my success was that I never looked back and I never looked forward," Sharapova said on Wednesday.

"I believed that if I kept grinding and grinding, I could push myself to an incredible place."

She would win the 2008 Australian Open and in 2012, the Siberian-born captured the French Open to become the 10th woman to complete a career

Grand Slam. She added Olympic Silver to her resume that year.

Her 2014 French Open title was another high after a dispiriting injury low.

"In giving my life to tennis, tennis gave me a life," Sharapova said in her retirement missive.

"I'll miss it everyday. I'll miss the training and my daily routine: Waking up at dawn, lacing my left shoe before my right, and closing the court's gate before I hit my first ball of the day.

"I'll miss my team, my coaches. I'll miss the moments sitting with my father on the practice court bench.

The handshakes — win or lose — and the athletes, whether they knew it or not, who pushed me to be my best.

"Looking back now, I realize that tennis has been my mountain. My path has been filled with valleys and detours, but the views from its peak were incredible."

# Coronavirus: Six countries, including China, pull out of shooting WC in Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The novel coronavirus outbreak has prompted six countries, including the deadly disease's epicentre China, to withdraw from next month's shooting World Cup here, the National Rifles Association of India (NRAI) revealed on Wednesday.

The ISSF World Cup is slated to be held from March 15 to 26 at the Karni Singh Shooting Range.

"There were some countries which were coming but because of the Coronavirus outbreak, their national policies dictate that they can't come,"



NRAI President Raninder Singh Sodhi, Sanjeev Rajput & Manu Bhaker

NRAI President Raninder Singh told reporters.

"China have taken a wise decision on their own as a nation. They don't want to infect others and hence

national policies," he added, referring to the domestic travel restrictions imposed by the governments of these countries.

The NRAI chief also informed that Pakistan will also not be competing at the event as the country's shooters are busy familiarising themselves with a new coach.

"Don't connect last time to this time. Pakistan were never coming. They have two athletes who have qualified for pistol events for the Tokyo Olympics," he said referring to the denial of visas to Pakistani shooters in last year's World Cup.

"My colleague Mr Javed Lodhi (Pakistan shooting federation's executive vice

president) has informed me that our coach in Germany is only available during that time and our shooters would much rather train with him for the Olympic events than participate in the World Cup," Singh added.

Last year, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had suspended all Indian applications to host international events after two Pakistani shooters were denied visas to compete in the World Cup held here.

The sanction was later lifted after assurances from the Sports Ministry that political issues will not come in the way of granting visas to participating athletes.

# Train in India: NRAI tells shooters

NEW DELHI: India's national shooting federation on Wednesday said it will not allow its shooters to travel abroad for training due to the novel coronavirus threat and won't hesitate in pulling out of a Tokyo Olympics Test event in April if it becomes a health risk.

Indian shooters are scheduled to travel to Tokyo to participate in the Olympic Test event slated to take place from April 16 to 26 in the Japanese capital, which will host the main event in July-August this year.

"We have chosen our test event team but we are yet to decide (on travelling there). I'm not going to risk any of those kids. If we receive any advice

from the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) or the international federation, our own mission in Tokyo or even our own assessment we feel there's a threat, it isn't worth the risk," National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) president Raninder Singh said.

"We are also not allowing our shooters to travel overseas to train as well due to the virus," Singh said.

"If a shooter is infected in the test event then we are subjecting him or her to the gravest of dangers and then that shooter won't be able to participate in the Olympics, hampering our chances of winning a medal," he added. PNS

# SEMIS BERTH IN SIGHT FOR INDIA



India vs New Zealand  
Live from 9:30am IST  
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

Indian players pose for photo after win against Bangladesh during ICC Women's World T20 match in Perth

BCCI/Twitter

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

On a high after two easy victories on the trot, including one against defending champion Australia, the Indian women's cricket team will aim to inch closer to a semifinal berth when it takes on New Zealand in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup here today.

The Indians have hardly broken a sweat in their 17-run and 18-run wins over hosts Australia and Bangladesh in their previous two matches, and they are perched at the top of five-team Group A standings with four points from two matches.

A win against New Zealand today will take the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side on the threshold of a knock-out stage spot, to be competed among top two teams from Group A and B.

In the two matches so far, the Indian team has been impressive both in batting and bowling.

The 16-year-old sensation Shafali Verma has been the stand-out batter with a whirlwind 17-ball 39 against Bangladesh, following her 29 against Australia.

One-down Jemimah Rodrigues has also been among the runs with 26 and 34 in the two matches so far.

Only captain Harmanpreet, among the top order batters, has not scored big and she is due a big innings.

India is also likely to be bolstered by the return of star opener Smriti Mandhana who missed the match against Bangladesh due to fever.

The middle-order has also done its bit with Deepti Sharma playing a major role against Australia with an unbeaten 49 while Veda Krishnamurthy hit a match-defining 11-ball 20 not out

for a late flourish against Bangladesh.

The bowling department has been led admirably by seasoned leg-spinner Poonam Yadav — seven wickets in the first two matches — with pacer Shikha Pandey ably supporting her with five scalps so far.

New Zealand, though, have a better head-to-head record against India in recent years, having won the last three matches between the two sides.

Exactly a year back, they had beaten the Indian team 3-0 in a three-match T20I home series.

India will, however, remember their massive 34-run win against

New Zealand in the previous edition in 2018. Harmanpreet had struck a memorable 103 to lead her side to victory.

New Zealand have some top class players in their ranks in the form of captain and all-rounder Sophie Devine and top-order batswoman Suzie Bates while pacer Lea Tahuhu and leg-spinner Amelia Kerr will lead the bowling department.

They will go into this match on a high after an easy seven-wicket win over Sri Lanka on Saturday.

Devine had led her side from the front with an unbeaten 75 off 55 balls at the top of the order in that win.

## Shafali takes pressure off me: Smriti

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

She has been the backbone of Indian women's cricket team's batting but swashbuckling India opener Smriti Mandhana is delighted that teen prodigy Shafali Verma is stealing her thunder at the ongoing tournament as it takes the pressure off her.

The 23-year-old Mandhana, who has been a key player for the Indian team in the last two-three years, said Verma is showing she is capable of filling her boots.

"I used to score a lot of our runs in the last two of three years, especially in the Powerplay, but now with Shafali coming in, she's getting the runs in the way I do. It makes the team more balanced," Mandhana said.

"Shafali has been a huge positive coming into the T20 side. The way she's going about her batting, it's so easy to bat alongside her," she said on the eve of India's group match against New Zealand.

Verma has already announced her emergence on the global stage. The 16-year-old has scored 68 runs across two games in this World Cup, including five sixes and seven fours, at an impressive strike rate of 212.

Smriti said Verma's best attribute is the "routine she likes



Shafali Verma in action against B'desh

to follow and no one has gone in and told her she has to change that."

Talking about New Zealand match, Mandhana said, "I don't think we will be going into the game thinking about a total, but we will continue playing the way that is working for all of our batters."

Seasoned New Zealand pacer Lea Tahuhu said she is looking forward to bowling at Verma.

"Personally, I love the thought of facing Verma. It makes me fire up a little bit more and I'm really looking forward to playing her," said Tahuhu.

"I actually played her in the T20 Challenge in India last year and I know she's not going to take a step back," she said, referring to India's IPL style T20 tournament played in Jaipur.



## Knight takes Eng to record win

CANBERRA: Captain Heather Knight's maiden T20I century helped England notch up a record-breaking 98-run victory over debutants Thailand on Wednesday.

Knight blasted a majestic 108 not out from 66 balls to become the fourth batter to make a hundred at the event and send records tumbling.

England's total of 176 for two, after

being sent in to bat, was their highest T20I total and Knight's unbeaten third-wicket stand of 169 with Nat Sciver (59 not out) was the highest partnership for any wicket in Women's T20 World Cup history.

Thailand managed 78 for seven from their 20 overs, with England's victory by 98 runs the largest winning margin at the tournament.

All this was scarcely conceivable after

a remarkable start to the game when the 2009 winners were reduced to seven for two. Bot England openers were dismissed for ducks for just the second time in T20Is.

Knight has a remarkable record at Manuka Oval, with all four of her T20I 50+ scores coming in Australia's capital, the most of any woman at a single venue in the format.

Natthakan Chantham top-scored with a 53-ball 32 in the Thailand's unsuccessful run chase.

PTI

## Kohli loses top spot in Test rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

India skipper Virat Kohli lost the top spot in the ICC Test Player Rankings after managing only 21 runs in the first Test which his side lost to New Zealand by 10 wickets in Wellington.

Kohli, who has 906 points, slipped to the second position in the list which also features Ajinkya Rahane, Cheteshwar Pujara and Mayank Agarwal at the eighth, ninth and 10th place respectively.

While India vice-captain Rahane, who scored 75 in the opening Test, gained a spot and Mayank returned to a career-best 10th position after amassing 92 runs, which included a second-innings half-century, Pujara dropped two places after returning with identical scores of 11 in the two innings.

Kohli's slump meant Australia's Steve Smith was back on top of the list for the eighth time after first occupying the top position in June 2015. The last batsman apart from Smith and Kohli to be number one is New Zealand's Kane Williamson, for an eight-day period in December 2015.

In bowling chart, off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who took three wickets for 99 in the first innings against New Zealand, slipped a place to ninth but remained the only Indian featuring in the top 10 with 765 points.

Fast bowler Ishant Sharma, who took a five-wicket haul on his comeback from injury during the opening Test, gained a place to be at the 17th spot.

New Zealand pacers Tim Southee and Trent Boult made big gains after finishing with nine and five wickets, respectively in the first Test against India.

While Southee advanced eight spots to take sixth position, which is his highest since a career-best fifth place in June 2014, Boult moved up four slots to take joint-13th position. The all-rounders' list features Jadeja and Ashwin at the third and fifth positions respectively. While Jadeja didn't play the first Test, Ashwin scored 0 and 4 to lose a place in rankings.

# 'Shaw natural stroke-player & knows how to get runs'

PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

Trent Boult and Tim Southee have exposed the chinks in Prithvi Shaw's armour but India skipper Virat Kohli is ready to wait and watch before any corrective analysis as he does not see a pattern in the young opener's dismissals so far.

There are a few shortcomings that experts have noticed in Shaw's batting after the 20-year-old right-handed batsman scored just 16 and 14 in the two innings of the first Test against New Zealand.

"I think we can sit down and analyse, maybe after 8 or 10 similar dismissals. I don't think (it's fair to the guy), who is playing away from home

for the first time and is probably experiencing different kind of bowling attack at international level compared to playing at home," Kohli had said, when asked about Shaw's dismissals.

"I don't think at this stage, we need to sit down and discuss what's going wrong because I don't see anything wrong. It's the execution of things which was not there."

International cricket is about finding one's own straps and Shaw also will work out what is best for him, feels the captain who has 70 hundreds to his credit in all formats.

"He (Shaw) will figure out. He will find ways to score runs because he is a natural stroke-player and he scores runs. It is not that he gets small runs



Prithvi Shaw bats during India's second innings in 1st Test

AP

(when he gets them). He gets big runs and knows how to get runs."

The reason why Shaw faltered could be due to the lack of understanding of the pace of the Basin Reserve track but the former U-19 World Cup-winning skipper was not alone as some of the team's other big names also failed to gauge the nature of the pitch.

"It is just a matter of understanding the pace of the wicket and conditions as soon as possible. Again, when he is in a clear frame of mind, he is very, very destructive," Kohli said, hopeful that Shaw will learn quickly.

Clarity of mind is paramount at the highest level and once Shaw has that, there would be no stopping him.

"I think whenever we have done well

overseas, the opening partnership has been with a lot of clarity and positivity even clearing the in-field, taking bowlers on so that you put them under pressure. He is that kind of a player," Kohli said.

"Once he feels that he can do it, I think it will be a different ball game. The mindset can shift very quickly."

While Kohli's Test squad has had horses for courses policy, it seems that the skipper wants to stick with Shaw in the second Test even though Shubman Gill can't be completely ruled out of reckoning. "Prithvi obviously wants to perform and no doubt about it, every batsman wants to. We need to give him that time to get used to the conditions a little bit and once he starts scoring, he will feel more confident about it"

## Indian bowling is still world class: McGrath

PTI ■ MUMBAI



Jasprit Bumrah & Ishant Sharma ICC

returned with a five-wicket haul, his pace colleagues Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami managed just one wicket each as New Zealand posted a match-deciding first innings score of 348 despite being 216 for six at one stage in first Test.

"I still have total faith in the Indian (bowling) lineup. They had a few injuries of late. Sharma is coming back and he did get five wickets. Bumrah had a couple of injuries and he is coming back," McGrath told reporters.

"So, yeah, I think the Indian bowling attack is world class and there is no doubt about that," he added.

"I don't have any issues with the bowling attack, you don't lose form overnight. It was just one of those things where the toss made a huge difference. (in the first test in New Zealand), but you still got to get and score runs."

McGrath praised Ishant for "reinventing" himself and also lauded Shami and Bumrah.

et. I am big fan of it. I'm not a big fan of four-day Test cricket. I'm very much a traditionalist — five days — that's Test cricket to me," elaborated McGrath.

"But if we can bring something new that keeps people coming to the game, then that's brilliant. Day Night cricket it that, it brings different challenges. When you bowl, you bat it can make a big difference. Different tactics, so it just brings a different awareness and different things you have to do," he elaborated.

PTI

## Jamieson wants to establish as all-rounder

PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

A specialist batsman during his formative years before shifting to fast bowling, New Zealand's promising pacer Kyle Jamieson wants to transform into an all-rounder going forward.

The 25-year-old, who made a dream debut against India in the first Test, played as a batsman in his younger days, and it wasn't until he met the then New Zealand U-19 coach Dayle Hadlee that he was asked to seriously consider focusing on fast bowling as a primary skill.

"I was pretty much a batter all through high school and then made the New Zealand U-19s, and Dayle Hadlee got a hold of me and told me to run in, which kind of shifted me towards becoming more of a bowler," Jamieson told ICC.

"I always liked batting, it was probably what I grew up admiring the most — whilst I did bowl, I did not think of that as my career option growing up. Now I'm a bowler who can bat, trying to get to the all-rounder stage, that's where I ideally want to be," the 6-ft-8-inch tall fast bowler said.

Jamieson impressed with his bounce and ability to extract movement in the first innings of the Wellington Test, where he picked up four wickets. He also scored 44 off just 45 balls in New Zealand's reply.

**TOUGH TO COUNTER'**  
Indian batsmen will get a liberal dose of "chin music" in the second Test at the seamer-friendly Hagley Oval, senior New Zealand pacer Neil Wagner declared, harping on the visitors' struggles when faced

with pace and bounce.

With India troubled by short balls bowled from round the wicket, the 33-year-old Wagner promised that they will employ the same strategy during the second match starting Saturday.

"It's obviously tough for them to come here and play where there is obviously a bit more bounce and pace," said Wagner.

"Obviously, playing in India where there is not that much bounce and pace around and so it is something new for them to adapt to," he added.

Wagner, just like his coach Gary Stead, believes that Indians will be better but he expects the home side to be relentless in its endeavour to compound the agony for the visitors.

"Hopefully, we can keep the squeeze on and bowl the way the boys bowled in Wellington and if we can keep piling the pressure on, we will make the job a lot easier for ourselves," he said.

## Faf out of SA ODI squad

AFP ■ JOHANNESBURG

Former captain Faf du Plessis will not play for South Africa in a three-match one-day international series against Australia but remains part of the country's future plans, Cricket South Africa (CSA) announced on Wednesday.

Du Plessis, who stepped down from the captaincy in all forms of the game earlier this month, is being rested along with recent regular players in Rassie van der Dussen and Dwayne Pretorius.

The first match in the series will be in Paarl on Saturday, following the conclusion of a T20 series.

Test left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj has been rewarded for good form in a domestic one-day tournament with his first one-day international call-up since 2018.

Coach Mark Boucher said the squad was picked with an eye to the future with the next World Cup still three years away.

"We always saw the series against England and Australia as an opportunity to play some fresh talent," said Boucher. "If we feel that we need to rest players, we will, as we have done in the recent past. Faf (du Plessis) has been fantastic for us in white-ball cricket and remains very much in our ODI plans and we will manage his workload for the near future diligently."

The squad includes batsman Janneman Malan and wicketkeeper-batsman Kyle Verreynne, who were both included in the squad for a recent series against England but did not play. Malan has previously been capped at T20 level while Verreynne is uncapped.

**RICHARDSON IN AUS TEAM**  
SYDNEY: Pace bowler Jhye Richardson was added to the

Australia ODI squad for three clashes in South Africa.

Selectors also named an unchanged line-up for the one-day series against New Zealand at home next month. Richardson dislocated his shoulder ahead of last year's World Cup in England but was recalled for T20 series against South Africa and will remain with the team for the one-dayers.

"He has slotted back into the T20 squad in South Africa and is pushing for a place in that side," national selector Trevor Hohns said of Richardson.

"Keeping him in South Africa with the one-day squad gives us another exceptional fast bowler who is ready to go."

Australia face New Zealand in the first of three ODIs in Sydney on March 13.

## SINGLES

DJOKOVIC, TSITSIPAS POWER INTO Q/F

DUBAI: Novak Djokovic and Stefanos Tsitsipas powered into the Dubai C'ships quarters with runaway victories. World number one Djokovic eased to his 15th straight win of the season with a 6-3, 6-1 demolition of Philipp Kohlschreiber in only 61 minutes. Greek star Tsitsipas dispatched Alexander Bublik 7-6 (7/1), 6-4.

ARSENAL MUST KEEP AUBA: LACAZETTE

LONDON: Alexandre Lacazette says it is crucial that Arsenal keep hold of fellow forward Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, who has been linked with a move away from the Emirates. "It's really important (to keep Aubameyang)," Lacazette said. "He's one of the best or maybe he's been the best player this season for Arsenal. Obviously I hope he's going to stay."

SHARAN-SITAK PROGRESS TO QUARTERS

SANTIAGO: Divij Sharan and New Zealand's Artem Sitak progressed to the quarterfinals of the Chile Open. The third-seeded Indo-Kiwi pair defeated the Brazilian duo of Thiago Monteiro and Fernando Romboli in straight sets 7-6, 7-6. The Indo-Kiwi duo will now face Roberto Carballes Beena and Alejandro Davidovich Fokina.

SL CRUSH WINDIES BY 161 RUNS

HAMBANTOTA: Sri Lanka crushed West Indies by 161 runs in the second one-day international to clinch the series on Wednesday. Chasing 346 for victory, West Indies were bowled out for 184 in 39.1 overs with wrist spinners Wanindu Hasaranga and Lakshan Sandakan taking three wickets each. Avishka Fernando, who blasted 127, and Kusal Mendis, who made 119, put on 239 runs in Sri Lanka's highest third-wicket stand as the hosts amassed 345 for eight after being put into bat.

MURRAY MAY NEED FURTHER OPERATION

LONDON: Britain's former world number one Andy Murray faces a crucial few weeks to find out if he requires another operation in order to return to top-level tennis. The 32-year-old three-time Grand Slam winner has only just returned to training after being out of action since November due to bruising on his pelvic bone. But may need an operation to remove bone growth associated with the surgery though he could be back in action at the end of March in Miami.

RAVI OFF TO FLYING START IN DUTCH JR

NEW DELHI: Young shuttler Ravi and Ritvik Sanjeev Satish Kumar registered a dominating straight-set victories in the U-19 men's singles opening round at the Dutch Junior Int'l tournament in Haarlem. While Ravi wrapped up the match 21-11, 21-8 comfortably against his Indonesian opponent Made Deco Setya Atmaja, Ritvik thrashed Singapore's Zhiyuan Lee 21-12, 21-11 to progress into the second round of the tournament.

JAPAN DAVIS CUP TIE BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

TOKYO: Japan's home Davis Cup tie against Ecuador next week will be played behind closed doors, organisers said, the latest sporting event in the country to be affected by coronavirus fears. And Japan's sumo governing body announced it would hold an emergency meeting to decide whether to go ahead with a major tournament in Osaka scheduled to begin on March 8.

AGENCIES