

**OPINION 8**  
PREVENTABLE  
REALITY

**WORLD 12**  
HISTORIC TRUMP IMPEACHMENT  
TRIAL BEGIN IN SENATE

**AVENUES 13**  
SOFTWARES THAT MAKE  
CAREER FUTURE PROOF

Published From  
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR  
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH  
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

\*Late City Vol. 16 Issue 21  
\*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

BHUBANESWAR, WEDNESDAY JANUARY 22, 2020; PAGES 16 ₹3



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## Review disqualification power: SC

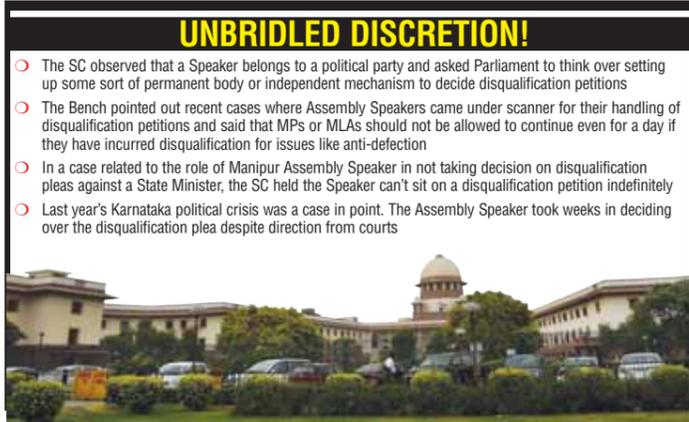
Parliament nudged to rethink absolute authority of presiding officers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court wants Parliament to put a full stop to the unbridled power enjoyed by presiding officers of legislatures in deciding disqualification pleas against lawmakers.

The SC on Tuesday observed that a Speaker also belongs to a political party and asked Parliament to think over setting up some sort of permanent body or independent mechanism to decide disqualification petitions. The Bench pointed out recent cases where Assembly Speakers came under scanner for their handling of disqualification petitions and said that MPs or MLAs should not be allowed to continue even for a day if they have incurred disqualification for issues like anti-defection.

In its Tuesday judgment in a case related to the role of the Manipur Assembly Speaker in not taking decision on disqualification pleas against a State Minister, the SC held that the Speaker can't sit on a disqualification petition indefinitely and he must act within a reasonable time.



### UNBRIDLED DISCRETION!

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- The Bench pointed out recent cases where Assembly Speakers came under scanner for their handling of disqualification petitions and said that MPs or MLAs should not be allowed to continue even for a day if they have incurred disqualification for issues like anti-defection
- In a case related to the role of Manipur Assembly Speaker in not taking decision on disqualification pleas against a State Minister, the SC held the Speaker can't sit on a disqualification petition indefinitely
- Last year's Karnataka political crisis was a case in point. The Assembly Speaker took weeks in deciding over the disqualification plea despite direction from courts

The court's suggestion came in the wake of several cases where the Speakers were accused of deciding the disqualification pleas to suit their political preferences, disregarding norms and conventions, and using such pleas as a tool to arm-twist the lawmakers to protect or destabilise State Governments.

Last year's Karnataka political crisis was a case in point. The Assembly Speaker took weeks in deciding over the disqualification plea despite direction from courts.

High Court in April 2018 issued a direction to the Speaker and fixed a deadline for deciding a plea. The Speaker took his own time and then matter went to the SC.

More often than not, the Speaker "sit over" such pleas, which remain pending for months — in some cases for years — even after

MLAS/MLAs have clearly violated the provision of anti-defection law. By not acting on such pleas, Speakers allow MLAs to retain their voting power despite switching side. This mostly helps the ruling party in a State.

Such arbitrariness by the Speakers often facilitated mid-night political coup in North-East States.

Suggesting for an independent mechanism to deal with disqualification pleas against lawmakers, the SC asked the Manipur Assembly Speaker to decide within four weeks the plea of a Congress leader seeking disqualification of BJP lawmaker and Manipur Forest Minister Th Shyamkumar.

A Bench headed by Justice RF Nariman had granted liberty to Congress MLA Fajur Rahim and K Meghachandra to approach it again if the Assembly Speaker fails to take a decision within four weeks.

The BJP Minister had won the Assembly election on a Congress ticket and later joined the BJP. This led to filing of the disqualification plea.

## E-ticket racket linked to terror financing busted

### RPF nabs man from Jharkhand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In one of its biggest crackdown on illegal ticketing in the railways, the RPF has arrested a madrasa-educated, self-taught software developer from Jharkhand in a racket which has links to Pakistan, Bangladesh and Dubai with suspected involvement in terror financing, a senior official said on Tuesday.

Ghulam Mustafa (28), who was arrested from Bhubaneswar, has a team of programmers working for him. He started his career in 2015 touting counter tickets in Bengaluru and then graduated to e-tickets and illegal software, the RPF official said.

"For the last 10 days, the IB, Special Bureau, ED, NIA, Karnataka Police have interrogated Mustafa.

"Dimensions of money laundering and terror financing are suspected," Railway Protection Force (RPF)

Director General Arun Kumar said at a press briefing.

Kumar said Mustafa has 563 personal IRCTC user IDs, and a list of 2,400 SBI branches and 600 regional rural banks where he is suspected to have accounts.

He also said Mustafa used software to access darknet, and Linux-based hacking systems were found on his laptop.

An Indian software company with branches across the country and abroad has also come under the scanner for having links to the racket, Kumar said, refusing to name it. He, however, said the company has been involved in a case of money laundering in Singapore.

"Analysis of Mustafa's laptops, which were highly encrypted. His phone has many Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Middle-Eastern, Indonesian,

Nepali numbers as well as six virtual numbers. There was also an application to create



fake Aadhaar cards," Kumar said.

The DG said Mustafa has revealed that he is a follower of a Pakistan-based religious group. Mustafa's digital footprints were found on Government websites, he said.

The RPF chief named Hamid Ashraf as the mastermind of the racket which is suspected to generate revenue of Rs 10-15 crore per month.

Ashraf, who is also a software developer, was involved in the bombing of a school in Uttar Pradesh's Gonda district in 2019 and is now suspected to have fled to Dubai, Kumar said.

### CAPSULE

#### CITIZENSHIP ACT WON'T BE SCRAPPED AT ALL: HM

Lucknow: Attacking the Opposition for "misleading" people on the Citizenship Amendment Act, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said the law will not be scrapped despite the protests over it. Addressing a rally here in support of the CAA.

#### ARMY JAWAN, SPO KILLED IN PULWAMA GUNFIGHT

Srinagar: An Army jawan and a special police officer were killed on Tuesday in an encounter with terrorists in Jammu & Kashmir's Pulwama district, police said.

#### DISCLOSURE OF INFO IN NPR VOLUNTARY: GOVT

New Delhi: Amidst strong opposition by some non-BJP ruled States, the Centre on Tuesday made it clear that the disclosure of information in the NPR exercise is not mandatory but voluntary.

#### WOMAN, SON FOUND DEAD INSIDE DELHI HOUSE

New Delhi: A 36-year-old woman and her minor son were found dead inside their house in north-west Delhi's Jahangirpuri on Tuesday, police said. The woman had a stab wound on her back while her 12-year-old son's throat was slit with a sharp-edged weapon, police said.

#### PAVAN QUESTIONS JD(U)'S TIE-UP WITH BJP IN DELHI

Patna: Disgruntled JD(U) leader Pavan Varma on Tuesday sought "ideological clarity" from party chief Nitish Kumar over extending alliance with the BJP beyond Bihar in Delhi despite having expressed apprehensions "in private" about the BJP-RSS leading the nation into a "dangerous space".

## In queue behind 44 independents, Kejriwal files papers after 6 hrs

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Am Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal filed his nomination from the New Delhi constituency on Tuesday after waiting for over six hours. AAP spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj said Kejriwal filed his nomination around 6.30 pm on Tuesday.

On the last day of filing nominations, Kejriwal was seen waiting and holding token number 45. "Waiting to file my nomination. My token no is 45. There are many people here to file nomination papers. Am so glad so many people participating in democracy," Kejriwal said.

Earlier, alleging a conspiracy, AAP senior leader Manish Sisodia accused the BJP of propping up 44 independent candidates ahead of Kejriwal to deny him nomination.

Sisodia said no matter how much the BJP conspires they will not be able to stop Kejriwal from filing his nomination. "The BJP, no matter how much you conspire, you will not be able to stop Kejriwal from filing his nomination or from becoming the Chief Minister for the third time. Your conspiracies will not yield any result," he said.

Tagging tweets of Bharadwaj, who alleged 35 candidates were sitting at the office along with the CM without proper nomination papers or even 10 proposers.



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal waves as he arrives at Jannagar House to file his nomination papers from the New Delhi constituency in New Delhi on Tuesday. Ranjan Dimri / Pioneer

"They (candidates) are insisting unless their papers are complete and they file their nominations, they won't allow the CM to file his nomination papers," he said. "Doesn't matter. Many of them are filing for the first time. They are bound to make mistakes. We also made mistakes the first time. We should hand hold them. I am enjoying waiting with them. They are all part of my family," Kejriwal said in a tweet.

Delhi goes to polls on February 8 and counting will take place on February 11. The BJP has fielded Sunil Yadav against Kejriwal, while the Congress has fielded Romesh Sabharwal.

## CM announces cancer hospital for Bargarh

### Launches ₹130-cr projects

PNS ■ BARGARH

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated seven projects worth Rs 70 crore and laid foundation-stone for 22 other projects of Rs 60 crore in Bargarh district on Tuesday.

Patnaik inaugurated a six-storied building with a 300-

bed capacity at the District Headquarters Hospital. He announced to establish a cancer hospital in the district.

Besides, the CM also inaugurated the ICICI's 150th branch in the State at Bijepur and a high-level bridge at Bargarh and a science centre at Tukurla in the district.

Among others Ministers Prafulla Mallik, Susanta Singh and Ashok Chandra Panda, MPs Prasanna Acharya and Suresh Pujari, district MLAs and 5T

Secretary VK Pandian were present.

Later, the CM visited the Samaleswari Temple at Sambalpur and prayed to the goddess. He told reporters that steps would be taken for the development of the shrine and availing of amenities for devotees. He said a team would soon visit the temple soon for the purpose.

Besides, Patnaik said Hirakud would be developed as an international-level tourism centre.

## Assembly session from Feb 14

### BUDGET TO BE Tabled ON FEB 18

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Third session (Budget Session) of the 16th Odisha Legislative Assembly (OLA) would begin from February 14, according to a notification issued by the Parliamentary Affairs Department on Tuesday.

Governor Prof Ganeshi Lal

would address the Assembly on the first day of the session, which would meet for a total of 31 workdays in two phases. The Annual Budget for 2020-21 would be tabled in the House

on February 18. While the first phase of the session would be from February 14 to 29, the second phase will run from March 11 till April 9.



### In Bhubaneswar

## Bangladeshi sex workers trafficking racket busted

### Mastermind couple held; 6 women rescued

and rescued the Bangladeshi women.

An official said the house owner was kept in dark about the identity of the Bangladeshi



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Special Task Force of Crime Branch arrested a couple allegedly involved in running a sex racket in Bhubaneswar and rescued six Bangladeshi women on Tuesday.

The cops arrested Sheikh Ibrahim and his wife Anjali aka 'Didi' from Danagohiri under the Pipili police station as the couple was allegedly the mastermind of the sex racket that was running from a rented accommodation at Rath Road in Bhubaneswar's Old Town area.

Later in the day, the Commissionerate police raided a house located in the Linagaraj police station area

women when Ibrahim and Anjali took his house on rent. The couple was said to have brought the Bangladeshi women to Bhubaneswar on the basis of forged Aadhaar cards.

The official said the Bangladeshi women were being questioned at an undisclosed location to elicit further details about the flesh trade.

Another official on condition of anonymity said that after a Bangladeshi sex worker levelled rape allegation against a hotel owner, the involvement of the Pipili couple in trafficking and running sex racket came to the fore. Since then, the couple had been under the vigil of Crime Branch, the official added.

## +2 minimum marks move may be dropped this year

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In the wake of students' protests against the State Government's move not to promote Plus II first year students securing less than 33% of marks, School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash on Tuesday said the department would reconsider its decision.

Dash told reporters, "As students are not ready for Plus II first year examination, the decision on 33% mark will be reconsidered. The Government is likely to implement the new rule from next academic year. The Government has no intention to fail any student."

On Monday, the Minister

had said that there has been some misunderstanding among students about the new rule. Like before, students would have to appear at the Plus II first year examination conducted by Higher Secondary Schools. "As per the new decision, students will have to secure minimum 33% pass mark to get promoted to second year. Those who cannot secure the pass mark will be given another chance in May."



On Tuesday, students of the Ravenshaw Junior College in Cuttack locked the university's main gate and staged blockade on the main road demanding cancellation of the 33% pass mark decision.

## Bribery case

## Horticulture Dir Executive too arrested

### Was coordinating between bank official, suppliers

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Vigilance officers on Tuesday arrested Pitabas Pradhan, Management Information System (MIS) Executive in the office of Director, Horticulture, for his alleged complicity in the bribe-taking case in which Director Dr Bijay Ketan Upadhyaya, an IAS officer, and YES Bank Bapuji Nagar branch vice-president Santosh Kumar Pattanayak have been arrested earlier.

Notably, Upadhyay and

Pattanayak were arrested for taking bribe of Rs 1 lakh from an authorised representative of the SRM Plastochem Private Ltd, which is an empanelled supplier under Directorate of Horticulture for supply of sprinklers to farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY). Both of them are now in judicial custody.

An official released revealed that Pradhan had joined as a Data Entry Operator in the Directorate on outsourcing basis on January 8, 2014 and was re-engaged as MIS Executive in the Director's office on September 1, 2019. He along with YES Bank VP Pattanayak acted as a conduit for Director Upadhyaya in the

demand and acceptance of illegal gratification of Rs 1,00,000 from the SRM Plastochem.

Pradhan was working in the Engineering Section of the Directorate where he was processing the PMKSY bills for release of payments to the bank account of the concerned company after approval by the Director. Upadhyaya had instructed him in the presence of Pattanayak to coordinate with the suppliers/ dealers regarding payment of part of the payment released to their account as illegal gratification



to Pattanayak. Accordingly, he was keeping track of bills processed as well as bills pending and was instructing the suppliers/dealers to contact Pattanayak and hand him over part of payment released as illegal gratification for the Director. He was also intimidating Pattanayak about the details of

the amount to be paid towards illegal gratification by the suppliers/ dealers which he (Pattanayak) was then accepting on behalf of Dr Upadhyaya. In case of non-payment of the demanded amount, Pradhan was also communicating to the concerned dealers/ suppliers that their further bills would not be processed, unless they made the payment of the demanded amount. He had also intimidated the same to the authorised representative of SRM Plastochem in the instant case.

The release further informed Pradhan forwarded to the Court of Special Judge, which remanded him to judicial custody till February 3, 2020.

5T, Mo Sarkar execution

# Chicago varsity roped in to develop data centre

## 'Big data' to be sourced for policymaking

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In another step towards actualisation of Mo Sarkar and 5-T approaches, the State Government has envisioned developing a Data Policy Innovation Centre (DPIC) in technical collaboration with the University of Chicago.

It was revealed at a meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy at the Lok Seva Bhawan here on Tuesday, Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment Principal Secretary Saurabh Garg outlined utility of a DPIC. The theme expert from the

University of Chicago presented different contours of DPIC with its technical and application possibilities.

The Chief Secretary directed to lay out the proposal in convergence with existing systems. The meeting gave in-principle approval for use of 'big data' in formation of innovative policies and service delivery.

A DPIC can serve as a center of excellence for accumulation of 'big data' from different sources through cutting-edge machine learning and artificial intelligence, analyse such data using modern econometrics and statistical models and come out with required innovative policy guides.

It can create a framework for collaborative work between Government departments and faculty of the Chicago University on select policy



areas to design new solutions and evaluate its field outcome. There is a wide scope for use of 'big data' in various sectors of governance. The principal potential areas outlined in the meeting include improving water and energy use policies, encouraging crop diversification through information on potential yield and farming technique, reducing pollution through predictive targeting models, improving learning outcomes, reducing distributive

loss of power through strategic enforcement and behavioral changes.

Development Commissioner Suresh Chandra Mohapatra, APC and ACS Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra, Finance Principal Ashok Kumar Meena, School and Mass Education Minister Chitra Arumang, Electronics and IT Secretary Manoj Mishra and Dr Anant Sudarshan from University of Chicago participated in the discussion.

# N'rangpur rape, murder: NHRC seeks ATR from DM, SP

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought an action-taken report (ATR) from the Nabarangpur district Collector and Superintendent of Police (SP) over the kidnapping, gangrape and murder of a minor tribal girl on December 14, 2019 in the district.

The NHRC has asked the report to be submitted within four weeks by February 21.

The 16-year-old tribal girl, who had gone missing from home, was found murdered after being gangraped in Gumundoli village under the Kogamunda police station in Nabarangpur district on December 14. The incident showed that law and order situation has collapsed in the State with an alarming spurt in cases of rape and murder of women, alleged Tripathy.

On December 13 night, at around 8 pm, the girl had gone out of her house to attend nature's call since the family does not have a toilet. When



she did not return till late night, the girl's parents searched for her but in vain. On December 14 morning, some villagers while going towards paddy fields, about 500 metre away, found the girl's body and informed her family members and police.

Her body bore multiple injury marks and police found two jeans trousers from the spot. The girl was studying in Kotpad school but dropped out in Class X. Her father and sister are working as daily labourers in the area.

The Nirbhaya Guidelines

have not been followed by the State, the petition pointed out. This is a classic case of failure of entire State machinery and the State police. Negligence and failure of the Government authorities in acting over the issue of implementing Nirbhaya Guidelines, ensuring mental health and ensuring toilets and benefits of social welfare schemes and strict adherence thereof pose serious question of human rights, Tripathy alleged.

He also demanded a compensation of Rs 1 crore to be paid to the victim's family.

# DOWRY DEMAND Woman dies as in-laws throw rice gruel

PNS ■ JAJPUR

In an incident of dowry death, a woman died when her in-laws allegedly thrashed her brutally and later threw hot rice gruel on her at Sankarikula village under the Bari police station in Jajpur district on Monday.

The deceased was identified as Tulasi Bari, daughter of Braja Kishore Das of Baruhan village in the district.

Tulasi had married one Rama, son of Bhikari Mallick, in April 2018. Though Braja had given dowry during the time of Tulasi's marriage, her in-laws had allegedly been demanding more dowries and torturing her mentally and physically since then. It is also alleged that Tulasi's sister-in-laws used to exploit her in the absence of her husband.

# State's consumer welfare system goes haywire

## Key posts of consumer forums vacant

KRUSHNA CHANDRA PANDA ■ BRAHMAMUR

The system of consumer welfare in Odisha has been totally paralyzed due to sheer negligence and undermining of the essence of 'consumer welfare' by the Department of Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare, alleged senior lawyer of Consumer Court, Brahmampur, Kailash Chandra Mishra.

Though the lawyers of Brahmampur have brought to the notice of the Governor about the deplorable state of functioning of the department, but

no action seems to have been taken in the matter so far, Panigrahi said.

Expressing concern that a crucial system has been grossly neglected in the State, Panigrahi said that there are a number of posts of president and members of different consumer forums as well as in the office of State Commission which are lying vacant for last two years to which the State Government have paid deaf ears.

Though there was an advertisement for filling the posts of president and members during January 2018, the Department of Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare has not taken any action yet. As a result, the consumers of the State are suffering from getting due justice from harassments, Panigrahi alleged.

Panigrahi also alleged that, the State Government though had notified in the Odisha Gazette for holding of Circuit Bench of State Consumer Commission at Brahmampur and Sambalpur on 26.9.2016 basing on which the State Commission notified its cause list on 17.11.2016 and 18.11.2016 for taking up the cases at Brahmampur, but the same has not yet been done which is quite unfortunate.

In this regard, a petition has been filed in the National Human Rights Commission, which was duly registered as NHRC Case No.3770/2019. The commission on perusal of the matters as available on records, recently directed to the Principal Secretary, Department of Consumer Welfare to take appropriate action within eight weeks.

# Use Odia in Assembly, Secretariat: LoP to CM

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the State Assembly Pradipta Kumar Naik has written a letter to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik urging him to take necessary steps to ensure use of Odia language in all proceedings of the legislature.

In the letter, the BJP legislator has alleged that the Government's decision to use Odia in all Government works has remained only in pen and papers. But due to step-motherly attitude towards the mother tongue, almost all letters in Assembly and Lok Seva Bhawan (Secretariat) are being written in English. Besides, several judicial reports, departmental expenditure reports, commission reports and various notices are also being released in English, he has pointed out.

"On November 4, 2011, the name of the State was changed from Orissa to Odisha and the language from Oriya to Odia. However, the State's name has not been changed in the signage of the High Court. This can be changed if the Government remains determined to do the same" Naik has stated in his letter.

He has opined that besides judicial works, court judgments can also be pronounced in Odia. "While several other States have taken such initiative to promote their mother tongue, why can't Odish replicate the same," he has questioned.

Naik has stated in his letter, "I request you take immediate steps for usage of Odia in all Government works, Assembly and judicial proceedings for the larger interest of the people of the State."

# AMRI launches 'Happy Heart Club'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The AMRI Hospitals has created a platform for cardiology patients and public to form eastern India's first cardiac support group named 'Happy Heart Club'. The platform was launched by a group of patients here on Tuesday.

AMRI Hospitals Group CEO Rupak Barua said the suggestion from the patients to set up the group was welcomed by the healthcare group and hoped that the patients as well as general public would benefit from the facilities that would be provided to the club members.

Hospital VP and Bhubaneswar unit head Dr Anuj Tiwari said the club membership card of one year would check the probabilities of sudden cardiac problems. Cardiac surgeons Dr

Jitendranath Patnaik, Dr Chandrabhanu Parija and Cardiologists Dr Lingaraj Nath pointed out that people should concentrate more on preventative measures as that would help them have a healthier life.



# Woman Maoist gives up arms in M'giri

## Carried bounty of ₹2 lakh on head

PNS ■ MALKANGIRI

A woman Maoist, carrying a bounty of Rs 2 lakh on her head, surrendered before police on Tuesday, expressing her desire to return to the social mainstream. Adme Madkami (22), who had joined the outlawed CPI(Maoist) organisation around five years ago, surrendered before Malkangiri SP Rishikesh D Khilari.

Once an active member of the Maoists Darva Division,



Madkami was wanted by the police in six cases in the district, including three involving murder of civilians.

According to the SP, Madkami claimed to have realised the futility of violence, and wanted to quit the banned

organisation. She was also disappointed with the treatment meted out to the women cadres by the Maoist leaders.

Madkami, a resident of Malkangiri's Mathili area, also said the Maoist leaders do nothing for the development

and wellbeing of the down-trodden sections, the SP told mediapersons.

Madkami would be provided financial assistance as per the surrender and rehabilitation scheme of the State Government, the SP added.

# Man-jumbo conflict: 100 humans killed in 9 mths

## WSO urges for panel to check alarming situation in Odisha

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Wildlife Society of Orissa (WSO) has urged the IGF and Director (Project Elephant), Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change to form an expert committee to assess the escalating human-elephant conflicts and human tolls and recommend solutions.

WSO secretary Biswajit Mohanty said Odisha has topped in human casualties out of man-elephant conflicts in 2019.

The number of humans killed since April, 2019 reached 100 while 102 others were injured, some of them critical-

ly in the 177 encounter incidents recorded in the State in 2019. This year till date, on an average, in less than 2 days, a human-elephant encounter is witnessed and in every 3 days a human is killed. Such a high number of human casualties had never been recorded in the past, said Mohanty.

The situation in Odisha is extremely worrying as the situation is now out of control. When we compare this with other States like Karnataka, Assam, Kerala and Tamil Nadu where the elephant populations are 2-3 times that of Odisha, one can see that Odisha's human-elephant-casualty (HEC) management and mitigation is dismal, he added.

Though an amount of Rs 3.67 crore was spent on consultancy fees for wildlife and conflict management by the State wildlife wing, nobody



knows the outcome of the huge expenditure, Mohanty told further.

"We have been raising concerns for the last eight years before the Chief Wildlife Warden and your office about the unhindered mining and quarrying in elephant habitats, the lack of notification of identified 14 elephant corridors, the lack of underpass on roads and

train lines, the barbed wire fencing of thick elephant forests all of which are significant contributors to the raging HEC," Mohanty told, urging to take experienced elephant experts and conservationists in the committee to assess the situation, identify the reasons behind human kills and suggest both short term and long term solutions.

# Rama Devi students lock gate, hold demo

## Protest move for +2 annual exam

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Tension gripped the Ramadevi Women's University on Tuesday after hundreds of students of the Rama Devi Junior College locked the main gate of the university and staged a road blockade in front of it demanding postponement of the Plus Two 1st year annual examination.

The students were objecting to the commencement of the examination as per the scheduled fixed by the college authorities at an earlier date stating the non-completion of course as the reason.

Similarly, the agitating students also objected to the new attendance norm notified by the college authorities to sit in



the examination alleging the decision couldn't be taken at a short notice.

Some students also levelled allegation of manhan-

dling against a male security personnel manning the institution's entrance, during the protest and blocked the Janpath

for hours by burning tyres. Getting information, police reached the spot and tried to pacify the agitating students.

# Jumbo death: BJP holds rally in B'ngir

PNS ■ BALANGIR

BJP members of Loisingha led by Gouranga Ch Naik and Alok Kumar Patel on Tuesday took out a rally in the town and submitted a 20-point charter of demands for Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik demanding proper inquiry into the recent death of an elephant and missing of its tusk in Cheliapat reserve forest in Loisingha forest range.

They raised slogans against the Loisingha Range Officer and held him responsible for the and sought action against him.

Divisional Forest officer Balangir Sameer Satpathy while receiving the memorandum said he would take whatever action possible at his level and also recommend soon to higher authorities for action.

# Stop, if your words, acts, thoughts offend others

## That's your Laxmanrekha

NILAMADHAB KAR

There is always a line, everywhere, suggesting 'do not cross'. It is individually, culturally, socially, legally defined. And it is not fixed. It differs for all those definitions, depending upon where, when and who has set it.

Lines have been described for centuries as borders, boundaries, limits, the tipping point, 'that's it and no more'; all have meanings far greater than one thinks.

The Ramayana, great Hindu epic, has it as a key feature, Lakshman's three lines for Sita. Did interwoven stories of Mahabharata have a line or

many lines? What about other scriptures, religious, social and legal texts? There are so many examples. And new lines are formed each day, limits are being set.

But then people cross it, for various reasons, sometimes just to enjoy the thrill. Many experience the consequences; many people escape and get away with it. Some cross it as an urge to do the opposite of what has been asked, suggested, advised. As a revolt or foolishly, some attempt to cross without any meaning and reason. But some do it deliberately, knowingly, as bravado that they can do it, they can do something that others dare not. They do not take 'no' as 'no'. They do not stop at lines. What do you do with them, the ones who cross the line, knowing that they should not?

Crossing the line offends, irritates, disturbs people. It tests the patience; even the tolerance has a limit. Sometime tolerance gives away to explosion, more destruction, to many unintended consequences.

Often it seems, people tolerate, they do not react or respond. But it does not mean they allow or find it acceptable. Silences do not mean affirmation or 'yes'. Sometime they do not want to be the first to point out, or lose their polite demeanour, or be rude, or simply they do not know how to respond. Some do become just spectators and recede more troubled, even traumatised.

Lines have meanings. They are there for a reason. They may be appropriate or inappropriate based on whichever side you are looking it from. Lines are

crossed and violated. They are attempted to be crossed with reason or without it. And it may or may not be possible to do anything about it, based on who, what and where you are. Lines are moved, redefined, but they are not erased. Protest, if you must, but be within the line, because beyond this, you are affecting others.

Where do you stop? Where to draw the line for yourself? How to know what's the real line you should not cross. There is just one golden rule, to clear away all the confusions. Remember to stop before your words, acts, and even thoughts affect another person negatively. That's your line. Stop there.

(The Odisha-born writer is a consultant psychiatrist at Wolverhampton, UK)

# Senior clerk held taking bribe in Nayagarh

Angul OFDC Manager's ₹2.5-cr assets traced

PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Vigilance police on Tuesday arrested a Senior Clerk-cum-Cashier of Nayagarh district for allegedly accepting bribe to pass an arrear bill for construction works.

As per a Vigilance release, Nigamananda Bhuyan working at the Minor Irrigation Division, Nayagarh, was caught red-handed by Vigilance officers for demanding and accepting an illegal gratification of Rs 13,500 from contractor Jugal Kishore Parida.

Bhuyan was demanding the bribe to release Parida's arrear bill amounting to Rs 1,89,611 for construction of the Singhapada and Kendua check dams during the year-2017-18 and to process the file for release of a further bill of Rs 14,000 towards construction of

the Aripada check dam during 2018-19.

Following a complaint filed by Parida, the Vigilance laid a trap and seized the bribe money from Bhuyan's office room. Vigilance officials also searched his Government quarter at Nayagarh.

Bhuyan was arrested and forwarded to court.

In another case, the Vigilance raided the flats, office and houses of the Odisha Forest Development Corporation's (OFDC) Angul Divisional Manager Maheswar Pradhan on the charge of



# ABPS UAIL students bring laurels

PNS ■ RAYAGADA

The Aditya Birla Public School of UAIL (Utkal Alumina International Ltd) has bagged the most coveted Best Exhibit Award in the CBSE National Science Exhibition held at Suncity School, Gurugram recently.

The project "River and Sea Surface Water Cleaner" prepared by Master Adarsh Pandey of Class-IX and Master Ritayan Misra of Class VIII under the guidance of PGT Sarbeswar Pradhan was selected for the award with a cash prize worth Rs 5,000. The exhibition was inaugurated by Anita Karwal, Chairperson, CBSE on January 16 in which nearly 600 schools across the nation participated.

Out of these, twenty-seven schools received awards in different categories. This year theme was "Science and technology for sustainable development with a thrust on water conservation."

Unit Head, UAIL, N Nagesh congratulated the school for the achievement.

# Centre wants to enhance financing to OBCs, SHGs

At a time when Odisha is for caste enumeration

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

While the Odisha Government has approached the Union Government to conduct socioeconomic caste enumeration along with the general census, the Centre has decided to enhance financing of Other Backward Class (OBC) beneficiaries.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) has informed the State Government about its decision to enhance financing of SC and OBC beneficiaries and Self Help Groups.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has recently approached the Centre to go

for socio economic caste census either by inserting suitable columns in the Census format or by prescribing separate format for a simultaneous enumeration of SEBCs/OBCs.

Union Secretary, Social Justice and Empowerment R Subrahmanyam has informed the decision of the Government of India for enhancing financing of SC and OBC beneficiaries and SHGs to ensure speedier economic improvement of these people who face multiple deprivation.

While SHG model with proper implementation has shown highest potential of poverty reduction, the Union Government is now showing interest in strengthening SHGs with enhancing finance to them.

Odisha has been in the forefront of promoting SHGs, especially women SHGs, which has made significant impact on the economical up-gradation of the people living in poverty.

In fact, the Odisha Government has decided to

extend Government business worth Rs 5,000 crore through SHGs, which will improve the fiscal status of the members of these groups.

Now, the Government of India following the Odisha Government's footsteps is harping on scaling up of financing these organisations along with the other beneficiaries of SC and OBC.

The SHGs will be provided credit with 4-5 per cent interest, while beneficiaries will be given loan at 6-8 per cent interest, said a senior official of the MoSJE.

Financing will be provided through National Scheduled Caste Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) and National Backward Classes Finance Development Corporation (NBCFDC).

The Government of India has decided to expand the operations of both NSFDC and NBCFDC significantly to bring more beneficiaries under

coverage. More people will be able to take up economic activities so that within next five years they will be out of poverty, said the officer.

Now the State Government will have to identify the beneficiaries and SHGs who will reap the benefits of the Union Government decision. Systematic identification is needed to be carried out by both Urban Development and Panahyati Raj Department to enable beneficiaries from both urban and rural areas, said sources.

The State Government will have to look at the market demand while finding out the projects that will be sustainable and beneficial for the beneficiaries.

Concessional financing to be routed through NSFDC and NBCFDC will be channelled through SC and OBC Finance Corporations of the State Government or Regional Rural Bank (RRB) as identified by the State administration, said sources.

# Rare marlin fish caught off Paradip coast

PNS ■ PARADIP

A group of fishermen were surprised when they caught a rare species of marlin fish from the sea off Paradip on Tuesday morning. It weighed 200 kg.

The fish is commonly called 'Kaau Machha' in Odisha since its mouth resembles the beak of a crow.

Reports said that after catching the fish, the fishermen brought it to the Baliplot fish market at Atharabanki for auction. A huge crowd gathered at the spot to have a glimpse of the rare catch,

whose market price is more than Rs 30,000.

Notably, fishes of the same species had been caught at some places off the Odisha coast last month. Although the rare fish is not quite popular in Odisha, it is much in demand in States like Kerala.



# 2 drivers die as trucks collide in Boudh

PNS ■ BOUDH

Two persons were killed and another sustained grave injuries when two trucks collided head on with each other on NH-57 at Guduguda Chhak under the Manamunda police limits in Boudh district on Monday night.

The deceased, identified as Uttam Sahu of Charichhak and Kuna Manik of Khordha's Pichukuli area, were drivers of both trucks.

Sources said that while one truck was carrying vegetables, another was loaded with soft-drinks packages. The



vegetable-laden truck was headed towards Bhubaneswar from Barghar for delivery. Midway, the other truck coming from the opposite direction lost control and collided with the former. While both the drivers died on the spot, a helper

sustained serious injuries and was rushed to a nearby hospital.

Police reached the spot and sent the bodies for post-mortem. Further investigation was underway in this connection.

# Farmer tossed to death by jumbo in Ganjam

PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR

Panic gripped residents of Digapahandi in Ganjam district after a farmer was tossed to death by a wild elephant in the area on Monday night.

The incident took place in a paddy yard of one Suresh Pashupal alongside the Digapahandi-Nimapalli canal road. The deceased, identified as Aalu Lachhei, along with another K Arakhit Patra was resting in the yard to guard the harvested crops. The duo woke up to some strange noise at around 3 am. Assuming that a bull might have broken into the yard to feed on the crops, they went out with a torchlight and cane sticks to drive away the animal.

However, they were taken aback when they found a giant elephant on the spot. Before both could escape, the tusker lifted Lachhei with its trunk and tossed him to the ground. However, Patra managed to escape from the spot and informed Lachhei's family about the incident.



Locals rushed to the spot and admitted Lachhei to the local Community Health Centre (CHC), where doctors declared him dead.

Being informed, police reached the spot and sent the body to the Brahmampur City Hospital for postmortem.

Notably, the Ratna forest of Digapahandi was home to eight elephants till recently; and now, a herd of 12 more jumbos has joined them triggering panic among locals.

# Now, dolphins sighted in new areas of Chilika

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A large number of endangered Irrawaddy dolphins have been sighted in new areas of the Chilika lake, according to officials. The total number of dolphins counted in the annual census on Sunday was 146, said Chilika Development Authority Chief Executive Officer Susant Nanda.

He said the good news is that dolphins are now sighted in new areas like the central and southern sectors of the lake, which is spread over 1,165 sqkm in three districts of Khordha, Puri and Ganjam.

"The areas near Kalijai Island and Rambha are the new places where dolphins have been sighted for the first time. Earlier, they were mostly confined to the Satpada area near Brahmagiri," Nanda said, adding that the dolphin population in the lake is now stabilising above 150 as expected.



Last year's census showed that there were 151 dolphins.

"We are also optimistic about an increase in dolphin population in the lake in next couple of years," Nanda said, adding that there is enough sign of dolphins migrating from the Satpada side to other areas within the lagoon.

Apart from Satpada, dol-

phins have this time been spotted in five other places, three around Kalijai Island within the lake and two close to Samal, he said. Wildlife experts opine that the dolphin sighting in new areas is possible due to clearing of prawn gheries from within the lake.

Apart from the annual census, the CDA also undertakes

dolphin counting by using hydrophones. In the hydrophone method, a microphone is used to record or listen to underwater sound. This method of counting has indicated that the highest 20 to 25 number of dolphins are found near Rajhans Island followed by Magarmukh and Malatikuda, 17 to 20 each.

# Many Jharsuguda farmers yet to get tokens

Even as 90% paddy procurement target achieved

RAJ KUMAR SHARMA ■ JHARSUGUDA

Over 1,000 farmers under four cooperative societies of Kolabira block in Jharsuguda district have not got tokens for last two months to sell their paddy, triggering resentment among them.

Now, tokens are given online from Bhubaneswar. But due to non-supply of tokens from Bhubaneswar, farmers are not able to sell their paddy. The farmers are showing displeasure against the cooperative secretaries who are helpless in the matter.

Sources revealed that four cooperative societies were

functioning at Kolabira, Samasingha, Jhillipali and Paramanpur in Kolabira block. A total 64,768 quintals paddy was purchased till January 15 from 1,274 farmers through the societies. In Kolabira samiti 14,912 quintal paddy has been purchased from 296 farmers against target of 17,900 quintal given to the society. Now, 326 farmers are in waiting list for token. Likewise against a target of 13,500 quintal to Paramanpur samiti, 11,151 quintal paddy has been purchased from 256 farmers till January 15. Still more than 200 farmers are waiting to get tokens. In Samasingha samiti, 21,710 quintal paddy has been purchased from 396 farmers



against a target of 23,100 quintal for the samiti. Till now, more than 200 farmers are in the waiting list to receive tokens.

Ironically, though 90 per cent target is said to have been fulfilled in the cooperative societies, yet many farmers are not having of tokens to sell their paddy.

Against a target of 72,400 quintal paddy, 64,768 quintal paddy has already been purchased. The farmers are pass-

ing through many financial crisis. They are also preparing for staging protests in front of cooperative societies in near future, said executive member of State BJP farmers forum Arun Behera.

Besides, Kolabira Samiti secretary Debraj Kumura said that secretaries had no role in the supply of tokens to the farmers. The departmental authorities should remove the token issue, he demanded.

# 5-yr-old girl lodged in shelter home at Soro

After being rescued from her 'saviour'

PNS ■ BALESWAR

A five-year-old girl, who was allegedly being tortured by a widow 'rescuer' from Mainsamunda village under Gopimohanpur gram panchayat, has been finally lodged in a shelter home at Soro in Baleswar district.

Childline officials lodged her in the shelter home on the direction of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC).

According to reports, the victim, a resident of Jaleswar, had undergone ordeals after the death of her father Shankar

Barik and her mother eloped with another man leaving her in sleep along NH-60 at Nandika, two months ago.

Seeing her sitting alone and crying, a passerby, Salama Tudu, a widow of Mainsamunda village, took the girl to her house. However, locals alleged that Tudu was torturing her physically and mentally by asking her to do domestic chores. Then, Childline members rescued the girl and produced her before the CWC. Following this, the child is lodged in the Kanyashram named 'Purubai'.

The CWC Chairman said action would be taken against Tudu on receipt of a report from the District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) and efforts would be made to trace the girl's mother.

# Power still not restored in Titli-hit G'pati villages

Hilltop village having a part under AP, another under Odisha, has electricity in AP part only

TARINI PRASAD PANDA ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI

It's been more than a year the Cyclone horrific Titli swept through Gajapati district, creating havoc, especially in Gangabada Panchayat where over more than 16 people had died due to a landslide.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had visited the Panchayat to take stock of the situation and had sanctioned crores of rupees for relief and restoration works. However, it's really shocking to know

about the living condition of Manikapatna villagers of Gangabada Panchayat, where minimum amenities are a far cry.

The Gangabada Panchayat is on border of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. The villagers are staying in darkness as power is yet to be restored to the area. As the village is situated in a mountain top, it gets dark very soon and it has been more than a year the villagers have been staying without electricity.

Nearly 45 families comprising about 150 members are residing in Manikapatna village. Some area of the village is under the Odisha Government and some part under Andhra Government. The houses constructed under Andhra Government area have electricity but the houses under Odisha do not have electricity. During Titli, the Andhra Pradesh Government provided

electricity and all kinds of facilities to the people of the same village within a short frame of time. The Odisha Government also provided electricity to the people of the same village in March 2019 but within a few days the electrical transformer got burnt.

Both Christians and Hindus are residing in the village. When the whole world celebrated Christmas with lights, ironically darkness had not lifted from Manikapatna village.

The Hindu families of the village celebrated Bhogi and Pongal festivals recently on January 14 and 15 under same situation.

Though the villagers have ventilated their grievances to the district administration but have got no relief yet. On September 16 last, a Grievance Cell was held at Gangabada Panchayat Office in the presence of the Gajapati district

Collector. The villagers demanded immediate steps to restore electricity by installation of a new transformer.

SouthCo Executive Engineer Gangagouri Prasad Patnaik had assured that very soon a new transformer would be installed. However, it's been more than four months and the promise is not fulfilled.

Notably, it's seen that in an Odisha Government electric pole, an AP Government streetlight has been fitted providing light for the Manikapatna villagers. The children are dependent on the street light for their exam preparations.

The villagers meanwhile have warned of taking to streets if electricity was not resumed in the locality soon. SouthCo Junior Engineer Dababrata Sahoo said the villagers were demanding for a 16-KV transformer, whose stock was not available.

# 3 of family among 4 die in truck mishap

As vehicle rams into makeshift shops in S'pur

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

In a deeply shocking incident, four persons, including three members of a family, were killed and many others injured when a truck rams into makeshift shops set up at a local fair during the Dhanu Yatra festival at Paramanapur under the Sasan police limits in

Sambalpur district early on Tuesday morning.

The incident took place at around 4.45 am when the truck was going to Jharsuguda from Sambalpur.

The deceased were identified as Md Sayad (40), Md Tayad (35), Waqur Alam (30) and Md Tanis (22). While three of them died on the spot, another succumbed to injuries on way to hospital.

The injured were admitted to the Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR), Burla.

# High Court saves the day for State hockey teams

PNS ■ CUTTACK

In a significant ruling, the Orissa High Court on Tuesday directed the Union Government and the Hockey India to allow the Hockey Odisha to participate in the upcoming Senior National (A' Division) Hockey Championships for men and women.

While the Men's Championship will be held at Jhansi from January 25, the women's event will be held at Kolar from January 30, informed Hockey Odisha general secretary Pratap Satapathy here.

The Hockey India had last week debarred 10 State teams, including Odisha's, from participating in the championships on the ground that they had not updated the details of the team members online in the website of the Hockey India one month before the beginning of the events.

The Hockey Odisha had sought some more time from the court to furnish the details. But when the request was not yielded, the Hockey Odisha had approached the High Court challenging the action of the Hockey India stating that it was practically not possible to select the team before one month of the championships. Similarly, the details like shoe size of the players, their heights, weights, remarkable marks on the players' bodies, as sought by the Hockey India, were not readily available.

Allowing the writ, Justice KR Mohapatra in an interim direction asked the Union Government and the Hockey India to allow the teams to participate in the championships, Satapathy informed, adding that Hockey Odisha has already selected the teams.

# Nayagarh DM holds hearing of public grievances



PNS ■ BHAPUR (NAYAGARH)

A public grievance hearing camp was organised here on Monday. Nayagarh district Collector Dr Poma Tudu heard the complaints of people of different regions. A total of 66 complaints were heard in which 52 were personal matters. After assessing 12 CMRF cases, a sum of Rs 1, 08,000 was sanctioned out of CMRF towards medical treatment assistance. A village

problem was solved and Rs 5,000 sanctioned out of District Red Cross Fund in another case. A total of 41 cases were disposed on the spot.

Among others, Sub-Collector Lagnajit Rout, SP Sashi Bhushan Satpathy, CDMO Dr Sweta Mahapatra, DRDA PD Subash Chandra Ray, Tehsildar Sunita Jena, BDO Antaryami Das and Bhapur block Vice-Chairman Gayadhar Parida were present.

# 'Govt insensitive in Harichandanpur gangrape'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Pradesh Congress Committee working president Pradeep Majhi on Tuesday alleged here that the State Government has remained insensitive towards giving justice to the gangrape victim of Jajpur district's Harichandanpur village.

"The victim was kidnapped on January 14. She was found on a bridge on January 18. Earlier, accused Satyanarayan Samal had told the victim's parents to come to the bridge to take their daughter. Satyanarayan's sister and brother-in-law, who are in police, are directing involved in the gangrape incident. The Dharmashala police did not receive the FIR from the victim's father. The Jarak police outpost personnel also didn't accept his FIR. Police have not

yet arrested the other two accused as they are police Constables," alleged Majhi.

Majhi demanded that the accused police Constables be arrested soon and the Government provide compensation to the victim.

Majhi also informed that a fact-finding team led by him would visit Harichandanpur village on Wednesday to conduct an on-the-spot investigation.

Among others, former Minister Ganeswar Behera and Congress MLA candidate Smrutirekha Pahi were present.



## INBRIEF

### EMINENT PROF TARA MOHAPATRA NO MORE

Brahmapur: Eminent Professor and former City College, Brahmapur Principal Tara Prasad Mohapatra passed away at his Gajapati Nagar residence here on Monday. He was 86. Brahmapur MLA Bikram Panda, former MLA Dr Ramesh Chyau Patnaik, former BDA Chairman Subash Moharana, a large number of well-wishers, former students, former colleagues and members of local public organisations of the city visited his residence to pay him last respects. He is survived by his wife, five sons and a daughter. Mohapatra was taken to Puri for last rites.



### JIBAN BINDU IN B'PUR: 400 BLOOD UNITS COLLECTED

Brahmapur: The Radhakrushna Banika Sangha along with residents of Tulasi Nagar organised a blood donation camp under the Jiban Bindu programme to mark the birthday of former Corporator and Biju Yuva Janata Dal Mahanagar president R Murali Mohan here on Tuesday. Over 400 units of blood were collected from the camp. Doctors from the Brahmapur Red Cross collected the units. Among others, former MLA Dr RC Chyauapatnaik, former BDA Chairman Subash Moharana, SDPO Bishnu Prasad Pati, weightlifter K Ravi Kumar, social activist SA Khalil and former Mayor K Madhvi were present.



### 125 N NAGAR SVM STUDENTS CLEAR JEE MAIN



Brahmapur: As many as 125 students of the Neelakantha Navar Saraswati Vidyya Mandir passed the JEE Main Examination conducted by the Nation Testing Agency this year. Among successful students, Ashutosh Tripathy secured 99.42 percentile, followed by Mrutunjan Swain 98.84 percentile, Soumya Ranjan Sahu 97.85, Aditya Kumar Padhy 97.79, Ainal Subham 97.69 percentile. More than 35 students secured above 90 percentile. Besides, eight students of the school got positions in top 20 in the State-level Chemistry Olympiad. Management committee president Srikanth Mohapara, vice-president Dr Harikrushna Nayak, secretary Narayan Panda, Principal S Mohan Rao and Pradhan Acharya Uma Madhav Mohanty have greeted the students.

### CM OPENS ICICI BANK'S 150TH BRANCH IN BIJEPUR



Bargarh: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated an ICICI Bank branch at Bijepur in Bargarh district on Tuesday. It is the first branch by a private sector bank in Bijepur and the bank's 150th branch in the State. The branch, which also houses a 24x7 ATM, would cater to the varied banking needs of the households in the village and surrounding areas. The Bijepur branch is part of the 16 new branches that the bank has opened in Odisha this fiscal. Among others, bank Odisha and Chhattisgarh Retail Zonal Head Pradosh Rout was present.

### CENTRAL FERTILISER SECY VISITS PPL



Paradip: Government of India Fertiliser Department Secretary Chhabilendra Roul met the senior executives of PPL and discussed about human resource, expansion plan, raw material supply and infrastructure readiness for enhancement of the plant's production capacity. He made an onsite study of different units of the plant. PPL COO Ranjit Singh Chugh, CGM (Operations) Pranab Bhattacharyya, Chief Financial Officer Sailesh Pati, GM (Resources) Jagannath Khuntia and GM (Maintenance) Ranjan Kumar Mohanty were present.

### 1ST BRIDAL LOUNGE OPENS IN BBSR

Bhubaneswar: The smart city got its first of its bridal lounge at PN Tower on Janapath Road near Big Bazaar Square here. The bridal lounge is part of the Indulge Salon chain. Bollywood actresses Puspita Panda and Archita Sahoo inaugurated the lounge which would offer pre-bridal makeup and bridal makeup at Rs 6,000 and Rs 8,000, respectively. Franchise owner Smriti Sweta Das said the new facility would offer an exciting experience to the brides availing various beauty products.

### TWO KHARIAR SCHOOLS HOLD JOINT ATHLETIC MEET



Nuapada: A two-day combined athletic meet of Raja Artatran High School and Government Girls' High School of Khariar was held at the Raja AT High School playground from January 20. "It was the 41st year of combined meet, which speaks a lot about the culture of cooperation and support between these two old institutions of Nuapada district," said teachers. Khariar LIC branch Development Officer Binod Padhi attended as chief guest in the inaugural day and praised the efforts of the schools for keeping the cooperation alive for four long decades.

# Pro-CAA rally in K'mal



PNS ■ PHULBANI

The Kandhamal district BJP unit staged a rally and held a meeting here on Tuesday in support of the CAA.

BJP district president Jagannath Sahu and former president Lingaraj Dalabehra, former MP Kharabela Swain, other party leaders including

KK Pandey, Rambisi Dugal and Archana Pradhan addressed the meeting.

Kharabela Swain said the new citizenship law would not at all go against anybody's right. The Act is aimed at ensuring the nation's security and not discriminatory. It would check illegal immigration into the country.

# 4 child labourers rescued in city

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Four child labourers were rescued from the Indradhanu Market here on Monday evening.

The Childline with help of the Nayapalli police rescued the children, who were working in roadside eateries and a grocery shop.

While three of the child labourers are below 14 years, one was 17 years old. Two of them are natives of Ganjima district while one belongs to Nayagarh district and the other one is from Cuttack district.

The rescued children have been kept at the Ruchika Open Shelter. "We have informed Bhubaneswar Additional CWC and DCPO for necessary action," said a Childline official.

# 2 get 20-yr jail for raping minor in K'mal

PNS ■ PHULBANI

Phulbani Additional District Judge Samarbilas Behera on Tuesday convicted two persons on the charge of kidnapping and raping a minor girl on December 22, 2016 and sentenced them to undergo 20 years of imprisonment.

The court also asked them to pay a fine of Rs 57,000 each and, in default, to undergo another one year imprisonment.

However, another accused Arun Naik was acquitted by the court.

The convicts were identified as Ranjit Sahu of Durgirshi and Arun Sahu of Pareiripada under the Baliguda police station in Kandhamal district.

On the fateful day, the accused had kidnapped the victim while she was playing in front of her house and later raped her. On December 24, 2016 the girl's mother had lodged an FIR with the Baliguda police.

# 'CAA has brought new dawn in refugees' lives'



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was passed as per the guidelines of the Constitution, but the Congress and some regional parties are misleading people and triggering violence over it," said BJP MP Rupa Ganguly at the party's 'Jan Jagran Abhiyan' at Raighar in Nabarangpur district on Tuesday. The minority refugees in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, who are prosecuted there on religious grounds and coming to India are accorded citizenship under

the act. But no Indian citizens rights are going to be affected by CAA, said Ganguly.

"After independence many people were living in the country without citizenship. I understand this feeling because my father had come from Bangladesh. My father would have been happy if he was alive today. The CAA would bring a new dawn in the lives of the refugees," she added.

After the meeting, the actor-turned-politician sensitised the refugees who had come to the rally about the benefit of the law for them.

# SCNL meet on women financial empowerment



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Satin Creditcare Network Limited (SCNL) along with the Nordic Microfinance Initiative (NMI) is organising a series of 10 'Women Financial Empowerment' workshops across seven States. The first workshop was conducted at Nimapara in Puri district which focused on inculcating leadership skills and financial knowledge amongst women. Odisha State Association

for Financial Inclusion Institutions (OSAFII) CEO BK Swain shared several financial tools and government social schemes.

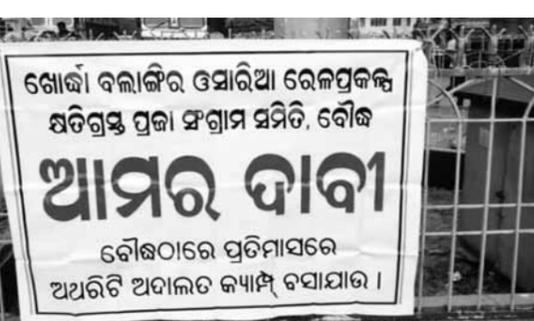
Among others, Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM) SVEP Tapan Kumar Behera, Skill Development Department State Coordinator Parakram Champati, Centre Manager Anandita, ORMAS young professional Kunal Khanna, SCNL Deputy CEO Rakesh Meher and SPM head Monika Chopra were present.

# 12-hr bandh hits life in Boudh

PNS ■ BOUDH

A dawn-to-dusk Boudh Bandh observed by people affected by the Khordha-Balangir railway line project hit normal life in many parts of the district on Tuesday.

The bandh supporters shouted slogans pressing for fulfilment of a two-point charter of demands, including adequate compensation for those who lost their land to the State Government for the



project and opening of camp courts for the purpose.

Vehicular movements were disrupted with the

incident was reported during the bandh.

# BJP holds pro-CAA rally in Keonjhar

PNS ■ KEONJHAR

About 6,000 BJP supporters joined a mass rally organised by the Kendujhar district BJP in support of the Citizens Amendment Act in the town on Tuesday.

Former MP Rudranarayan

Pani, Ex MP and party spokesperson Dillip Mohanty, along with district leaders Mohan Majhi, Maheswar Sahoo, Prutviraj Kuanr, Sabuja Mahanta and others led the rally from the Town Hall to the Collectorate passing through the streets of Keonjhar town.

The leaders spoke on the advantage and need of the CAA in the country and praised PM Narendra Modi for introducing such Act while addressing the rally. They criticized the opposition parties for working against the interest of the nation and appealed to the public not to be misled by their false propaganda.

The people of Keonjhar have always supported the welfare measures of the Modi Government and the massive participation in the rally shows their solidarity for PM Modi, Keonjhar MLA Mohan Charan Majhi said.

# 'Research in genomics has immense potential'

## CIFA holds meet on 'Genomics in Aquaculture'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A three-day 3rd international symposium on 'Genomics in Aquaculture' organised by the ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA) in association with Association of Aquaculturists at its Kausalyaganga campus here began on Tuesday.

The symposium has four themes namely Genetics, Breed improvement and Molecular breeding; Genome editing, Biosecurity and Biosafety; Genome informatics and Intellectual Property Rights and Genomics in Fish Health, Reproduction and Nutrition.

Chief guest Utkal University Vice-Chancellor Prof Soumendra Mohan Pattnaik said that to meet the national food security, researches in

frontier areas like genomics, robotics and bioinformatics hold immense potential. Integrated farming should be adopted in the right way for sustainable environment and more research should be done for the less privileged people of the society, Pattnaik added.

FAVET-INBIOGEN, Chile Director Dr Victor Martinez said that research in genomic science requires huge investment, however, it pays. He said as we are already reaping its advantages in agriculture and animal husbandry.

CIFA Director Dr BR Pillai highlighted the genetics research being done in the institute in relation to better growth and aquaculture production enhancement. Organising Secretary Dr KD Mohapatra briefed about thematic areas. Over 200 researchers from different parts of India and abroad are taking part in the symposium. On the occasion, a souvenir was released by the guests.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**1st Corrigendum to TCN No.08**  
**dtd.06.01.2020**

The word "S/R" in the name of the work from SI.No.04 to SI.No.36 in tender invited vide T.C.N No.08 dtd.06.01.2020 is replaced with the works "Repair and restoration". All other terms and condition remain unchanged.

Sd/-  
 Executive Engineer  
 Rural Works Division, Cuttack

25053/11/0017/1920

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE**  
**Tender Call Notice No. 48/2019-20**

The Executive Engineer, Khurda (R&B) Division, Khurda on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in Single cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible class of contractors having valid registration certificate for execution of the Civil works as detailed below:

- Nature of Work : Building
- No of Work : 01 No.
- Tender Cost : Rs.60,00.00 (Online)
- Class of Contractor : SL.No.1 "C" & "B" Class Contractor
- Available of Bid documents in the web site. : From Dt. 28.01.2020 at 10.30 AM to Dt. 11.02.2020 at 5.00 PM
- Date of opening of Bids : Dt 12.02.2020 at 11.30 AM
- Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website: <https://tenderodisha.gov.in>. Any information regarding Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can be available in the said website.

Sd/-  
 Executive Engineer,  
 Khurda (R&B) Division, Khurda

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# ₹45,000-cr submarine project goes to MDL, L&T

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, on Tuesday, approved private sector Larsen and Toubro and public sector Mazagon Docks Limited (MDL) for the Navy's project to manufacture six conventional submarines worth over ₹45,000 crores within the country.

Approved last year, the project known as P-75 I will be under the Strategic Partnership model with the Indian partners tying up with a foreign manufacturer. The DAC also approved the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) who are in the race for the project. They include Rosoboron Export (Russia), Daewoo (South Korea), Navantia (Spain), Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems (Germany) and French Naval Group, sources said. The Larsen and Toubro and MDL will forge the strategic partnership with one of the selected OEMs after due tender process, they added.

The first DAC meeting of this year and after the creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) also cleared proposals



worth over ₹5,100 crores from local industry to promote indigenisation. General Bipin Rawat, the first CDS, attended the meeting along with other top functionaries of the defence ministry. As regards the submarine project, sources said the DAC approved short-listing of the Larsen and Toubro and MDL as the Indian strategic partners (SP) and the potential Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) that would collaborate with SPs to construct six conventional submarines in India. The MDL is already constructing Scorpene submarines in collaboration with the French. The DAC nod to the short

listing came days after the Congress last week claimed the NDA Government of 'favouring' the Adani group in the submarine project alleging it was promoting its 'crony capitalists'.

Addressing a Press conference, Congress communication chief Randeep Surjewala and party spokesperson Jaiveer Shergill had charged the Government of violating the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) of 2016 as well as overruling the recommendations of the 'Empowered Committee' of the Indian Navy that had been set up for the project.

The Congress claimed that two key parameters set by the DPP were that the shortlisted company to manufacture the six submarines in the deal should be of Credit 'A' rating and the Ministry of Defence should approve the 'Special Purpose Vehicle' (SPV) set up for the project before applying for 'request for expression of interest'.

The Empowered Committee of the Navy, claimed the Congress, shortlisted the public sector unit, Mazagon Docks Shipbuilders Limited, and Larsen and Toubro from the private sector.

The main Opposition party alleged that the Government is all set to violate the Committee's recommendations by allowing the private entity which neither has any experience in submarine manufacturing nor the required credit rating.

Strategic partner is expected to play a transformational role in building an eco-system in the country, comprising development entities, specialised vendors and suppliers; especially those from the medium and small scale sector.

The new model also aims at promoting India as a manufacturing hub for defence equip-

ment, in addition to establishing an industrial and research and development eco-system capable of meeting the future requirements of the armed forces besides giving boost to exports.

Meanwhile, the ₹5,100 crore proposals approved include sophisticated Electronic Warfare Systems for the Army designed by Defence Research and

Development Organisation (DRDO) and manufactured locally by the Indian industry. These systems will be used in deserts and plains and will provide comprehensive Electronic Support and Counter Measure capabilities to the field formations in both communication and other aspects of Electronic Warfare.

The DAC also approved prototype testing of trawl assemblies designed by the DRDO for T-72 and T-90 tanks providing an important indigenous defining capability to the Army.

The DAC also accorded approval for inclusion of Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) in Defence Procurement Procedure.



The Ambassador-designate of the Republic of Panama, Arturo Luis Fabrega Alvarez, presents his credentials to President Ram Nath Kovind at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Tuesday

## INSHORT

### SC TO HEAR OVER 140 PLEAS ON CAA TODAY

New Delhi: The Supreme Court will on Wednesday hear over 140 petitions challenging or supporting the CAA. A Bench of CJI SA Bobde, Justice S Abdul Nazeer and Justice Sanjiv Khanna will hear the pleas as also the Centre's request seeking transfer of petitions pending before HC relating to the issue, to SC.

### JITENDRA SINGH PITCHES FOR INDUSTRY'S ROLE

New Delhi: Union Minister of State for Atomic Energy and Space, Jitendra Singh on Tuesday pitched for the industry's role in the space technology to address the issues related to lack of resources. He was addressing the gathering at India's first global Mega Science Exhibition 'Vigyan Samagam' at National Science Centre here.

### MHA SANCTIONS 2,000 POSTS IN CISF

New Delhi: The Union Home Ministry has approved creation of 2,000 posts, from constables to the inspector level, in the CISF to augment its strength to effectively guard vital installations, including airports, atomic installations, metro networks. The CISF guards about 60 civil airports in the country and has an elite VIP security wing under its command called the Special Security Group (SSG).

### SC SEEKS TN REPLY ON MERCY PLEA IN RAJIV CASE

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Tamil Nadu Government to inform whether a decision has been taken by it on a mercy petition of a convict, 46-year-old A G Pararivalan, in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case.

### BRAZILIAN PREZ TO BEGIN 4-DAY INDIA VISIT

New Delhi: Brazilian President Jair Messias Bolsonaro will on Friday begin a four-day visit to India, primarily as chief guest on Republic Day and also to explore ways to boost trade ties at a time both the large economies are hit by slowdowns. On his first visit to India after assuming power, Bolsonaro will be accompanied by seven ministers, top officials and a large business delegation.

### MEPSC CONFERRED WITH TWO SKOCH AWARDS

New Delhi: Management & Entrepreneurship and Professional Skills Council (MEPSC) has been conferred with 'two Skoch Awards - First is Skoch Order of Merit and Skoch Silver Award' under Innovation in Skilling Category.

### VARUN, SHRADDHA VISIT AMITY UNIVERSITY

New Delhi: Bollywood actors Varun Dhawan and Shraddha Kapoor on Tuesday visited Amity University for the curtain raiser of Amity Youth Fest - a knowledge and entertainment extravaganza. The duo was also seen promoting their upcoming movie 'Street Dancer 3D' along with other cast members of the film... The star cast was welcomed by Pooja Chauhan, Chairperson, Amity School of Film and Drama.

### DIPPING EMPLOYMENT: YECHURY SLAMS GOVT

New Delhi: Slamming the Government over dipping employment rates, CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury on Tuesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi should conduct a 'Naukri Par Charcha' to listen to the 'mann ki baat' of millions of jobless.

## CBI books Frost International, its directors in ₹3,592-cr fraud case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI carried out searches at 13 locations on Tuesday including the premises of the present and former directors of Mumbai-based private firm Frost International which has been booked by the agency for allegedly cheating a consortium of 14 banks to the tune of Rs 3,592.48 crore minus interests accrued on the defaulted amount.

The FIR comes following a complaint from the Kanpur Zonal office of Bank of India, which alleged that the directors had worked under the guise of undertaking merchanting trade without genuine business.

This is understood to be the biggest default reported by public sector banks to the CBI after January 2018 when disgraced diamond traders Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi fled the nation causing a loss of over Rs 13,000 crore to the Punjab National Bank.

The Bank of India in its complaint, which is now part of the CBI FIR, stated that Frost

International's account had started showing signs of stress from January, 2018 and later became a non-performing asset.

The probe agency carried out searches at 13 locations including the premises of the company, its directors Uday Desai and Sujay Desai and other former and present directors and

## CBI books former DGFT officer, others in ₹20 crore duty fraud

New Delhi: The CBI has booked a former Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Joint Director along with directors of an Ahmedabad-based private company in a case of corruption and cheating the exchequer of over ₹20.26 crore through fraudulent claim of terminal excise duty in 2014-15.

According to the FIR registered on January 18, action has been taken against A K Singh, the former DGFT Joint Director, Ahmedabad and Mohit Kumar Goel, Ankur Aggarwal and Nand Kishore

Aggarwal -- all directors of Ahmedabad-based Crystal Crop Protection Pvt. Ltd.

As per the requirements of the Prevention of Corruption Act, the CBI had sought sanction from the Commerce Ministry before proceeding against the officer. The sanction was granted by the Ministry on July 15, 2019.

Besides slapping the Prevention of Corruption Act, the agency has also charged them under the Indian Penal Code Sections relating to cheating and criminal conspiracy.

## Human activity puts small predators' life at risk: Study

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Every time, a natural habitat is converted into a land for agricultural or residential purposes, it is the small predators, especially small invertebrates like spiders and ladybirds, which lose their homes as well as lives, as per a first of its kind global study on the impacts of human land-use on different groups of animals.

The findings published in the journal, Functional Ecology, also found that small ectotherms--cold blooded animals such as invertebrates, reptiles and amphibians, large endotherms like mammals and birds and fungivores ie animals that eat fungi were also disproportionately affected.

But, the loss of large herbivores will also likely to have important effects on ecosystem functioning, for example increasing the risk of rodent borne human disease, warn the researchers who had analysed over one million records of animal abundance at sites ranging from primary forest to intensively managed farmland and cities.

The data represented over 25,000 species across 80 countries. Species were grouped by size, whether they were warm or cold blooded and by what they eat. Species ranged from the oribatid mite weighing only 2x10-6g, to an African elephant weighing 3,825kg.

"Normally, when we think of predators, we think of big animals like lions or tigers. These large predators do not decline as much as we expected with habitat loss, which we think may be because they have already declined because of human actions in the past (such as hunting). We find

small predators - such as spiders and ladybirds - to show the biggest declines," said Dr Tim Newbold from University College London and lead author of the research.

The results indicate that the world's ecosystems are being restructured with disproportionate losses at the highest trophic levels (top of the food chain).

"We know that different types of animals play important roles within the environment - for example, predators control populations of other animals. If some types of animals decline a lot when we lose natural habitats, then they will no longer fulfil these important roles," said Dr Tim Newbold.

The conversion of land to human use is associated with the removal of large amounts of natural plant biomass, usually to give space for livestock and crops. As you go up the trophic levels (food chain), resource limitations are compounded through a process known as bottom-up resource

limitation, said the study which is part of the PREDICTS project exploring how biodiversity responds to human pressures.

The researchers analysed 1,184,543 records of animal abundance in the PREDICTS database, gathered from 460 published scientific studies. This database included all major terrestrial vertebrate taxa and many invertebrate taxa (25,166 species, 1.8% of described animals).

Species were sorted into functional groups defined by their size, trophic level (what they consumed) and thermal regulation strategy (warm or cold blooded). The type of land-use at each of the 13,676 sample sites was classified from the description of the habitat in the source publication.

The six broad categories were primary vegetation, secondary vegetation, plantation forest, cropland, pasture and urban. Three levels of human use intensity were also recorded: minimal, light and intense.



## Congress sets up 11-member coordination committee in Punjab, Asha made chairperson

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Sonia Gandhi set up an 11-member committee for ensuring better coordination between the party and the government in Punjab, with AICC in-charge for Punjab Asha Kumari as its chairperson.

The moves comes after she dissolved the Office Bearers and Executive Committee of Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) and District Congress Committees (DCCs) of Punjab with immediate effect. Its State unit president, however, remained unchanged.

The coordination committee will have Chief Minister Amarinder Singh and PCC president Sunil Jakhar as its members, besides AICC general secretary Ambika Soni. It will also have Punjab ministers Charanjit Singh Channi, Sunder Sham Arora, Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, Vijay Inder Singla, besides PCC general secretary Sandeep Singh Sandhu and AICC secretaries Kuljit Nagra and Gurkirat Kotli as its members.

The committee was announced after Sonia cleared the names following deliberations with Amarinder Singh and senior party leaders on Monday. It comes a day after the party announced similar committees for Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Puducherry which are all under Congress rule.



Union Minister for Law & Justice, Communications and Electronics & Information Technology Ravi Shankar Prasad lights the lamp at the inauguration of the 'NIC Tech Conclave 2020' with the theme - Technologies for NextGen Governance, in New Delhi on Tuesday

## Modi, Nepal's Oli unveil border check-post



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli jointly inaugurate the integrated check post, at Jogbani-Biratnagar through video conference, in New Delhi on Tuesday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Reiterating, India's historic ties with Nepal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said New Delhi is committed to simplifying traffic with all friendly countries in the neighbourhood and to further facilitate contacts in areas like business.

He said this after jointly inaugurating with his Nepalese counterpart K P Sharma Oli the second integrated check post at Jogbani-Biratnagar along the border.

Built with Indian assistance, the integrated check post is spread over 260 acres and is capable of handling 500

trucks on a daily basis. The Rs 140 crore project will improve trade and people-to-people contact.

The project was launched jointly by the two leaders via a video link. The first ICP was built in Raxaul-Birgunj in 2018.

After inaugurating the ICP, Modi said India is committed to simplifying and smoothing traffic with all friendly countries in the neighbourhood, and to "further facilitate contacts between us in areas such as business, culture and education".

He also said India and Nepal are working on several cross-border connectivity projects such as road, rail and transmission lines.

"Integrated check posts at major places of border between our countries are greatly facilitating mutual trade and movement," he said.

At the event, both prime ministers also witnessed the progress in Indian-assisted post-2015 earthquake housing reconstruction projects in Nepal.

Out of India's commitment to build 50,000 houses in Gorkha and Nuwakot districts, 45,000 have already been completed.

"The 2015 earthquake was a painful accident. Natural calamities like earthquakes test man's tenacity and determination. Every Indian is proud that our Nepali brothers and sisters

faced the sad consequences of this tragedy with courage," Modi said.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that 45,000 out of 50,000 houses have been constructed under Indo-Nepal cooperation, he said.

"We hope that the construction of the remaining houses will also be completed soon. And these houses will soon be dedicated to Nepali brothers and sisters," the prime minister noted.

Addressing the event via video, Oli invited Modi to visit Nepal.

Prime Minister Modi said he looks forward to a visit to the neighbouring country this year.

## KERALITES DEATH AT NEPAL RESORT Will take all steps to bring back bodies, says Vijayan

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday said his Government will take all steps to ensure that the mortal remains of eight tourists from the State who died at a resort in Nepal are brought back at the earliest.

The bodies are expected to be brought to the State on Wednesday, a statement from the Chief Minister's Office said. Union Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said he has asked the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu to make all arrangements to bring back the bodies.

The tourists, including four minors, died after they fell unconscious probably due to a gas leak from a heater in their room at a mountainous resort, police said. The Indian nationals were

airlifted to HAMS hospital in Kathmandu where they were pronounced dead on arrival, they said.

Vijayan expressed "deep grief" over the incident, the statement said. According to the chief minister's directions, officials of Department of Non-Resident Keralites Affairs (NORKA) have gotten in touch with the Indian Embassy in Nepal, it said.

The bodies are expected to be brought to the State on Wednesday after post-mortem, it added.

Makwanpur police said the victims, who were a part of a group of 15 tourists, might have fallen unconscious due to asphyxiation. Muraleedharan told PTI that he has asked the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu to make all arrangements to bring back the bodies.

He said he has also deputed a doctor from the Indian Embassy to coordinate the medico-legal procedures.

A doctor from the Indian Embassy also went to the hospital where the bodies have been kept to examine the cause of the deaths, he added.

"We are in regular touch with the Indian embassy in Kathmandu", Muraleedharan, who is also a Rajya Sabha member from Kerala, said. Transport for the remaining tourists of the group is also being arranged, he said.

The victims were identified as Praveen Krishnan Nair, Saranya Sasi, Sreebhadr Praveen, Aarcha Praveen, Abhinav Saranya Nair, Ranjith Kumar Adatholath Punathil, Indu Lakshmi Peethambaran Ragalatha and Vyshnav Ranjith. **PTI**

## Pavan confronts Nitish on JD(U)-BJP alliance in Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

**A**head of the Delhi Assembly elections, senior Janata Dal(United) leader Pavan K Verma has confronted Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar over the party's alliance with the BJP in two seats-Burari and Sangam Vihar- for the February 8 election despite having expressed apprehensions 'in private' about the BJP-RSS leading the nation into a 'dangerous space'. This is for the first time that the JD(U) headed by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is having a tie-up with the BJP outside Bihar.

In a strongly worded two page letter to Nitish, Varma said he is 'deeply perplexed' by the development amid the citizenship law protests and is looking to him for 'ideological clarity'. Varma, who shared screenshots of the missive on his official twitter handle and Facebook profile, said he was 'perplexed' by the party's tie-up with the BJP for the Delhi Assembly polls, accusing the saffron party of having 'embarked on a massive, socially divisive agenda.' "On more



than one occasion, you have expressed your grave apprehensions about the BJP-RSS combine," Pavan Varma said in the letter on Tuesday.

The BJP had announced on Monday that it will spare two seats for the JD(U) in Delhi and one for another NDA partner—the LJP headed by Union Minister Ram Vilas Paswan. Both the JD(U) and the LJP had ploughed the lonely furrow in the recent assembly polls in Jharkhand, where the saffron party lost power to the JMM-Congress-RJD alliance.

"If these are your real views, I fail to understand how the JD(U) is now extending its alliance with the BJP beyond Bihar, when even long standing

allies of the BJP, like the Akali Dal, have refused to do so," he wrote. "This is especially so at a time when the BJP, through the CAA-NPR-NRC combine, has embarked on a massive social divisive agenda aimed at mutilating the peace, harmony and stability of the country," Varma said.

"In my first meeting with you in Patna in August 2012, even before I had resigned from the IFS, you had spoken to me at length and with conviction on why Narendra Modi and his policies are inimical for the country," Varma, one of the most articulate spokespersons of a political party, said.

"When you were leading the Mahagathbandhan (a grand

alliance which also had the RJD and the Congress as partners), you had openly made a call for RSS-Mukt Bharat. These views, articulated for a sustained period, are a matter of public record," Varma wrote.

In comments that may embarrass Kumar, Varma claimed that the JD(U) leader, even after aligning with the BJP again in 2017, had confessed to him 'in private' how the current saffron party leadership had 'humiliated' him. "You mentioned on more than one occasion that the BJP was leading India into a dangerous space. It was your personal view, as conveyed to me, that the BJP is destroying institutions and that there is a need for democratic and socialist forces within the country to regroup, a task for which you actually assigned a senior party official," Varma added, without disclosing who the JD(U) leader was.

JD(U) national vice president Prashant Kishor also had come out strongly against the party's support to the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill when it was tabled in Parliament last year.

## Students must use time judiciously, says Assam CM

**Guwahati:** Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Tuesday urged youths to realise their potential and commit themselves to the development of society.

Value-based services are of utmost importance in today's world and working for only individual success does not give much satisfaction, Sonowal said at the concluding ceremony of the three-day Chief Minister's Youth Conclave.

"Youths must strive to equip themselves with required skills, knowledge through education and hardwork to achieve excellence. Students should judiciously utilise time and not get distracted in pursuit of a successful life," he said.

The State Government is committed to making north-east the new engine of growth for the country and capture the market in Southeast Asian countries through the Act East Policy, he added. **PTI**

## Rajinikanth opens new political narrative in TN

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

**R**ajinikanth, Tamil filmndom's super star, has put both the AIADMK and the DMK in a fix with his statement about EV Ramasamy Naicker, founder of the Dravida movement in Tamil Nadu.

While addressing the Golden Jubilee meeting of Tamil magazine Thuglaq launched by late Cho Ramaswamy, Rajinikanth who is certain to launch his political outfit anytime from now, had said that Naicker with his followers had taken out a procession in Salem in 1971 with nude pictures of Lord Rama and his consort Sita 'decorated' with footwears. The rallyists had raised derogatory slogans against the revered couple, Rajinikanth had said, "While all newspapers and mag-

azines had blacked out the incident, it was Thuglaq which carried the report in detail with the picture of the rallyists. The then Karunanidhi Government had tried its best to prevent the magazine copies from reaching the hands of the readers. But Cho printed additional copies and saw to it that the magazine copies reached its readers," Rajinikanth said in his reminiscences.

Rajinikanth's declaration from the venue of Thuglaq's function that it was the intelligentsia who read Thuglaq while DMK activists carry Murasoli (mouthpiece of the DMK) has upset the DMK leadership.

The DMK came out with a front page article stating that the readers of Murasoli were Dravida youths with self respect and courage. "Our readers are people who care about the

suppressed and depressed people in the society and they are not slaves to any ideology," the Murasoli stated in an indirect reply to Rajinikanth's declaration that those who read Thuglaq were intelligentsia while the readers of Murasoli were cadre of Dravidian party.

"Rajinikanth has succeeded in opening a new battlefield as well as political narrative in the State politics," said Kolahala Srenivaas, political commentator.

Nehrudoss, a DK leader, has approached Coimbatore Police with a plea to file a complaint against the actor for spreading hatred against people. Nehrudoss alleged that Rajinikanth was peddling lies.

But Thuglaq Ramesh, lead writer of the magazine who has worked with Cho Ramaswamy from the day the

Thuglaq was launched said there was no lies in the speech by Rajinikanth though there was a factual error. "Naicker and his associates had carried nude pictures of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu to denigrate the birth of Lord Ayyappa. The big size photograph was adorned with footwears and we have preserved the copies in our office. What Rajinikanth told is correct though the characters differed," Ramesh told The Pioneer.

He said the action of Naicker and his associates were nothing surprising as they had hatred for Hindu gods whom they disgraced and insulted at all available opportunities.

Though he was present during the 75th anniversary of Murasoli in 2018, the superstar did not make any speeches despite the pleads by Stalin.



Women take part in a rally during 4th All India Womens Conference, in Kolkata on Tuesday

PTI

## Coronavirus: Screening of passengers flying from China at seven airports

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

**A**s advised by the Union Health Ministry, the Union Civil Aviation Ministry has directed seven airports Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Cochin, Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata to make arrangements for screening of passengers arriving from China in the wake of outbreak of an infection caused by a new strain of virus there.

The Union Health Ministry has also sought from the Ministry of External Affairs details of those who have applied for Indian visa since December 31 so that they can be counselled.

Airlines flying in from any airport in China including Hong Kong have been asked to make in-flight announcements requesting

passengers with history of fever and cough and travel to Wuhan city in the past 14 days to self-declare at the port of arrival in order to facilitate early isolation, according to an official statement on Tuesday.

This is in continuation to the travel advisory issued by the Union Health Ministry regarding threat of novel coronavirus in Wuhan, Hubei province of China asking citizens to follow certain precautionary measures while visiting the country.

The action-plan includes thermal screening of passengers to be undertaken, it said. Thermal cameras will be installed at the pre-immigration area of the seven identified airports and airlines staff will bring the passengers to the health counters before the

immigration check.

The coronavirus (CoV) is a large family of viruses that causes illnesses ranging from the common cold to acute respiratory syndromes, but the virus that has killed four people in China is a novel strain not seen before.

Also, if an ill passenger or crew member is confirmed as a probable case of nCoV, public health authorities should be notified about the contacts using the passenger locator form, the statement said.

All travellers who have visited China, particularly through Wuhan during the past 14 days and show symptoms of acute onset of fever, cough, shortness of breath have been asked to report to the airport health unit.

## Birth certificates say 2 UP kids are over 100 years old, court orders action

**Bareilly (UP):** Two-year-old Sanket may not look it but he is 102-year-old, according to his birth certificate. Shubh (4) is 104.

A Bareilly court recently ordered police to lodge a case against a village development officer and a village head who allegedly issued wrong documents after the children's family refused to give them a bribe.

Pawan Kumar of Bela village under the Khutar police station of Shahjahanpur had moved court alleging that birth certificates of his nephews Shubh (4) and Sanket (2) were issued with wrong years of birth, SHO Tejpal Singh said.

Pawan had alleged that Village Development Officer Sushil Chand Agnihotri and head Pravin Misra had demanded ₹ 500 for each birth certificate for which he had applied online two months ago, the SHO said.

When he refused to give bribe, the year of birth was mentioned in the certificate as June 13, 1916 and Jan 6, 1918, instead of June 13, 2016 and Jan 6 2018, Pawan had stated in the court. **PTI**

## IMF lowering of growth: Cong targets Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

**F**ollowing the IMF's lowering of India's economic growth estimate, the Congress on Tuesday targeted the BJP Government with its senior leaders and former Union Ministers P Chidambaram and Kapil Sibal taking a dig saying the IMF and its chief should be ready for being attacked by the BJP.

While Sibal launched a personal attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah saying they were a "drag on Indian democracy", Chidambaram who served as Finance Minister in Manmohan Singh Government, said that the NDA regime will now prove the IMF wrong and entire team NDA

will foul mouth the world body and its chief economist, Gita Gopinath.

"IMF lowers India's GDP for 2019 to 4.8%. Calls it a drag on the world economy," Sibal said at AICC Press conference. "Protests of people, young and old, across India (who can't be recognised by the clothes they wear) Reflect that the duo Modiji and Amit Shah are a drag on Indian Democracy," the Congress leader added.

Sibal said the nationwide protests against the amended citizenship law reflected that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah were a "drag on Indian democracy".

Ahead of the start of the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual summit in Davos, Switzerland, Gopinath

had said growth in the country slowed sharply owing to stress in the non-bank financial sector and weak rural income growth. Chidambaram claimed an attack on the world body and its chief economist Gita Gopinath by government ministers was imminent. He also alleged that the growth figure of 4.8 per cent given by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is after some "window dressing" and he won't be surprised if it goes even lower.

"Reality check from IMF. Growth in 2019-20 will be BELOW 5 per cent at 4.8 per cent," Chidambaram said in a series of tweets.

"Even the 4.8 per cent is after some window dressing. I will not be surprised if it goes even lower," the former finance minister said.

## Sabarimala temple closes after a peaceful pilgrimage season

**Sabarimala(Ker):** After a peaceful Mandalam-Makaravilakku pilgrimage season of over two-months, the portals of the Lord Ayyappa Temple here were closed after performing customary rituals and pujas on Tuesday.

Though the annual Makaravilakku was held here on January 15, the hill top temple, nestled in a reserve forest in the Western Ghats, was open for devotees to offer worship till Monday evening.

Even the last day of the pilgrimage witnessed heavy rush of devotees, including those

from neighbouring States, at the Sannidhanam (temple complex), sources at the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB), the apex temple body, which manages the shrine, said.

Customary rites like "aash-tadrvya mahaganapathi homam", abhishekam and 'usha nivedyam', were performed under the aegis of tantra (head priest) Mahesh Mohanaru in the early hours of Tuesday. In accordance with the tradition, the royal designate of the Pandalam Palace, where according to legend Lord Ayyappa had spent his child-

hood, offered prayers before the sanctum sanctorum. He later led the procession carrying the sacred jewels 'thiruvabharanam', brought here to be adorned on Lord Ayyappa on the day of Makaravilakku, back to the Palace.

Melsanthi (chief priest), A K Sudheer Namboothiri performed the 'bhasmabhishekam', the offering of holy ash, on the idol of the Lord Ayyappa and closed the doors of the sanctum sanctorum singing 'hari-varasanam', the sacred lullaby, marking the culmination of over 60-day pilgrimage season. **PTI**

## RAJASTHAN Polling for 2nd phase of panchayat polls today



**Jaipur:** The second phase of polling in 2,312 village panchayats of Rajasthan will be held on Wednesday and all preparations have been made for conducting free, fair and peaceful elections, officials said on Tuesday.

Polling in 15,127 wards of 2,312 village panchayats of 74 Panchayat Samitis will be held between 8 am and 5 pm, State Election Commissioner PS Mehra said.

A total of 77,56,416 people are eligible to exercise their franchise. Counting for sarpanch posts will be done on Wednesday itself.

In the second phase, 21 sarpanches and 7,466 panches have been elected unopposed in 25 districts. Apart from these, 15,334 candidates are in the fray for sarpanch posts and 43,376 candidates for panch posts. **PTI**

## 23-year-old man held for minor girl's rape in Fatehpur

**Banda (UP):** A minor girl was allegedly raped by a 23-year-old man in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Fatehpur district who was later arrested, police said on Tuesday.

The girl was alone when Jaswant Lodhi, a resident of the same village, apparently lured her to his house promising to give her sweets where he raped her on Sunday, the incharge of the police station in the area said.

The girl's parents, who returned later in the night, found her in grave condition and admitted her to a government hospital where she is undergoing treatment, the policeman said.

They lodged a complaint against the accused on Monday who confessed to the crime upon being arrested, the officer added. **PTI**

## Kota: Man gets life for raping 5-yr-old

**Kota:** A POCSO court here on Tuesday sentenced a 24-year-old man to life imprisonment for raping a minor girl in 2017.

The court also imposed a fine of ₹ 60,000 on the convict, a public prosecutor said.

Anil Sahariya (24) took the girl, then five-year-old, to his room on the pretext of showing her a cartoon movie and raped her.

A case was registered against Sahariya at the Anantpura police station on the complaint of the victim's father.

Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act court special judge Ajay Kumar Sharma held Sahariya guilty of raping the minor girl under sections of the IPC and the POCSO Act and sentenced him to life imprisonment, the public prosecutor said.

He said statements of 16 witnesses were recorded during the trial of the case and 20 documents were produced before the court. **PTI**

## Thane man arrested for raping 5-yr-old neighbour

**Thane:** A 24-year-old man was arrested on Tuesday for allegedly raping his five-year-old neighbour in Maharashtra's Thane city, police said. The accused, Deepesh Sutar, an employee of a courier company, lived in the same chawl as the victim at Lokmanya Nagar Pada no. 2, senior inspector SB Gaikwad of Vartak Nagar police station said. The incident took place at around 6 pm on Sunday, when Sutar lured the victim to his house and sexually abused her when no one was

around, he said. The child, who was in extreme pain, rushed home and confided in her mother, who lodged a complaint with the police, the official said.

The minor was sent for a medical check-up, after which the police confirmed the rape and arrested the accused, he added. A case has been registered against Sutar under section 376 (rape) of the Indian Penal Code and provisions of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, the official said. **PTI**

## Woman whose family alleged rape died from multiple fractures post-accident: Police

**Noida (UP):** The post-mortem report of the 20-year-old girl whose family alleged rape and assault by two men has confirmed that she died from multiple fractures and a shock due to an injury to kidney after an accident on the Yamuna Expressway, police said on Tuesday.

However, a report of medical diagnostics involving the vaginal swab of the deceased is yet to be out and that will confirm if she was raped or not, police said.

"The autopsy has re-confirmed the observations of a femur bone fracture of the private hospital in Jewar where she was first treated before being referred to Delhi," DCP (I) Sankalp Sharma told PTI. **PTI**

"The report stated that she died as a result of shock due to injury to kidney and multiple fractures produced by blunt force impact, which generally happens in cases of road accident," he added.

"So far there is no evidence of rape. However, the vaginal swab of the deceased has been taken for observation and we would get its report in about a week," Sharma said.

The woman had died at Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital in Delhi on Sunday where she was brought on Friday night after preliminary medication at a private hospital in Gautam Buddh Nagar's Jewar area, according to police. **PTI**



Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Prahlad Joshi flies a kite with portraits of PM Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, during the International Kite Festival in Hubballi district on Tuesday

PTI

CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT

# Act not to be withdrawn, those protesting can continue: Shah

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday emphatically said the Citizenship Amendment Act(CAA) will not be withdrawn and those protesting can continue to do so even as he challenged Opposition leaders for a public debate on the contentious law.

Accusing the Opposition of "misleading" people on the amended citizenship law, Shah threw the challenge for the debate to Rahul Gandhi(Congress), Mamata Banerjee(Trinamool Congress), Akhilesh Yadav(Samajwadi Party) and Mayawati(Bahujan Samaj Party).

Addressing a rally in Lucknow in support of the CAA, Shah also declared that the construction of a Ram

temple "touching the skies" in Ayodhya will begin within three months.

At the same meeting, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath alleged that the Congress is shelling out money for "arson" and protests over the CAA.

Shah accused the Congress of not implementing the suggestions that came from its own leaders in the past on granting citizenship to minority Hindus in Pakistan, Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) and Afghanistan after Partition.

He also hit out at West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, saying she is now opposing Indian citizenship for Dalit Bengalis.

Shah said there is no provision in the amended law for taking anyone's citizenship away. "A canard is being spread



BJP supporters attend a rally by Union Home Minister Amit Shah (unseen) in support of CAA, in Lucknow on Tuesday PTI

against the CAA by the Congress, SP, BSP, and Trinamool Congress."

The CAA is a law to grant citizenship, he added. "I want to say that irrespective of the protests it will not be withdrawn," he said, adding, "Whoever has to oppose can oppose the Act, it is not going to be revoked."

Stating that a myth is being spread in the country about the CAA, Shah alleged that riots and arson are being induced and that the SP, BSP, Congress and the TMC are fomenting the protests.

"If any clause of the CAA takes away the citizenship of anyone, including Muslims, they can tell me. The agitations and sit-ins, which are being organised in the country against it, are wrong," he said. "The Congress has

become blind due to vote bank politics," he said, and also blamed the party for Partition.

Reacting to the assertions by Shah, Akhilesh Yadav said they reflected intolerance as the BJP "wants to crush people with the road roller of its majority".

Lashing out at the BJP, the former Chief Minister alleged that the saffron party is making "intolerance" as its identity.

"Playing with basic principles of the democracy, the BJP is going ahead with making intolerance its identity. Shah's statement that he would implement the CAA at any cost shows that the Government wants to crush people with the road roller of its majority," Yadav said in a statement.

The Uttar Pradesh unit of the Congress accused Shah of

"speaking the language of a dictator".

"Virtually soaked in pride of being in power, the country's home minister is speaking the language of a dictator..." UP Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu said in a statement.

Shah asked Opposition parties where they were when "crores of people were killed" in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh on the basis of religion.

He said five lakh Pandits were displaced from Kashmir, "but these parties did not utter a word".

"Now, because of PM Modi, a new chapter has begun in the lives of these people," he said. Shah referred to the recent Supreme Court verdict that allows the construction of a Ram temple at the disputed Ayodhya site.

## Bengal to table motion against it on January 27

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Mamata Banerjee Government will call a special session of the State Assembly on January 27 to table a resolution rejecting the Citizenship Amendment Act. The date was given by State Parliamentary Affairs Minister and Trinamool Congress general secretary Partho Chatterjee.

The formal announcement came a day after Banerjee declared that she would soon get a resolution against CAA passed in the State Assembly.

The development also comes as an aftermath of members of the minority community openly questioning the TMC Ministers — Jyotipriya Mullick and Bratya Basu at various organisational forums as to why the Bengal Government was not following in the footsteps of Kerala and Punjab which had earlier passed resolutions against the controversial Act.

"I don't have to say anything about who said what. But I can only say that our Chief Minister has decided to call a special session of the Assembly to pass a resolution against the CAA," Chatterjee said adding the State Government's credentials could not be questioned as it had already passed similar resolutions against National Register for Citizens and National Population Register.

"I have personally spoken to opposition leader Abdul Mannan (Congress) and would also speak to CPI(M) Legislator Party Leader Sujjan Chakrabarty seeking their support for the resolution which will be tabled on January 27," Chatterjee said.

The decision which the Government had taken on Tuesday should have been taken earlier, Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Chowdhury said reacting to the Tuesday's announcement adding "the Congress and the Left had moved a similar resolution earlier in the Assembly but the TMC refused to take it up for discussion now for some unknown reasons they have agreed to pass the resolution only after Kerala and Punjab Governments have done it... it is better late than never."

Chakrabarty wondered "why they rejected our move when we wanted to table a similar resolution a few days in the Assembly denouncing CAA. It seems that only after getting the green signal from her BJP friends in Delhi that the Chief Minister has now decided to table the resolution. In any case we have no problem in supporting it."

He added how the TMC Government had grudgingly passed a resolution against NRC and NPR tabled by the opposition "but only after tabling it in their party's name."

Chatterjee would not dwell much on the issue but said "We have already submitted the resolution to the Speaker on January 20."

He also would not comment on why the TMC was moving the Supreme Court challenging the CAA in Kerala and Punjab. "I am in State politics and will not be in a position to take questions on things at national level. Please ask the questions to Derek O'Brien who will be the appropriate person to take the question."

On whether the Chief Minister would take up Home Minister Amit Shah's challenge to debate the CAA at national forum, the senior Bengal Minister said "we will take it up for discussion in the party forum before coming back to you."

Meanwhile, after the lawyers, students and civil society it was the turn of the doctors to descend on the streets against the CAA with hundreds of medics from NRS Medical College and Hospital on Tuesday taking out processions condemning the controversial Act.

## Chants of 'CAA se azaadi' as hundreds of students march in protest on AMU

Aligarh: Hundreds of students took out a protest march against the amended citizenship act on the Aligarh Muslim University campus here on Tuesday raising slogans of "CAA se azaadi" and vowing to boycott classes until their demands are met.

The protesters including girls and schoolchildren, belonging to the schools within the campus, began their march from the Purani Chungi and culminated it at the Babey Sir Syed gate of the university.

They also raised slogans in support of Delhi's Shaheen Bagh protesters and the Jawaharlal Nehru University.

"Shaheen Bagh Zindabad (Long live Shaheen Bagh)" and "JNU tum sangharsh Karo hum tumhare saath hain (keep fighting JNU, we are with you)" rent the air along with the chants of "CAA se azaadi" (freedom from CAA) and "BJP se azaadi" (freedom from BJP). The university was closed early for winter vacations from December 16, a day after students clashed with police during a protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) on campus. It was to reopen on January 6 but the vacation was extended owing to persisting tension over the changes in the citizenship law.

It is reopening in phases from Monday. But after the university reopened on January 13, agitation against the law has been going on and students have devised innovative ways to protest peacefully.

## Permission denied for Muslim organisations to take out rally

Coimbatore: Police have denied permission to various Muslim organisations to carry out a procession in the city on February 2 against the Citizenship Amendment Act.

Representatives of Federation of Islamic Organisation and the District All Kamath had submitted a petition to the office of police commissioner on January 17

seeking permission to take out a 7 km "unity procession".

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Law and order) L Balaji Saravabnan had convened a meeting on Monday with representatives of SDPI, TMMK, PFI, Manithaneya Makkal Katchi and Jamaath, a release from police department said on Tuesday. They were informed that the procession would paralyse movement of vehicles

besides affecting people as it was being taken out through a national highway and arterial road. Besides, almost 16 organisations had already conducted nearly 50 rallies, protest meetings, human chain, closure of shops and other mode of agitations on the issue.

Against this background, an order denying permission for the procession was issued, the release said.



People hold a huge tri-colour during a protest against CAA, NRC and NPR at Shivajinagar in Bengaluru on Tuesday PTI

## J&K: Army jawan, SPO killed in Awantipora encounter

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

An Army jawan and a special police officer (SPO) of J&K police on Tuesday sacrificed their lives during a fierce firefight with terrorists in snow clad Khrew area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district.

Till the time of filing the report, the security forces had not confirmed whether any terrorists were neutralised or they managed to give a slip to the security forces during the encounter.

Soon after the operation was launched, after receiving a tip off about the presence of three terrorists in the area, joint teams of security forces had cordoned off Zand village of Tral.

While searches were going on in the area, first contact was established with the terrorists. To avoid any collateral damage the security forces even escorted children and others from the area.

In the initial exchange of



fire an Army jawan and SPO received bullet injuries. According to official sources, "SPO of the J&K police died on the spot while Army jawan succumbed to his fatal injuries in the hospital".

Initially, twitter handle of the Kashmir zone police posted a tweet, "Encounter has started at Awantipora. Police & security forces are on the job. Further details shall follow". Thereafter, no update was posted till late evening nor any press statement was issued by the police media centre confirming killing of terrorists in the encounter.

Meanwhile, Twitter handle of the Udhampur based Northern command headquarters, paid rich tributes to

the martyred soldier who sacrificed his life in the Pulwama encounter on Tuesday. "Lt- Gen Ranbir Singh, Army Cdr NC and all ranks salute the supreme sacrifice of Sepoy Rahul Rainswal; offer deepest condolences to the family", tweeted Northern Command.

This is the second major encounter which took place in Kashmir valley ahead of Republic day celebrations in the last 48 hours.

On Monday, joint teams of security forces killed three terrorists including top commander of Hizbul Mujahideen Waseem Ahmad Wani along with Adil Bashir Sheikh in Shopian.

According to police records, Waseem was involved in the killing of eight people, including four security men in the Valley while Adil had decamped with 7 AK 47 rifles and a pistol from the residence of former PDP MLA from Wachi Assembly segment.

## Delhi polls: Tanhaji video morphed with Modi, Shah goes viral

SHIVAJI DESCENDANT CONDEMNNS IT, DEMANDS PROBE

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A spoof video made from the scenes of latest Bollywood blockbuster 'Tanhaji — The Unsung Warrior', in which the faces of Chhatrapati Shivaji and his trusted commander Tanaji Malusare have been morphed with those of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah went viral in the social media on Tuesday.

Fresh from the controversy over a Hindi book 'Aaj ke Shivaji: Narendra Modi', likening the current Prime Minister to Maratha warrior Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the latest video — in which Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has been projected as Udaybhan Singh Rathore — has turned the spotlight on the BJP once

again, amid the ongoing campaigning the Delhi Assembly polls.

The spoof video, posted on the twitter handle named 'political kida' has drawn comparisons between the battle of Sinhagad Fort with the upcoming Delhi elections and the website has said: "Jo Dilli Jeet Gaya, Samjho Dil Jeet Gaya". Interestingly, the twitter page containing the spoof video went missing later in the evening.

Reacting to the spoof video, BJP's Rajya Sabha member and the 13th direct descendant of Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji and great grandson of Chhatrapati Shahu of Kolhapur Sambhaji Chhatrapati tweeted: "After the book (likening Shivaji to Modi), we now have video that indecent, intolerable and condemnable. The parties concerned should expressed its stand over the video. The Centre should order an inquiry into the video and initiate action against those behind it"

"For us Shiv baktsh Shivaji

Maharaj is everything. The video has hurt the Shiva baktsh. It is the responsibility of the Government to take cognisance of the sentiments of the Shiv baktsh and take steps to ensure against recurrence of such things in future. My request to all political parties not to misuse the image of great Maratha warrior for their cheap politics," Sambhaji Chhatrapati tweeted.

Responding to the objectionable video, Shiv Sena MP and spokesperson Sanjay Raut said: "I have sent the video to controversial Hindutva leader Sambhaji Bhide and various BJP leaders. I am waiting for their response."

Alluding to the recent demand by Sambhaji Bhide that action be taken against him for his disparaging remarks against the descendants of Chhatrapati Shivaji, Raut said: "I want to see the reaction of those who have called for a bandh at Satara and Sangli against the Shiv Sena. Not even a single person whom I have sent the video to has replied so far."

Meanwhile, the Maharashtra BJP has disassociated itself from the spoof video put out on the twitter handle of "political kida": "The BJP has nothing to do with this video. The BJP is not using the video in its campaign for the Delhi Assembly polls. We condemn this video. It is wrong to elicit the BJP's reaction on this video. Chhatrapati Shivaji cannot be compared with anyone," Maharashtra BJP president Chandrakant Patil said.

"There is no restriction on any one making anything of video, putting it on social media and letting it go viral. There is a clear cut attempt to defame the BJP by making such a controversial video," Patil said.

Hitting out indirectly at Raut, Patil said: "The people who are demanding evidence from the descendants of Chhatrapati Shivaji have no mortal right left to talk about the Maratha warrior. The BJP's stand is that there was only unique king (Shivaji) and we do

not get to see such a king against. It was because of this king that Hindu Swaraj was established. No one can be compared chhatrapati Shivaji".

Last week, under severe flak from various political quarters, an embarrassed BJP had distanced itself from a controversial book 'Aaj ke Shivaji: Narendra Modi', penned by the party's Jai Bhagwan Goyal, likening the current Prime Minister with Maratha warrior Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

BJP's National Media co-head Sanjay Mayukh had said through a video statement: "Whatever that been written in the book is the author's personal point of view. It is neither our party publication nor are we connected with it in any manner"

"The writer has clarified that it is his personal writing. He has also said that if the book has hurt anybody's emotions, he is withdrawing the book. We would like to clarify again that it is not a party publication," Mayukh had said.

## CENTRE'S J&K OUTREACH PROGRAMME Want to get firsthand account of problems people face: Naqvi

Srinagar: The purpose of the Centre's outreach programme in Jammu & Kashmir is to get a firsthand account of the problems faced by the people and address their concerns, Union Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said on Tuesday.

"The objective of this dialogue is to go close to people, listen to their problems and needs and also find solutions to their problems," Naqvi told reporters here.

Naqvi, who laid the foundation stone for a development project at Harwan on the outskirts of the city, was the first minister to visit Kashmir as

part of the Centre's outreach programme.

He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi is keen to ensure that benefits of the changes initiated by the Central government should reach all the people of the union territory.

"The aspirations and expectations of the people were not upheld (earlier) and corruption had eaten into Jammu and Kashmir... Some people had benefited themselves but we want prosperity for all people here," Naqvi said.

Asked why only five ministers were visiting Kashmir against 31 going to Jammu, he

said the present outreach programme was just the beginning of the Centre's efforts to reach out to the people of the Valley.

"This is not the last programme. This initiative will continue," he said. Naqvi refused to comment on criticism from some quarters about the Ministers not including seven districts of Kashmir in their outreach programme.

Addressing a gathering earlier, Naqvi said the Central Government wants "a new dawn" of development and accountability in the functioning of the Government machinery in Jammu & Kashmir.

## Mins' visit only to highlight BJP agenda at expense of public exchequer: Cong

Jammu: The Jammu & Kashmir unit of the Congress on Tuesday attacked the BJP-led central Government over its ongoing public outreach programme in the Union Territory and alleged that the visit of the Ministers is only to highlight the agenda of the party at the expense of the public exchequer.

It also alleged that the visit is aimed at diverting the attention of the people from real issues of unemployment, price rise and "worst ever" economic slowdown besides the social and political upheavals being witnessed in the country, affecting the political prospects of the BJP in Delhi and West Bengal.

In the aftermath of the abrogation of Article 370 provisions and bifurcation of the erstwhile state into two UTs in August last year, the Centre launched a major week-long public outreach programme on January 18 to aware people about the benefits of the move and to disseminate

information about the implementation of its policies and programmes for the overall development of Jammu & Kashmir. So far about 24 ministers visited different parts of Jammu.

"The visit of Ministers' brigade is only to highlight the agenda of the party at the expense of public exchequer by use of entire official machinery, after feedback to the BJP Government at the centre that people even in Jammu region are fed up with the neglect, especially the treatment meted out to the erstwhile state depriving it of the identity and rights of the locals," Pradesh Congress Committee chief spokesperson Ravinder Sharma said.

"The BJP should answer why only five ministers, out of 36, are going to Kashmir to attend eight programmes against 51 programmes in the Jammu region to explain the benefits of abrogation of special status under Article 370 and disbanding of the erstwhile state," he said.

**Notice Inviting e-Tender**  
 No.SSA/TT/Teacher ID Card/314/2019/314 Date: 21.01.2020  
 Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam (Samagra Shiksha) invites tender through e-Tendering process from experience organization in the field of manufacturing of PVC Identity Cards of Smart Cards for supply of Identity Cards.  
 To participate in this tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of class-II (minimum) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.  
 The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable tender fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized/scheduled Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.  
 Sd/- Mission Director,  
 SSA, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

## Capital gain or loss?

Jagan Mohan Reddy may want to develop Andhra uniformly with 3 capitals but the human cost might impact his politics



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy should remember his father YSR Reddy's overarching nature of politics, one that was about social welfare and uplifting backwards and one that gave him a bankable legacy. So he should stop over-obsessing about setting up three capitals in a now truncated State, focus on its cash-strapped economy and optimise its resources rather than engaging in a competitive one-upmanship with his predecessor and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief Chandrababu Naidu.

True, the latter had built his persona by creating futuristic cities as a measure of good governance, be it by redeveloping Hyderabad and giving it a new moniker called Cyberabad or, after losing that to Telangana, attempting a Singapore-style new capital at Amaravati. But considering that much work had progressed on the new capital and was largely acceptable to the gentry for whom it wasn't too far out of Hyderabad, Reddy might have to pay a political price for stalling the project. For there is a constituency he cannot ignore, that of farmers. The Naidu Government had cracked a land deal with them, whereby they pooled 34,000 acres of farmland in return for stakeholder of developed land. Now with global investors out of the city, its status reduced to just a legislative capital and unfinished towers turning into a ghost town, the human cost would bear heavy on Reddy. As it is the crashing prices have meant that farmers have lost out on the land value. They can't reclaim their old land which has become fallow ever since they were acquired in 2016. Promised doles like annuity for crop loss, they feel cheated although the Reddy Government has increased the pension amount from the existing ₹2,500 to ₹5,000. With protesters at his doorstep and his intransigence, Reddy has a man-made crisis that he can ill-afford. His plan of devolving power across the State by developing Amaravati as the legislative, Visakhapatnam as the executive and Kurnool as the judicial capitals may be well-intentioned and help him assuage all his constituencies, particularly catapulting the cosmopolitan Visakhapatnam as a top-tier city, but is ridden with challenges. With the functions of the executive, legislature and judiciary being interconnected, requiring swift approvals and quick transfer of files, governance is bound to suffer a time lag while efficiencies will be compromised. The exchequer, too, will be under additional fiscal stress owing to logistical expenses. The infrastructural costs of building new spaces will make a further dent in the State Budget, though Reddy insists that firming up Amaravati would have been much more expensive. Most importantly, the movement of staff for allied or overlapping issues could end up disturbing the bureaucracy. Then there is the larger issue of a loss of face among investors, both global and domestic. Allegations of malpractices that the Reddy regime has been levelling against Naidu's contracts have scared prospective investors. The repudiation of past contracts has raised doubts about their sanctity in the State, which would henceforth be dependent on regime change and new governance priorities. This has already spooked most business houses. At the moment, Andhra Pradesh has topped the official ease of doing business index, relegating Telangana to the second spot. But given the decentralisation move, it may not be able to hold on to this advantage for long.

Decentralising capitals, though new to India, has been experimented in 15 countries across the world. In South Africa, for example, Pretoria is the administrative capital, Cape Town is the legislative capital and Bloemfontein is the judicial capital. In Sri Lanka, too, while Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte is its official capital and seat of national legislature, Colombo is the de facto seat of national executive and judicial bodies. Moreover, India, too, is not alien to having twin capitals because of seasonal reasons in Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh and the former State of Jammu & Kashmir. The constitutionality of having diversity of governance within the States through just distribution of powers, thus, stands the test. So long as it is kept within the realm of pragmatism than political sabre-rattling, Reddy's test will now be in the Upper House where his party does not have absolute majority and where the TDP is a thorn in the flesh. All the more reason for him to act in a prudent manner, so that his moniker of Bhramaravati (illusionary city) for Amaravati doesn't end up being used against him. The BJP, with Pawan Kalyan, is waiting for him to make a mistake.

## Inequality rules

The way to grasp the current political climate is by understanding how inequity has grown over the decades



The British charity Oxfam has come out with another annual report at a time when the World Economic Forum (WEF) held at the Swiss resort town of Davos is under way. The report gains eyeballs, loaded as it is with some stunning statistics to highlight "inequality" across the world. This year's report has some stunning numbers — the top one per cent of India's billionaires owns four times as much wealth as the poorest 70 per cent. On the global front, the top 22 richest men in the world have more wealth than all the women

in Africa. The details are quite shocking. While the calculations of the report have been questioned in the past, make no mistakes about the message it sends out: The world is a deeply iniquitous place. The extremely rich are the ones who are exponentially richer than those at the bottom of the human pyramid. With or without a report, evidence is there that the world is becoming more unequal, the rich are getting richer and the poor, well, poorer.

And when someone needs to decipher why there has been such a rise in a nativist Right-wing polity across the world, particularly in democracies, it would be wise to understand that people feel like they have been left behind by globalisation. But they blame other social constructs, too, multi-culturalism for example. Ergo, the leaders they vote for are the ones "who say it like it is." Of course, many of these elected men, and they are almost always men, do not have the necessary talent to do much about it. They, thus, blame previous administrations and on that front, their point must be accepted. For years, peace dividend allowed sycophancy, nepotism and corruption to bloom and far from making the world a better place, inequality accelerated. The technology revolution has propped up many billionaires but it has also started treating human beings as mere data points — their information being bought and sold without their knowledge. But what can be done about this? The breakdown in trust is massive but other than motivated philanthropy schemes, it would be prudent for the very rich to actually start contributing more to society. Governments have to realise that unmitigated development is not always a good thing, even if some people can become very rich. The poor will be hurt due to the impacts of climate change much more; they will suffer from societal breakdowns far more. While clinking their champagne glasses at Davos later this week, leaders need to realise that they might soon lose control of the narrative.

# Preventable reality

The comprehensive listing of threats that can emerge this year, published by the Astana Club, is specific to Eurasian countries but has lessons for the entire world



RK PACHAURI

The Astana Club based in Kazakhstan has brought out a useful document which assesses the top 10 risks for Eurasia in 2020. There are contributions from researchers and thinkers from all over the world, which have been incorporated while carrying out this assessment. Although the risks identified are specific to Eurasia, in effect, one could identify these as being applicable to almost any other part of the world.

The foreword of this document identifies China emerging as a new potential superpower. It also draws attention to China's economic strength as signified through the Belt and Road mega initiative. Eurasia being in the vicinity of China sees the changes in the balance of power that are now developing. It also expresses the fact that Russia has finally recovered from the chaos and devastation of the 1990s despite several sanctions and restrictions. As a result of this phase of recovery, it is expanding its influence far beyond post-Soviet borders. Concurrently, leaders such as India, Japan, Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia have been identified as showing bold intentions to influence the international order. The document observes that no geo-political game can now play out without the participation of these new players.

The first of the 10 risks, which is identified, deals with the aftershock of the US presidential campaign. It looks at developments within the US and the efforts of the current administration to move in the direction of nationalism with possible isolation from global affairs and developments. The prediction made is that in the coming year, there will be more apparent manifestations of the unilateral approach to foreign policy, which obviously will have erratic consequences in a negative sense. In effect, the assessment of this first risk can be seen as not entirely related to aftershocks of the US presidential campaign but possibly more in terms of leading up to the presidential election, which implies several risks during the campaign itself.

It is obvious that the current process of impeachment, which the US Senate will be pursuing, will have major implications for the presidential election in November, 2020, as well as some risks for candidates running for the US Senate. It is also obvious that global developments initiated by the White House would be targeted, keeping in view the 2020 elections. While this Astana Club assessment was produced before the killing of Iranian Major General Soleimani, it can be concluded that to some extent, this attack on a very popular and respected general in Iran was clearly a "macho" act, which was perhaps designed to blunt the impacts of the current impeachment process against US President Donald Trump.

This document also highlights the fact



that as far as Iran is concerned, Trump will increase sanctions and the pressure that would be imposed on Tehran. On the other hand, the likelihood of a US-Iran military conflict, which posed certain danger in the summer of 2019, will decline this year. The opinion is also expressed that Trump is unlikely to initiate a military campaign against Iran, which could have uncontrollable consequences. There are other possible developments related to the Middle East, which could also constitute a risk politically to Eurasia. But, of course, there will be serious implications for other parts of the world, particularly for South Asia, with its proximity to both Eurasia and the countries of the Middle East.

The other risks identified in the study include the effects of global economic recession, escalation of the US-China confrontation, a new stage of the nuclear missile race, exacerbation of the battle for technological dominance, military escalation of the conflict around Iran, nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula, a new wave of terrorism, aggressive nationalism and populism as well as large-scale climate change problems.

The prospect of a global economic recession is very real and this, combined with an inward looking policy of nationalism such as in the case of the US, could cause economic complications worldwide.

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 WHILE THE  
 BACKBONE OF THE  
 ISLAMIC STATE (IS)  
 HAS GENERALLY  
 BEEN DECIMATED, IT  
 IS ENTIRELY  
 POSSIBLE THAT  
 RE-GROUPING BY  
 THIS TERRORIST  
 ORGANISATION  
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 IN DIFFERENT PARTS  
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 INDIA IS  
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 STATE-SPONSORED  
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 VICINITY AND THIS  
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 THE ENTIRE GLOBAL  
 COMMUNITY AND  
 INDIA WOULD NEED  
 TO DEAL WITH  
 ”

Also, in the case of the US, there is the real prospect of a further division between the Democrats and the Republicans, those who are supporters of Trump and those who are strongly opposed to his continuation as President. In the case of the Middle East, it seems unfortunate that Iran and the US have been at loggerheads for over 40 years now, which is affecting all developments in the wake of the Iranian revolution. Developments in 2020 will continue to be affected by an obvious bias on the part of the US openly favouring some Middle Eastern nations.

The issue of terrorism is also alive. While the backbone of the Islamic State (IS) has generally been decimated, it is entirely possible that re-grouping by this terrorist organisation could lead to several dangers in different parts of the world. India is confronted by State-sponsored terrorism in its vicinity and this is a subject that the entire global community and it would need to deal with. The extent of this threat is likely to increase as a result of frustration within a country which is our neighbour. We have to be alive to this as well as other terrorist threats across the globe.

With respect to climate change, we need to come up with scenarios on how we may be able to bring about a transition from fossil fuels to low carbon sources of energy. Far

more immediate is the issue of impacts of climate change, which would pose increasing risks across the globe. Projections of extreme events, which the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) had clearly brought out 11 years ago, is the increase in intensity and frequency of disasters and extreme events. A typical but unfortunate example of this is provided by the raging forest fires, which recently affected several parts of Australia, followed immediately by extreme precipitation events which led to flooding and excessive damage.

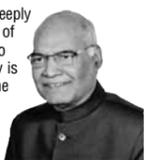
All in all, it is important that the Astana Club has come up with a comprehensive listing of threats, which can emerge during 2020 and, therefore, extending into this decade as a whole.

Kazakhstan and several Eurasian countries may lie beyond the Himalayan range but in terms of proximity, they are in some cases very close to us in terms of geographical distance. India should, perhaps, engage far more closely with countries of the region and exercise its soft power, including the flow of knowledge, education and research on issues that have a bearing on the region. The threats for Eurasia apply equally to India as well.

(The writer is former chairman, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2002-15)

## SOUNDBITE

A democracy like ours deeply relies on the uncovering of facts and a willingness to debate them. Democracy is meaningful only when the citizen is well informed.



President  
—Ram Nath Kovind

There's right and there's wrong, and there's common sense and there's abuse of power and as a citizen I have every right to voice my opinion.



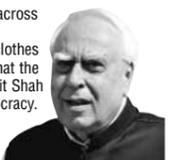
Hollywood veteran  
—Robert De Niro

People are more generally aware now. The climate and the environment is a hot topic. But from another perspective, pretty much nothing has been done.



Climate campaigner  
—Greta Thunberg

Protests of people across India (who can't be recognised by the clothes they wear) reflect that the duo Modi/Jai and Amit Shah are a drag on democracy.



Congress leader  
—Kapil Sibal

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Technological feat

Sir — An Australian developer has produced an app that allows people to upload a photo of someone else and match it with other photos of people and their location. Police in America have already tested and successfully used it to arrest one person. The introduction of cameras on mobile phones has led to millions of photos being taken and far too many being put online for us to ignore. The Instagrammers and influencers may not realise that by default, the location is embedded in their photos. The technology that allows facial recognition is under attack from privacy advocates, but why? If you have done nothing wrong, then you have nothing to hide. Although the reality is that some people err in their life choices. The concern of people being recognised in photos has gone too far with google maps and street view blurring number plates on cars and people's faces. People should be happy to be known and seen although not obsessively. Live a good life and be seen doing it.  
**Dennis Fitzgerald**  
 Melbourne

### Indian foreign policy takes a beating

None will dispute the fact that the foreign policy as pursued by the ruling dispensation has dented the good relationship India has been maintaining with other nations, particularly immediate neighbours. Maintaining cordial relations with other nations, even after effectively recording dissent on matters affecting us, requires a lot of suave diplomacy, which is lacking in present-day leaders. Though he is a career diplomat and has also served as the Foreign Secretary, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is found to be undiplomatic in his deliveries. He has also been more aggressive, muscular in his thoughts, words and deeds, particularly after sporting the BJP party cap.  
 At a time when the BJP Government is hell-bent on implementing the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), National Population Register (NPR) and National Register of Citizens (NRC), it has become inevitable on the part of the External Affairs Minister to play second fiddle and hard sell the schemes despite the damage such accusations of persecution of minorities are going to cause to our relationship with



Bangladesh and Afghanistan. It appears that Indian diplomacy has gone for a toss and has suffered an irreparable damage. Jaishankar has failed to handle the sensitive issue with utmost care. This is also evident from the strong statements made by Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and former Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai against the CAA.  
**Tharcius S Fernando**  
 Chennai

### Challenges ahead

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "BJP's new chief" (January 21). Both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah wanted someone to take charge of the party who would be a non-challenger to them and JP Nadda was best suited for this. What, however, must be complimented is that Nadda is one leader who grew from the grassroots level to make his way to the top.  
 Nadda has taken charge amid protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). More importantly, will he be able to stop the reverses the party has seen in States? Surely, the BJP is on a weaker footing and the winning the forthcoming elections in Delhi and West Bengal will be challenging. One thing that will come handy for him is that he has been part of the Modi Government and knows both the organisation and the Government well. Can he be a good catalyst between the two?  
**Bal Govind**  
 Noida

### Recognising Nadkarni

Sir — Babu Nadkarni, who passed away recently, leaves behind an incredible legacy in bowling. In 1964, he bowled 131 consecutive balls without conceding any runs during a Test innings against England. He had similar

economical bowling averages in earlier matches against Pakistan in Kanpur and Delhi in the 1960-61 series. His economy rate across his first-class career was less than two.

He was one of the finest all-rounders of the time. His maiden over tally is difficult to match. It is unfortunate that the present

cricketers, who play at a time of immense money and fame in the sport, are honoured frequently while players of yesteryear are forgotten. It would be even better if a series of postage stamps of older cricketers with notable contributions could be issued.

**SC Agrawal**  
 Delhi

Send your feedback to:  
 letterstopioneer@gmail.com

**FIRST COLUMN**

## The enigma named Putin

What the Russian Premier needs is a position that gives him the final say when big changes loom but lets him abjure from daily exercise of power



GWYNNE DYER

Five years ago somebody posted photographs on the internet showing a man who looked a lot like Vladimir Putin in photographs from 1920 and 1941. In both shots he was in military uniform, defending the interests of the Russian people then as he still does today. But how can this be? He wasn't even born until 1952. So the wave of faux speculation starts that Putin is an immortal hero who returns at intervals to save Russia. Or maybe just that he's an immortal vampire. At any rate, he'll be around forever. It was nonsense then and it's nonsense now.

Last week the Russian President announced a wave of constitutional reforms and the vast majority of foreign observers, especially in the West, immediately jumped to the conclusion that Putin is changing the system so that he can stay in power forever. Twenty-five years in power (his current term as President expires in 2024) is not enough for Putin, the foreign pundits insist. He can't risk leaving power, they explain, or Russians would start asking where his vast illicit wealth came from. And then the pundits spin off into lengthy tirades about how he is Evil Incarnate, even comparing him to Joseph Stalin, who ruled the old Soviet Union from 1924 until his death in 1953. Stalin was a mass murderer without a conscience. Nobody was safe from his paranoia: He even killed most of the other heroes of the Bolshevik Revolution. He was probably responsible for the deaths of ten million Russians.

And Vladimir Putin? Here's the opinion of Simon Tisdall, columnist and former foreign editor of *The Guardian*: "Like Stalin, (Putin) has made many enemies and caused untold misery...cronyism and corruption on a vast scale...military aggression and disruption abroad....Again like Stalin, retirement is not a safe option for the ex-KGB spy who normalised assassination as a modern-day tool of state policy."

Where to start? Perhaps with the obvious point that Stalin killed tens of thousands for every death that can be attributed to Putin. Moreover, corruption in Putin's Russia is far less than it was in the 1990s under the first post-Communist President, the Western-backed Boris Yeltsin, a drunken puppet who made ordinary Russians cringe.

"Military aggression and disruption abroad?" Guilty as charged, in the illegal restoration of Crimea to Russian control (though most people in Crimea welcomed it) and in backing anti-Government rebels in two provinces of eastern Ukraine. But there is a litany of Western invasions and military interventions (Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Serbia, Syria, Yemen) that didn't meet the highest legal standards either and had equally messy outcomes. Nor do Western Governments lag behind on the assassination front.

More importantly, Russia's western border is a 1,000 km east of where it was in 1914. It is a minimum of 300 km east of where it was as recently as 1991. Putin has not challenged that new frontier once (with the partial exception of Ukraine) in 21 years in office. You could have a much more frightening and disruptive person than Putin in the Kremlin.

The old KGB was a ruthless organisation but also a rational and realistic one. Putin is a man steeped in that tradition, not an adventurer or a fantasist, and we should probably be grateful for that. So what are the odds that he will still be running things after 2024? He will be 72 years old in 2024: Definitely time to start thinking about what happens after he's gone. And I'm going to make a bold assumption here: That he is a Russian patriot. Being Russian means that he fears disorder above all else: Russians sometimes call themselves "Italians of the North" and they don't mean it in a good way. So he wants a strong state, run with a firm hand, even after he has retired, which means that a clear and orderly succession is very important. However, living on under somebody else's firm hand is not an attractive prospect for Putin. He may or may not have fabulous sums of stolen money tucked away — the evidence for that is unclear — but you make a lot of enemies in a quarter-century in power and they could hurt you badly after you have relinquished it. So what Putin needs is a position that gives him the final constitutional say when big changes loom but lets him withdraw from the daily exercise of power. Something like the chairmanship of a strengthened State Council that can overrule both President and Prime Minister when necessary (but does so very rarely). And lo! That appears to be exactly what he has in mind. The details of his proposed reforms are not yet clear but a weaker President, a stronger Prime Minister and a State Council presiding serenely from afar are all part of the package. I'm not saying that's what will actually happen, but I think it's what he'd like to happen.

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

THEY HAVE GONE TO THE SUPREME COURT (OVER THE CAA) WITHOUT INFORMING ME. THAT IS AN UNLAWFUL ACT. NOT LEGALLY CORRECT.

—KERALA GOVERNOR  
ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN

**POINTCOUNTERPOINT**



THE CHIEF MINISTER WAS NOT DUTY-BOUND TO HAVE INFORMED THE GOVERNOR BEFORE MOVING THE SUPREME COURT ON THE CAA.

—FORMER KERALA GOVERNOR  
P SATHASIVAM

# Act, before it is too late

Taking a 'fair' and 'realistic' view of all receipts and expenditure of the Govt, its fiscal deficit is turning out to be almost double the three per cent target sought by the NK Singh panel



UTTAM GUPTA

Having achieved the fiscal deficit (FD) target for three years in a row, the Narendra Modi Government missed it in 2017-18 and 2018-19. During 2017-18, the actual FD expressed as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 3.5 per cent against the target of 3.2 per cent. For 2018-19, the then Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley had set a target of 3.3 per cent as against three per cent sought by a committee under NK Singh, former Expenditure Secretary and current Chairman of the 15th Finance Commission.

The committee was set up in 2016 to review the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003, with a mandate to revamp it and recommend a path for the next six years. It advocated a FD target of 2.5 per cent, revenue deficit 0.8 per cent, combined Centre-State debt ceiling of 60 per cent and a Central debt ceiling of 40 per cent for 2022-23. It recommended three per cent FD for 2018-19. It also allowed the Government to breach the target in case of "far-reaching structural reforms with unanticipated fiscal implications."

Vide the Finance Bill, 2018-19 the Government amended the FRBM Act to allow it to achieve three per cent FD by 2020-21 instead of 2018-19 recommended by the committee. Further, it sought the debt limit of 40 per cent by the Centre (60 per cent for Centre and States) to be reached by 2024-25 instead of 2022-23 mandated by the committee.

During 2018-19, the Government posted 3.4 per cent (against the target of 3.3 per cent), that too by taking recourse to what is termed as "financial engineering." It paid ₹60,000 crore less to the Food Corporation of India (FCI) towards food subsidy as reimbursement of the excess of the cost of procurement, handling and distribution over the sale price to the beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFSA). It paid ₹32,000 crore less to State-owned oil marketing companies (OMCs) viz. Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and so on, for selling LPG and kerosene at subsidised prices. Likewise, short payments to manufacturers for fertiliser subsidy were about ₹40,000 crore.

The above three so-called "deferred payments" add up to ₹1,32,000 crore. In addition, public undertakings like the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO), National Housing Bank (NHB), Rural Electrification Corporation (REC), Power Finance Corporation (PFC), National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) borrowed on behalf of the Government to fund welfare schemes such as rural and urban affordable housing, sanitation and irrigation projects, rural electrification schemes (including free electricity connections to households) highways and railway projects. Termed Extra-Budgetary Resources (EBRs), these totalled ₹280,000 crore.

All put together, the money, a whopping ₹412,000 crore, should have been paid by the Government from its Budget. But it decided to make other entities pay for it or borrow on its behalf. This translates to about 2.3 per cent of the GDP.



“ IN THE BACKDROP OF THE SLOWDOWN IN GROWTH, EVEN AS COMMENTATORS ARE ADVOCATING SOME LENIENCY IN THE FISCAL CONSOLIDATION DRIVE, THE REALITY IS THAT ALREADY, THERE IS SUBSTANTIAL RELAXATION THROUGH IT IS GOING UNRECOGNISED. UNDER THE 'BUSINESS AS USUAL' SCENARIO, THE ECONOMY MAY FACE CATASTROPHIC CONSEQUENCES. THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD RECOGNISE THAT THE PROBLEM EXISTS AND STOP FUDGING ITS ACCOUNTS. BUT THIS BY ITSELF WON'T HELP ”

Including this, the FD for 2018-19 would have been 5.7 per cent instead of 3.4 per cent reported in the Budget. During 2017-18 also, according to the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), the FD was suppressed by 2.4 per cent, courtesy EBRs.

The current year for which the FD target is kept at 3.3 per cent (same as the target for 2018-19), will also end up with a repeat of the scenario in the previous two years.

Let us look at how slippage from the target is likely to pan out. First, at the time of the Budget presentation, the FD projection at 3.3 per cent or about ₹700,000 crore in value term was based on a nominal GDP growth of 12 per cent — from ₹188,00,000 crore during 2018-19 to ₹211,00,000 crore during 2019-20. Against this, the actual growth is estimated to be 7.5 per cent implying a GDP of about ₹202,00,000 crore during 2019-20. Even if the deficit were to be kept at ₹700,000 crore, as percentage of the lower than initially projected GDP or ₹202,00,000 crore (or "denominator" effect), this will be 3.46 per cent.

That apart, even in absolute terms, the deficit is expected to be much higher than ₹700,000 crore. First, given the slow pace of tax collection so far till November 2019 — both direct and indirect — and little prospect of any major recovery in the remaining four months, the collection during the year is expected to fall short of the Budget estimate by about ₹200,000 crore. Second, the proceeds of disinvestment are expected to miss the target by a whopping ₹80,000 crore (the Budget estimate of ₹1,05,000 crore was based largely on strategic sale of BPCL, Air India and so on which is unlikely to materialise before March 31, 2020).

So, the total shortfall in collection — on both these counts — adds up to ₹2,80,000 crore. Add to this, fertiliser subsidy arrears of about ₹60,000 crore (according to the industry body Fertiliser Association of India); unpaid food sub-

sidy bills of the FCI at ₹60,000 crore and about ₹30,000 crore as unpaid fuel subsidy bills to OMCs. That takes the grand total to ₹430,000 crore. This will push the actual deficit to ₹1130,000 crore which translates to 5.6 per cent. This does not capture the EBRs used to fund the Government's welfare schemes. If, that is included then, the deficit would be even higher.

Taking a "fair" and "realistic" view of all receipts and expenditure of the Union Government, its fiscal deficit is thus turning out to be almost double the three per cent target handed out by the NK Singh Committee. Though, in the balance sheet, it may still show a figure close to the target and brandish that it is sticking to the fiscal consolidation glide path, that is made possible through an act of skulduggery. But, this is not a sustainable situation.

Apart from the spillover effect on PSUs, other agencies of the Government such as the FCI and others, through whom subsidy is administered (e.g. fertiliser manufacturers) who are made to bear the brunt by way of liquidity problems, interest cost, recurring losses and so on, the most serious damage is done due to the "complacency" this breeds with regard to fiscal management. When, the target is achieved without actually bringing about reduction in expenditure or boosting revenue or a combination of both, why would our planners and policymakers take credible measures in that direction?

For instance, a major reason for the ballooning subsidy on urea is its ridiculously low MRP (the current price is just 10 per cent higher than it was in 2002). This is despite the recommendation of the Expenditure Reforms Commission (ERC) in 2000 to increase steps to eliminate the gap between the cost and price over five years. No action on this front implies increasing subsidy in the face of ever-increasing cost. But, by rolling over payments year-after-year and showing less in the Budget, the man-

darins in the Finance Ministry skirt the real issue.

Likewise, by not releasing food subsidy dues to FCI and showing less expenditure in the Budget, they run away from dealing with the real factors viz. ridiculously low selling price of food grain, high inefficiency in handling operations by agencies and giving millions of non-deserving access to the food security system.

The same holds for oil subsidy (mainly LPG and kerosene).

In the backdrop of the slowdown in growth, even as commentators are advocating some leniency in the fiscal consolidation drive, the reality is that already, there is substantial relaxation though it is going unrecognised. Under the "business as usual" scenario, the economy may face catastrophic consequences. The Government should act before it is too late. For that, it should recognise that the problem exists and stop fudging its accounts. But, this by itself won't help.

This has to be followed up by some hardcore reforms such as removal of controls in key areas such as fertilisers, food, fuel and power, giving subsidy through direct benefit transfer (DBT), substantial pruning of the number of beneficiaries under welfare schemes and removing inefficiencies at various levels in the supply chain. This will require shedding populism and cracking down on vested interest (especially corrupt politicians and bureaucrats who are gaining a lot from the existing dispensation) with alacrity.

Modi should show the gumption to crack the whip. Having an absolute majority in the Parliament and four-and-a-half years to go, he can afford to do. Even so, time and again, he has reiterated his commitment to do things in the overall national interest even if it leads to a political backlash. Hence, he should go ahead.

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

# Unlock the Capital's economic potential

Regularising unauthorised colonies is a long-standing issue that needs to be resolved soon because not only will it benefit the people living in these areas but will also add to the Government's coffers and provide an entry point for residents into the formal financial markets



PERNA PRABHAKAR

Delhi's urban planning policies have been characterised by the inability of the agencies concerned to facilitate adequate supply of affordable, formal housing stock for its residents. As a result, informal housing has crept up across large parts of the national Capital. Unauthorised Colonies (UACs) are one form of such informal housing categories and have grown at an unprecedented rate — from 110 in 1961, to nearly 1,800 colonies today. These UACs cater largely to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Low Income Groups (LIG) that reside in the city.

While numerous efforts have been made to regularise these colonies to

address problems emanating from their informality, the situation has barely improved. This has been a result of institutional multiplicity coupled with the political motives of elected representatives at various levels.

Political establishments target the UAC population for garnering votes and make promises about regularisation and development. However, once elected, they fail to deliver on them.

In 2008, just before the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, the then Central Government issued a notification to regularise UACs and invited applications from these colonies. However, the process went nowhere post applications.

This time, the Narendra Modi-led BJP Government at the Centre, close to the Delhi Assembly elections in February 8, has passed a Bill in the Parliament to confer ownership rights on 40 lakh people living in unauthorised colonies. In this regard, Prime Minister Modi addressed a rally in New Delhi and said, "We took the initiative to do the work which many previous Governments did not do."

As per the Bill, these rights will be conferred for built-up plots as well as

vacant plots on payment of nominal charges.

Subsequently, any owner of a 100 sq mt residential plot in an unauthorised colony will have to pay at least ₹19,980 (depending on the zone in which the colony falls) to acquire the ownership certificate. This addresses the affordability concern in case of the UAC population while attempting to recover the land cost from the residents of these colonies.

This measure can have positive benefits for the city's economy. Implementing this notification can provide an entry point for the residents into the formal financial markets. This affirmed ownership can enable property owners to seek collateral against their houses. Such a move is expected to add around 800,000 potential customers to the housing loans market, providing the necessary push to the national Capital's economy.

With the registration of UAC households, the decision is likely to boost further formal transactions, hence adding to the Government's stamp duty revenue.

However, the Bill does not offer any clarity on the status of transaction of a plot/house/property in the existing colony.

This clarity is important to solve the issue of creating a formal and affordable housing market in these colonies. In the absence of clear information, it may be assumed that with the conferment of the ownership rights to a UAC plot owner, the subsequent registration of sale deed will take place at the conventional circle rates of the colony.

In this case, the resident living in an UAC household acquires the ownership rights of a 100 sq mt plot for at least ₹19,980; however he/she would be selling the same property for ₹1.6 crore, based on conventional circle rates.

This begs the question — do properties in these localities really merit this price, given the inadequate infrastructure? In this regard, to maintain a balanced buyer-seller dynamics, policymakers should reconsider the transaction prices for these households. Without this necessary revision, it is possible that these prices create an excess supply condition and consequently distort the market.

Another route through which this Bill is likely to inflate the Government's revenue is through Property Tax obligation for the registered UAC households.

Although the notification is silent on the issue of Property Tax collection from these colonies, the forthcoming Bill is likely to offer clarity in this regard. With legal ownership, the UAC residents will be obliged to pay the annual property tax, which will be a significant contributor to its maintenance services.

To reap these possible economic gains from the Bill, it is vital that the implementation of the entire process is not complex. From the perspective of the applicants, the suggested process involves certain tools and techniques that are likely to be beyond their understanding, given their socio-economic profile. Thus, training and awareness would be required to make the programme successful and the Delhi Government must take the lead on it by substantiating the need for institutional coordination.

Discussions with a few residents of UACs in Delhi have brought out that given their past experience, residents are still apprehensive about the actual implementation of the Bill and have not gone ahead with the application process on the online portal. In some cases, people are not even aware of the procedural require-

ment. This is reflected by the fact that there are only a handful of applications on the DDAs portal — 166 out of around 800,000 households in the city. Against this pessimistic situation, it is imperative that for the desired success rate of this policy, volunteers are appointed to assist the UAC residents in the process. As of now, there are only 25 help desks and they are very unlikely to serve the purpose of efficiently facilitating the process.

Effective implementation of this proposed policy can unlock the substantial economic potential of the city's land and housing markets.

The issue of UACs in Delhi has gone on for far too long and it is high time that it gets resolved for better economic outcomes. Whether the vicious circle around policy implementation for unauthorised colonies — with vote bank politics being the central point — will be broken this time around is likely to get clear after the Delhi Assembly elections.

(The writer is an Associate Fellow at the National Council of Applied Economic Research. The views expressed in this article are personal)

# AGR ROW Telecom stocks mixed after SC accepts pleas

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of telcos' on Tuesday ended the session on a mixed note after the SC agreed to list next week telecom firms' fresh pleas, seeking a fresh schedule of payment of statutory dues to the DoT.

Shares of Vodafone Idea zoomed over 24 per cent to ₹6.04 during the day. Later, the stock shed some of its gains to settle at ₹5.92, up 21.18 per cent over previous close on the BSE.

On the NSE, the scrip rose as much as 24.74 per cent to ₹6.05. It settled 22.68 per cent up at ₹5.95.

Moreover, the spurt in volume was more than 2.16 times on the BSE and the stock has gained over 30 per cent in last three trading sessions.

On the other hand, Bharti Airtel stock ended marginally up by 0.41 per cent to ₹511.35 on the BSE.

On the NSE, the scrip lost 0.07 per cent to close at ₹508.35.

The SC agreed to list next week the fresh pleas of telecom firms, including Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and Tata Teleservices, seeking a fresh schedule of payment of statutory dues to the tune of ₹1.47L cr to the Telecom sector

Tata Teleservices (Maharashtra) stock settled 1.15 per cent lower at ₹2.59 on the BSE and ended flat at ₹2.60 on the NSE.

Meanwhile, shares of Reliance Industries, the parent firm of Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd, gained 0.13 per cent to close at ₹1,533.95 on the BSE and 0.17 per cent to ₹1,535 on the NSE.

"It is learnt that telecom majors have moved the Supreme Court in a bid to delay payments that are due on January 23. This is after the Supreme Court last week rejected the pleas of telecom companies with regards to October verdict on adjusted

gross revenue (AGR).

"However, telecom players have got a fresh lease of life as the apex court has agreed to listen to pleas with regards to payment of statutory dues next week. In case of a negative outcome, the telecom sector will essentially move towards duopoly kind of market benefiting Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio largely and the viability of other weaker players will be questioned amid uncertainty," said Paras Bothra, President of Equity Research, Ashika Stock Broking.

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to list next week the fresh pleas of telecom firms, including Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and Tata Teleservices, seeking a fresh schedule of payment of statutory dues to the tune of ₹1.47 lakh crore to the Department of Telecommunications.

The telcos said they wanted an open court hearing on their fresh pleas with regard to working out fresh schedule of payment of their dues.

# Trump touts 'great American comeback' 2nd phase of US-China trade deal soon: Trump

PTI ■ DAVOS

Shrugging off his impeachment trial back home, US President Donald Trump came out all guns blazing at the WEF summit here on Tuesday as he lauded the unprecedented economic boom in the United States and exhorted other nations to follow the American example of lower taxes and reduced regulations.

In his characteristic style, Trump also claimed that he shares an "extraordinary" relationship with Chinese President Xi Jinping and negotiations for the second phase of the US-China trade deal will commence soon.

Without directly mentioning climate change, Trump said he believed forecasts of apocalypse by the "perennial prophets of doom" were wrong.

In a special address at the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual summit, Trump said since he last addressed Davos two years ago, the US has enjoyed the "great American comeback" that he had predicted.

"Today I am proud to declare that the United States is in the midst of an economic boom the like of which has never been seen before," he said.

The American dream is back and better than ever, Trump said.

According to him, 11 million jobs have been gained by America since his election and average unemployment rate is the lowest for the tenure of any



President Donald Trump delivers the opening remarks at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland on Tuesday

US President in history.

Talking about reforms undertaken by his government, he said, "I knew that if we unleashed the potential of our people, cut taxes, slashed regulation, fixed broken trade deals and fully tapped American energy, that prosperity would come thundering back and that is exactly what happened."

"Years of economic stagnation have given way to a roaring geyser of opportunity," he added.

"We have launched a historic step of removing job killing regulations. We are removing all archaic laws. Today I urge the nations to follow our example and liberate their citizens from the shackles of bureaucracy and other archaic laws. There is no better place on the earth than the United States," the President asserted.

Amid simmering trade tensions between the US and China, Trump said the relationship with China has never been better. "We went through a rough patch, but things are good now," he remarked.

The first phase of the trade deal between the two economic majors was signed recently, which has helped in reducing trade tensions which have been a major concern for the global economy.

Trump added that he shares a great relationship with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"My relationship with Xi is extraordinary. He's for China, I'm for the US but other than that, we love each other," the American president said.

The second phase of negotiations for the US-China trade deal would begin soon and the administration is focussing on trade, which was neglected by his predecessors, Trump noted.

## BUSINESS CORNER

HEALTH NEEDS TO BE ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL: MANDAVIYA



New Delhi: Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya is on four-day official visit to Davos to attend World Economic Forum. On his first day, Minister attended the High-level round table of UNAIDS (The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS) on the theme "Access for all: Leveraging Innovations, Investments and Partnerships for Health". UNAIDS provides the strategic direction, advocacy, coordination and technical support needed to catalyse and connect leadership from governments, the private sector and communities to deliver life-saving HIV services. UNAIDS is leading the global effort to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Minister Mansukh Mandaviya in a high-level round table discussed about what Government of India has done for Health Access to All in the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He mentioned various schemes initiated by Government of India for "Creating a Healthy India". He deliberated about the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (Ayushman Bharat) — the largest healthcare programme in the world and Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana — to provide affordable quality medicines for all. In a one-hour long discussion Minister Mandaviya stated that, "Health needs to be accessible for all and innovative technologies and solutions can play a key role, including in bridging economic inequalities." In 2015, Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has delivered his key-note address in United Nations on "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

PTI ■ MUMBAI  
New Delhi: Power Exchange India Limited (PXIL), India's first institutionally promoted Power Exchange has unveiled its new technology-based Trading Platform — PRATYAY, which went live on Tuesday. The tech-enabled platform aims to ease participation and provide customer delight for trading on the exchange.

# Need to have fairer, more equitable terms in trade relations: Goyal

PTI ■ DAVOS

Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said India is working on ways to have fairer and more equitable terms in its trade relationships with various countries. Speaking here at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2020, the commerce and industry minister also called for greater cooperation among various nations to realise the huge growth prospects in the Indian Ocean region and also for tackling the important issue of climate change.

Goyal said the RCEP in its present form was clearly an unworkable agreement. "Any pact needs to take into account several factors. India is grappling with a huge trade deficit, particularly with China and many other nations in the region," he said.

For the first time, India demonstrated that trade cannot be dictated by diplomacy, Goyal said, referring to India's decision to pull out of the RCEP. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) has had to factor in several diversities among partners, but India has serious concerns about climate change and is seeking greater

cooperation on fair terms, he asserted. Goyal was speaking at a Strategic Outlook session on "The Indian Ocean Rim".

"We are like a pivot for the Indian Ocean and we believe this region has huge potential. At the same time, India is very much concerned about the issue of climate change.

"Going forward, the entire grouping around the Indian Ocean will play a very important role, while keeping in mind fair and equitable distribution. India also expects greater cooperation among various nations on climate change," he said.

Goyal further said, "We in India are also working on how to put in place more equitable terms in our trade relations with various countries."

On whether India can still join RCEP, Goyal said the country had said at that time too that it will not be able to join the trade deal in its current form. If nations provide adequate transparency safeguards and if non-tariff barriers are addressed, there is always scope for a fresh dialogue, he added.

The Indian Ocean Rim sees two-thirds of the world's oil shipments pass through its waters and is home to half of the world's container ships that support 2.7 billion people.

# ₹ trips for 4th day, down 10 paise at 71.21 against \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Indian rupee logged its fourth straight loss on Tuesday, dropping another 10 paise to settle at 71.21 against the US dollar amid concerns over IMF revising downwards India's growth forecast and weak quarterly earnings.

Besides, heavy sell-offs in domestic equity market for a second session in a row and the outbreak of a deadly virus in China also impacted forex market sentiment.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened on a weak note at 71.17. During the day, it saw a high of 71.13 and a low of 71.24.

The Indian currency finally settled at 71.21, lower by 10 paise against its previous close.

However, weaker greenback overseas and easing crude oil prices helped the rupee restrict its losses to some extent. The domestic unit had settled at 71.11 against the American currency on Monday.

"Rupee fell following sell-off in domestic equities and broad strength in the US dollar," said Gaurang Somaiyaa, Forex & Bullion Analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

# Govt approves up to 100% FDI in Bharti Airtel

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Department of Telecom (DoT) has approved raising of foreign direct investment in Bharti Airtel to 100 per cent from 49 per cent allowed earlier, a stock exchange filing of the company said on Tuesday.

The company also has the approval of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) that allowed foreign investors to hold up to 74 per cent stake in the company. "Bharti Airtel Limited has received the approval from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) vide its letter dated January 20, 2020, for increasing the limit of foreign investment up to 100 per cent of the paid-up capital of the company," the filing

said. The approval comes few days before the company has to clear statutory liabilities of up to nearly ₹35,586 crore, of which ₹21,682 crore is licence fee and another ₹13,904.01 crore is spectrum dues (excluding the dues of Telenor and Tata Teleservices).

"The aforesaid approval read together with the RBI approval dated July 3, 2014 granted to the company allows the FPIs/FIIs to invest upto 74 per cent of the paid up capital of the company," it said.

# Airports may incur ₹650cr/yr loss if duty-free liquor restricted: APAO

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Indian airports are likely to incur a revenue loss of ₹650 crore per annum and could potentially turn defaulters if the commerce ministry's proposals on the sale of liquor and cigarette at duty-free shops are accepted, an industry body warned on Tuesday.

The Association of Private Airport Operators (APAO) in a statement said that if non-aero revenues are restricted by an act of government, the new operators will find the airports unviable and may even renege on their contracts.

Flughafen Zurich AG, which is one of the largest European airport operators, has just re-entered the domestic airport space, bagging the contract for the greenfield Jewar Airport in UP while

Adani group has been mandated to run six AAI-owned airports in the country.

The Commerce Ministry, as part of its proposals to the finance ministry ahead of the budget, has recommended restricting purchase of tax-free alcohol to one bottle against two at present and prohibiting completely the purchase of cigarette cartons, from one carton of 100 sticks now, at duty-free shops at the arrival area of the international airports in the country.

"Such a move will have disastrous effects on the Indian aviation industry across all stakeholders including airports, airlines, passengers and duty-free operators," the APAO said.

Liquor accounts for majority of sales of duty-free operators. Vehemently opposing the proposal, the body said, "It

will make their operations unviable due to firm commitments towards fixed fee and fixed expenses to be met out of lower revenue base."

Share of import of liquor for sale to arrival passengers in total import is minuscule — 0.0213 per cent or ₹97 million of the total \$460 billion imports, it said adding that "even doing away with entire imports will not serve any purpose."

According to the association, the proposed restrictions will lead to an increase in passenger charges, hurt airport industry and may "encourage smuggling," besides a revenue loss of about ₹650 crore per annum at all airports.

The revenue loss at airports will impact the operators' financial ratings and consequently hamper expansion plans, it said.

## SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely Shilpi D/o Chintu R/o A-58, Gali no.-4, Vidyapati Nagar, Rohini, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped from the area of P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi Since 01.01.2020. In this regard, a case DD No. 38-A dated 02.01.2020 has been registered at P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi. The description of the missing girl is as under.



SHILPI

Age: 20 Years Complexion: Fair, Height: 5', Face: Oval, Wearing: Unknown. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing girl 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- 25489080

DP/3634/RD/2020

## SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely Nisha, D/o Jai Nath, R/o D-279, Tripathi, Enclave, Prem Nagar-II, Rohini, Delhi Age: 17½ years, Height: 5', Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Wearing: Red Colour Suit & Salwar and Green Sweater and Green Colour Jutti in Foot has been missing since 28.12.2019 from the area of PS Prem Nagar. In this regard a FIR No. 694/19 dated 29.12.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following.

E-Mail: cbc@cbi.gov.in Website: http://cbi.nic.in Ph: 011-24368639 P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi Ph: 011-25489080

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 DP/3613/RD/2020

# Asean Secretariat invites India for RCEP meeting next month in Bali

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Asean Secretariat has invited India to participate in a meeting called in Bali on February 3 and 4 on RCEP agreement to sort out concerns of New Delhi, an official said.

India at a meeting in November last year in Bangkok decided to withdraw from this mega free-trade agreement as its concerns were not addressed adequately by the RCEP.

"India has received the invitation for the meeting but it has not yet taken any decision on this," the official said.

The meeting in Bali will be held at a chief negotiator level.

The RCEP, comprising 10-member Asean bloc and six other countries India, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, is engaged in negotiations for a free-trade pact. Meanwhile, speaking at a WEF session in Davos, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said, "We believe if RCEP nations provide adequate protection against circumvention of product origin rules, adequate transparency is brought in the trading practices, if non-tariff bar-

riers can be addressed, there is scope for discussion".

Japan had earlier indicated that efforts were on to make India join the ambitious Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), saying all member countries of the grouping were committed to address New Delhi's concerns.

Speaking at the Raisina Dialogue earlier in the month, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said India had not closed its doors on the RCEP and would carry out a cost-benefit analysis to evaluate its merit.

# CII suggests easing of certain norms to enhance liquidity for NBFCs, HFCs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Industry body CII on Tuesday recommended easing of certain norms for enhancing liquidity for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and housing finance companies (HFCs).

It has suggested to ease ECB norms with a higher limit for investment grade-rated companies equivalent to sovereign rating up to maybe \$1,500 million from the current uniform limit of \$750 million for all NBFCs.

## SEARCH OF MISSING

General public is hereby informed that one girl (depicted in the photo), namely: Sapna, D/o: Sh. Raj Kumar, R/o: H.No. T-2573, Durga Mohalla, Baljeet Nagar, New Delhi, Aged: 17 years, has been missing since 24.12.2019. A case vide FIR No. 422/19 u/s 363 IPC, Dated 29.12.2019, has been registered at P.S. Patel Nagar, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:



Sapna

Height: 5'3", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Long, Built: Medium, Identification Mark: A Tattoo mark at right hand wrist, Clothing: Black Colour Jacket, Blue Colour Jeans and Golden Colour Sandals in feet.

Any person is having any information/clue about this missing girl, may inform SHO, Patel Nagar, Delhi at E-mail: cbc@cbi.gov.in or website : http://cbi.nic.in Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641

S.H.O. P.S. Patel Nagar, Delhi Ph: 011-25872637, 8750870434

DP/6884/CD/2020.

## SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General Public is hereby informed that one lady namely: Rekha, W/o: Tek Chand, R/o: A-1093, Agar Nagar, Prem Nagar-III, Rohini, Delhi, Age: 30 Years, Height: 5', Face: Round, Complexion: Shallow, Wearing: Black Colour Jeans Pant & Pink Colour Sweater has been missing/kidnapped since 03.01.2020 from the area of P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 31-A, Dated 05.01.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing/kidnapped lady but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone have any information about this missing/kidnapped lady please inform the undersigned.

Web-site : http://cbi.nic.in E-Mail ID: cbc@cbi.gov.in Ph: 011-24368639 P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi Ph: 011-25489080

DP/3648/RD/2020

## SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a female namely Babita W/o Tara Chand, R/o H.No. 129-130, B-Block, Jain Colony, Ranikhera, Delhi, Age : 25 yrs., Height : 5 ft., Complexion : Wheatish, Face : Round, Wearing : Black Colour Jeans Pant and Pink Colour Sweater, has been missing / kidnapped since 06.01.2020 from the area of P.S. Prem Nagar. In this regard a case DD No. 26-A dated 10.01.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local Police to trace out the missing / kidnapped female but no clue has come to light so far.

if anyone have any information about this missing / kidnapped female please inform undersigned Website: http://cbi.nic.in, Email: cbc@cbi.gov.in, Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641, Fax: 011-24368639

SHO P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi Ph: 011-25489080, 9868872688

DP/3649/RD/2020.

## SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that a boy namely Iqbal, S/o: Sh. Jafrudeen, R/o: A-69, Kailash Vihar, Kirari Suleman Nagar, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped since 02.01.2020 from the area of P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi. In this regard FIR No. 02/2020 dated 04.01.2020 has been registered at P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing/kidnapped boy but no clue has come to light so far. The description of missing/kidnapped boy is as under:

Name: Iqbal, Age: 11 Years, Height: 4', Face: Round, Complexion: Shallow, Wearing: Blue Colour Jacket, Blue Jeans and plastic chappal in feet.

If anyone have any information about this missing/kidnapped boy please inform P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi. Web: http://cbi.nic.in, Email: cbc@cbi.gov.in Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639

SHO Police Station, Aman Vihar, Delhi, Ph: 011-23014046, 23015218

DP/3636/RD/2020

# Passenger vehicle retail sales dip 9 pc in Dec

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Automobile dealers' body AFADA on Tuesday said retail sales of passenger vehicles in December 2019 declined 9 per cent to 2,15,716 units year-on-year, as even the best offers failed to lift weak consumer sentiments. According to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), passenger vehicles (PV) sales stood at 2,36,586 units in December 2018.

Two-wheeler sales declined 16 per cent to 12,64,169 units last month as compared with 15,00,545 units in December 2018. Commercial vehicle sales declined 21 per cent to 67,793 units as compared to 85,833 units in December 2018.

Three-wheelers sales, however, rose one per cent to 58,324 units last month. Total sales across categories declined 15 per cent to 16,06,002 units in December 2019 as against 18,80,995 units in the year-ago month. FADA President Ashish Harsharaj Kale said December sales de-growth was not on expected lines as the inquiry levels all through the month were quite robust.

Consumer sentiment continues to be very weak as customers did not conclude on the purchase even after taking the efforts of inquiring and despite



the best offers being available, he added. "The sharp decline in growth has denied the dealer community an opportunity to reduce its BS-IV inventory making the transition to BS-VI trickier," Kale said.

With such weak consumer sentiment, FADA recommends a very cautious approach to its members with serious focus on BS-IV inventory liquidation, he added. "FADA will work towards seeking relief from the Honourable Supreme Court for the BS-IV inventory of its members as with such weak consumer demand the near term retail sales are unprofitable, making it extremely difficult for our members to continue the current business

and also ensure a nil BS-IV inventory on March 31," Kale noted. The commercial vehicle and two-wheeler inventory still remains a concern, he added. Besides, liquidity still remains a concern for the dealers' community as well as for the retail customer as banking industry continues to be in cautious mode, Kale said highlighting the challenges. "Equal importance needs to be given to availability of reasonably liberal credit, especially in a developing country like ours where the growth is driven by first time buyers or individuals and businesses looking to expand beyond their current capacity," he added.

# Sensex, Nifty tumble on tepid Q3 earnings, GDP growth concerns

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mumbai (PTI): Market benchmark Sensex furthered losses for the second straight session on Tuesday as investors fretted over subdued corporate results and IMF revising downwards India's growth forecast. At the closing bell, the 30-share Sensex was down 205.10 points, or 0.49 per cent, at 41,323.81; while the NSE Nifty settled 54.70 points, or 0.45 per cent, lower at 12,169.85 — the third loss for the gauge in a row.

Indian bourses also remained under pressure tracking weaker global markets after the outbreak of a new deadly virus in China spooked investors. On the Sensex chart, Tata Steel was the top loser, shedding 3.01 per cent, followed by M&M, Maruti, Asian Paints, PowerGrid, ITC and Axis Bank. On the other hand, Ultratec Cement, Kotak Bank, Bharti Airtel, HDFC, IndusInd Bank and ONGC ended with gains. Sectorally, BSE power, realty, metal, auto, utilities, FMCG, bankex and finance indices ended up to 1.47 per cent. While telecom, tech and energy indices settled in the green. In the broader market, BSE midcap fell 0.21 per cent, while smallcap closed flat.

Besides rising concerns over growth in India, global investors turned risk-averse after confirmation of a deadly SARS-like virus in China. "Indian markets

continued to fall for third consecutive day on the back of weak Asian and European markets. Global agencies are slashing India's growth rates as domestic demand growth has slowed down more than anticipated earlier. Earnings season has started and the growth has not been very encouraging from the few Nifty companies that have declared their results so far," Hemang Kapasi, Portfolio Manager - Equity Investment Products, Sanctum Wealth Management, said.

All eyes are now on the budget and government initiatives to revive the lagging economy, he added. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Monday lowered growth estimate for India to 4.8 per cent for 2019, citing stress in the non-bank financial sector and weaker rural income growth as the major factors for the downward revision. "Investors are profit booking in mid and small caps post the decent pre-budget rally. Some subdued results in Q3 compared to the solid expectation has triggered a consolidation in the market. We believe this is a rational reaction of the market which will hold in the short-term and can reverse as per the final outcome of Budget & Q3FY20 results," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services Ltd, said.

# Zomato acquires Uber Eats business in India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Zomato on Tuesday said it has acquired the Indian business of Uber Eats in an all-stock deal that will give Uber 9.99 per cent stake in the Indian food delivery and restaurant discovery platform. Uber Eats app in India will discontinue operations and direct restaurants, delivery partners, and users of the Uber Eats apps to the Zomato platform, effective Tuesday, Zomato said in a statement.

The deal marks possible consolidation in the highly competitive and price-sensitive online food delivery market where most players are in the red. In a regulatory filing to the BSE, Info Edge (India) - a shareholder in Zomato - said its shareholding in Zomato will stand reduced to about 22.71 per cent on fully converted and diluted basis upon closing of the transaction. The deal comes days after Zomato had raised USD 150 million in funding from existing investor Ant Financial, an Alibaba affiliate, at a USD 3 billion valuation. Post money valuation of Zomato is USD 3.55 billion, sources in know of the matter told PTI, adding that this transaction will add to a total of over 50 million orders per month on its plat-



form, giving it around 55 per cent market share. "We are proud to have pioneered restaurant discovery and to have created a leading food delivery business across more than 500 cities in India. This acquisition significantly strengthens our position in the category," Zomato Founder and CEO Deepinder Goyal said.

Uber Eats, which entered India in 2017, has about 26,000 restaurants listed on its platform from 41 cities. On accessing Uber Eats app, users were shown a message saying they can still use Uber Eats if they are travelling outside India. Discussions between Zomato and Uber have been on for months. Facing stiff competition from Zomato and Swiggy, Uber Eats had been making losses. Uber had projected an operating loss of Rs 2,197 crore in its food delivery business for the five months through December 2019,

according to a valuation report prepared by KPMG affiliate BSR and was part of regulatory filings. According to sources, Uber Eats India business contributed three per cent of the global gross bookings but accounted for over 25 per cent of adjusted EBITDA losses for the first three quarters of 2019. With sale of the food business in India, Uber can now focus on the rides business and driving it towards profitability, one of the sources said. They also said that 245 full time employees of Uber Eats will be affected and some of these people could be absorbed in other roles in Uber.

"India remains an exceptionally important market to Uber and we will continue to invest in growing our local rides business, which is already the clear category leader. We have been very impressed by Zomato's ability to grow rapidly in a capital-efficient manner and we wish them continued success," Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi said in the statement. Zomato is a restaurant review, restaurant discovery, food delivery and dining out transactions platform, providing in-depth information for over 1.5 million restaurants across 24 countries.

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	12195.30	12230.05	12162.30	12169.85	-54.70
INFRAEAL	224.40	243.55	224.40	241.00	19.15
ZEELE	269.00	286.70	267.15	283.00	12.25
BPCAL	457.60	466.50	455.05	463.50	6.35
COALINDIA	201.15	205.25	201.15	202.35	1.20
KOTAKBANK	1605.00	1630.60	1585.20	1627.35	9.45
HDFC	2443.00	2485.90	2432.00	2465.00	16.35
ULTRACEMCO	4455.00	4520.00	4440.00	4484.00	10.65
BRITANNIA	3100.00	3130.00	3077.25	3120.30	9.85
TECHM	777.25	783.40	775.00	779.50	1.30
RELIANCE	1528.60	1545.85	1522.00	1535.00	2.65
INDUSINDBK	1332.00	1350.00	1320.00	1334.05	2.10
TCS	2169.95	2186.35	2158.05	2172.35	2.00
BAJAJFINSV	9883.95	9825.00	9808.20	9872.45	-0.30
SBN	313.80	316.95	312.00	313.90	-0.10
HINDUNILVR	2059.75	2075.00	2052.15	2062.00	-0.85
BHARTIARTL	510.00	515.00	504.40	508.35	-0.35
ONGC	123.05	124.50	122.40	122.80	-0.10
ADANIPORIS	378.80	382.00	375.30	379.70	-0.35
DREDDY	3055.55	3079.80	3035.85	3052.00	-7.60
SUNPHARMA	448.00	451.75	446.00	448.00	-1.45
BAJAJ-AUTO	3096.00	3119.00	3085.50	3099.00	-10.70
GRASIM	779.00	781.10	763.45	770.00	-2.80
BAJFINANCE	4149.95	4186.10	4117.05	4135.00	-17.60
WIPRO	247.90	249.20	246.00	246.85	-1.15
GAIL	128.35	129.55	126.30	127.20	-0.60
IT	1304.75	1313.90	1300.45	1302.10	-7.50
NTPC	118.40	119.55	116.95	117.50	-0.75
ICICIBANK	532.95	540.25	530.20	531.15	-3.70
TITAN	1183.45	1183.90	1161.00	1179.15	-8.70
HEROMOTOCO	2410.00	2412.65	2375.00	2398.00	-17.60
YESBANK	38.60	39.20	38.10	38.35	-0.30
HDFCRANK	1250.00	1250.00	1238.40	1244.90	-7.00
INFY	768.45	775.00	760.75	761.15	-1.30
NESTLEIND	15361.05	15501.60	15200.00	15270.25	-147.00
HINDALCO	206.00	208.50	204.65	205.10	-1.20
HCLTECH	589.30	593.25	582.35	582.70	-6.50
UPL	582.80	582.80	572.20	578.00	-6.60
AXISBANK	726.35	729.60	716.05	717.45	-9.75
ITC	241.45	241.45	238.00	238.45	-3.45
CIPLA	478.95	479.55	472.00	473.00	-7.15
JSWSTEEL	270.00	270.90	262.35	266.80	-4.55
EICHERMOT	21358.00	21475.00	20970.30	21005.00	-360.10
POWERGRID	203.65	204.30	199.00	201.05	-3.60
VEDL	157.00	158.40	153.55	154.05	-2.85
IOC	118.00	118.45	114.25	115.15	-2.35
MARUTI	7411.50	7434.65	7287.80	7297.90	-151.70
ASIANPAINT	1839.95	1842.55	1793.85	1809.00	-39.75
TATAMOTORS	195.50	196.40	190.20	192.45	-4.75
M&M	564.00	564.50	550.10	550.95	-16.25
TATASTEEL	487.80	487.80	473.50	474.50	-16.15

## BSE 500

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
SBN	313.95	316.80	312.10	313.65	-0.30
BHARTIARTL	509.10	515.00	504.40	511.35	-0.35
HINDUNILVR	2063.00	2074.40	2052.15	2056.95	-0.35
RELIANCE	1529.70	1545.95	1523.00	1533.95	-0.35
IDEA	5.34	6.04	5.34	5.92	KEI
QUESS	561.55	579.50	557.40	571.35	NMDC
HDFCLIFE	595.00	609.80	594.80	601.80	RAJESHXPO
IBULHSGFIN	292.00	305.80	292.00	301.10	HINDALCO
JINDALSTEL	179.00	187.00	176.20	185.75	HINDPETRO
HAVELLS	624.90	632.50	613.25	616.90	STRTECH
TATASTEEL	487.10	488.60	473.70	475.90	NCC
RELIANCE	325.00	342.95	321.80	341.40	PRESTIGE
ICICIBANK	534.85	540.40	530.30	531.00	ULTRACEMCO
CANFINHOME	396.10	407.20	396.10	404.10	RADICO
TINDIA	524.30	527.90	522.00	523.55	HEG
ZEELE	269.50	286.50	267.60	283.95	PNB
ITC	241.90	241.90	237.95	238.30	SCI
HDFCRANK	1255.00	1255.00	1239.00	1244.15	TATAMTRDVR
KOTAKBANK	1608.90	1630.70	1586.50	1625.95	TATAACOFFE
AMBUJACEM	206.75	209.85	205.00	207.50	HIFL
INDUSINDBK	1330.00	1350.25	1321.00	1336.80	HEROMOTOCO
TEAMLEASE	2771.85	2796.40	2721.60	2727.85	INDIANB
INFRAEAL	225.70	243.30	224.25	240.35	CHOLAHLDNG
STAR	394.70	396.05	388.40	391.70	UPL
TATAMOTORS	195.50	196.50	190.10	191.45	PHILPCARB
AXISBANK	725.05	729.50	716.20	717.75	SUDARSCHEM
BAJFINANCE	4149.95	4186.35	4120.00	4137.40	COALINDIA
CONCOR	551.50	553.60	550.00	551.35	BEL
YESBANK	38.55	39.20	38.10	38.35	LUPIN
DLF	259.00	259.00	255.10	257.05	RELCAPITAL
IOC	118.00	118.55	114.25	114.85	DREDDY
LRTH	116.80	119.50	116.20	119.10	ICICI
AVANTI	681.80	712.00	659.05	699.00	NITTECH
FEDERALBK	94.00	96.35	93.55	94.60	BIOCON
ASIANPAINT	1847.00	1847.00	1794.75	1810.25	COPAL
BEL	985.10	1019.55	978.30	999.50	APOLLOHOSP
TATAGLOBAL	382.90	389.60	379.25	385.80	GRASIM
LICHSGFIN	462.00	486.40	461.00	478.50	NESTLEIND
UPL	1575.00	1616.55	1562.35	1611.45	15420.00
CHOLAFIN	311.55	318.55	309.10	314.95	15500.10
PFIZER	808.00	810.00	798.05	802.10	15253.05
JUSTDIAL	574.20	592.40	563.75	575.45	15280.20
MARUTI	7410.00	7434.75	7290.00	7303.10	
MCX	1395.00	1442.00	1391.00	1399.65	
HDFC	2451.00	2486.40	2431.20	2464.50	
ASHOKLEY	84.55	86.60	83.65	86.30	
TCS	2174.95	2185.00	2165.00	2171.45	
PIDILITIND	1440.00	1440.00	1412.60	1414.90	
ICICIRULI	488.50	496.80	478.70	489.00	
GRANULES	147.20	152.70	138.00	139.65	
LT	1307.45	1313.60	1300.10	1302.60	
CARERATING	63.30	65.20	63.60	64.35	
SAIL	50.40	51.20	49.60	49.75	
PIIND	1412.00	1432.30	1412.00	1442.05	
IRB	115.90	119.70	110.50	116.90	
PNBHousing	530.00	562.80	526.00	551.75	
CANBK	217.35	221.35	217.30	219.15	
BPCAL	458.80	466.40	455.00	463.80	
MOTHERSUMI	136.00	139.45	133.95	138.45	
ACC	1496.05	1508.00	1488.15	1495.05	
RAIN	120.00	122.70	118.45	121.15	
HDFCAMC	3229.00	3240.00	3174.20	3178.90	
TITAN	1185.30	1185.30	1162.10	1176.85	
SBIILE	990.00	990.00	970.00	973.05	
BANKBARODA	94.95	95.75	94.10	94.75	
PPC	112.35	112.65	106.70	106.70	
BERGEPAINT	566.00	566.00	547.00	549.80	
ADANIPORIS	378.80	381.90	375.45	379.90	
DMART	1934.90	1958.65	1915.00	1916.85	
ADANIGREEN	199.20	206.75	193.00	202.20	
SUNPHARMA	449.00	451.60	446.20	447.30	
JUBLANT	61.00	63.00	60.45	62.15	
FORCEMOT	1464.00	1502.00	1452.20	1467.15	

Historic Trump impeachment trial begins in Senate

Washington: President Donald Trump's historic impeachment trial begins in earnest Tuesday in the Senate, with Democrats calling for his removal from office and Republicans determined to acquit him — and quickly, if possible.

election to help him win, and then tried to thwart a congressional probe of his behavior. It will be only the third time a president has endured an impeachment trial, after Andrew Johnson in 1868 and Bill Clinton in 1999.

responded in a 110-page brief submitted to the Senate on Monday. This echoes the repeated assertions of the 73-year-old real estate magnate that the saga is a political witch hunt and a hoax, and that his phone call with the Ukrainian leader was "perfect."

the power of his office to solicit foreign interference in our elections for his own personal political gain, thereby jeopardizing our national security, the integrity of our elections, and our democracy," the House managers said Saturday in a memorandum. They said the president's behavior "is the Framers' worst nightmare," referring to the authors of the US Constitution, and that Trump deserves to be removed from office.

Trump left late Monday for the economic forum in Davos, Switzerland. How long the trial will last is up in the air. The first order of business Tuesday will be to set the rules, such as how long they will hear the arguments of the House managers, or prosecutors; how long they will hear the defense; the time allotted for questions, submitted by the senators but read by Roberts; and whether they will call witnesses or seek other evidence.

Trump, who has repeatedly expressed scepticism about climate change, is set to give the first keynote address of Davos 2020 on Tuesday morning, on the same day as his impeachment trial opens at the Senate in Washington.

House managers, or prosecutors; how long they will hear the defense; the time allotted for questions, submitted by the senators but read by Roberts; and whether they will call witnesses or seek other evidence.

Thunberg, Trump to offer competing visions at climate-focused Davos

Davos: The starkly opposed visions of US President Donald Trump and Swedish teen activist Greta Thunberg on climate change will clash in Davos on Tuesday as the World Economic Forum tries to face up to the perils of global warming on its 50th meeting.

Trump, who has repeatedly expressed scepticism about climate change, is set to give the first keynote address of Davos 2020 on Tuesday morning, on the same day as his impeachment trial opens at the Senate in Washington.

Trump heading to Switzerland

Washington: When President Donald Trump's historic impeachment trial is called to order in the Senate this week, he won't be watching from inside the chamber or on television from the White House.

his ability to balance his anger over being impeached with a desire to project leadership on the world stage. Administration officials say Trump remains focused on serving the public. "The president's work doesn't stop just because of the impeachment sham," White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham said in an email.

Iran confirms 2 missiles fired at Ukraine airliner

Tehran: Iran has confirmed two missiles were fired at a Ukrainian airliner brought down this month, in a catastrophic error that killed all 176 people on board and sparked angry protests.

fired at the aircraft," Iran's Civil Aviation Organisation said in a preliminary report posted on its website late Monday. It said an investigation was ongoing to assess the bearing their impact had on the accident.

China coronavirus: Death toll rises to 6 as leaders warn officials against cover up

Beijing: At least six persons have died of the new SARS-like virus in China with top leaders warning officials against any cover up of the information on its outbreak even as the WHO is considering declaring an international public health emergency to combat the deadly illness.

India has already issued a travel warning. Several countries started screening travellers coming from China, especially from Wuhan to detect symptoms like fever.

China's National Health Commission on Monday confirmed for the first time that the infection could be transmitted from human-to-human. It said two people in Guangdong province had been infected this way.

Russian air strikes in Syria kill 15 civilians: Monitor

Beirut: Russian air strikes killed at least 15 civilians on Tuesday in northwestern Syria, as renewed violence tightened the noose around the country's last major rebel-held bastion and deepened an already dire humanitarian crisis.

regime-ally Russia on a rebel-held region in Aleppo's western countryside killed eight members of the same family sheltering in a house, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.



India has already issued a travel warning. Several countries started screening travellers coming from China, especially from Wuhan to detect symptoms like fever.

PUBLIC NOTICE: Notice is hereby given that a special General Body Meeting of the Mahalakshmi Multi State Cooperative Group Housing Society Ltd. shall be held on 23.02.2020 at 11a.m. At its office at H. No. 22, VPO - Mitraon, Najafgarh, New Delhi - 110043 to conduct election of Board of Directors of the Society.

But he said the missile operator who opened fire had been acting independently. The deadly blunder triggered days of student-led protests mainly in the Iranian capital. Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Friday that the demonstrations were unrepresentative of the Iranian people and accused the country's enemies of exploiting the air disaster for propaganda purposes.

Such a declaration, if made, will be seen as an urgent call for a coordinated international response in view of fears that millions of Chinese are travelling at home and abroad for the Chinese New Year and Spring Festival holidays starting from January 24.

China's National Health Commission on Monday confirmed for the first time that the infection could be transmitted from human-to-human. It said two people in Guangdong province had been infected this way.

On Tuesday, air strikes by regime-ally Russia on a rebel-held region in Aleppo's western countryside killed eight members of the same family sheltering in a house, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

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PAWRGRID POWERGRID: NOTICE: Approval under regulation-86 of CER (Conduct of Business) Regulations 1999 and CER (Terms and Conditions of Tariff) Regulations 2014 and CER (Terms and Conditions of Tariff) Regulations 2019 for (i) Truing up of transmission tariff for 2009-14 tariff block and (ii) Truing up of transmission tariff for 2014-19 tariff block and (iii) Determination of transmission tariff for 2019-24 tariff block in respect of combined Assets consisting of Asset-1: 765 kV S/C Moga-Bhiwani transmission line (DOCC: 1.6.2012). Asset-2: 765 kV S/C Jattikan-Bhiwani transmission line associated with 765 kV system (DOCC: 1.10.2012). Asset-3: L/L of both circuits of 400 kV D/C Barnauli-Munka-Bawana at Jattikan 765 kV sub-station, (DOCC: 1.10.2012). Asset-4: Jattikan 765 kV S/C Transmission Line, (DOCC: 1.5.2013). Asset-5: Agra-Meerut 765 kV S/C Transmission Line under 765 kV system (DOCC: 1.6.2013) covered under "765 kV System for central part of Northern Grid-1 in Northern Region".

Temporary appointment notice on contractual basis: (From the date of appointment till 31/05/2020) Every common person is informed that a lady teacher is required to teach in class nursery and KG for the academic Session 2019-20 at Montessori School of Deputy Inspector General of Police, Group Center, CRPF, Dadri road, Sutiana, Greater Noida-201306 and for the interview on 29/01/2020 at 11:30 am, the candidates will bring their original academic certificates, 02 passport size photos, bio-data and other documents and they will also produce a Bond that they will not leave work in mid session. Note: Detailed advertisement can be on the website of CRPF www.crpf.gov.in Please contact mobile no. 7906927135

EASTERN COALFIELDS LIMITED (A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited) Notice for 'e'- Auction of Scraps: M/s. MSTC Ltd., Kolkata is going to conducting e-auction for disposal of scraps in the month of February-2020 on the following dates on behalf of "Eastern Coalfields Ltd." (A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited). Physical Inspection of scrap & unseizable scrap lots: Till one day prior to Auction date.

2,000 missing persons during Lanka's civil war are 'dead', says Rajapaksa

Colombo: For the first time, Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has admitted that some 2,000 people who disappeared during the country's brutal civil war with Tamil Tiger rebels over a decade ago are "dead".

Resident Coordinator Hanaa Singer last week that after the necessary investigations are completed steps would be taken to issue death certificates to these missing persons, the Colombo Gazette reported.

least 100,000 lives. The Tamils alleged that thousands were massacred during the final stages of the war that ended in 2009 when the government forces killed Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) chief Velupillai Prabhakaran.

Taiwan gay couples urge foreign marriage rights after Tsai win

Taipei: Rights groups and gay couples called on Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen Tuesday to cement the island's reputation as a bastion of LGBT rights by recognising international same-sex marriages following her landslide re-election victory.

"I hope President Tsai can see the difficulties international couples face," said Lai Kai-li, whose partner is from conservative Malaysia. "We feel like our futures are in limbo right now and we can't really make any plans," she added.

15 dead, others missing, in DR Congo boat mishap

Kikwit, (DR Congo): Fifteen people died and more were missing after a boat capsized in high winds on a lake in western Democratic Republic of Congo, local sources said on Tuesday.

प्रेस विज्ञापित: मू०अ०स० 309/19 धारा 419/420/467/468/471/406/506 मा०द०फि० थाना कोतवाली जनपद आजमगढ़ (उ०प्र०) में वाचित पुल के अतिरिक्त शिखर मण्डारी वरु एन०के० मण्डारी हल पता 106/1-11 वार्ड नं० 9 कुशाग्रद बसना विहार थाना स्टेट कोलास दक्षिणी पूर्वी नई दिल्ली थाना पता म०न० 17 फाकेट-2 जशोला विहार थाना सारिता विहार दक्षिणी पूर्वी दिल्ली के विरुद्ध मा० न्यायलय सी०डी०एम० आजमगढ़ से दिनांक 30.10.19 को निना जमानती वाचट निर्गत किया गया था जिसकी वाग्लिा से बचने के लिये अतिरिक्त फिपे होने के कारण मा० न्यायलय द्वारा दिनांक 09.01.2020 को 82 सीआरपीसी का आदेश निर्गत करने हुये उक्तपत्रा की गयी है कि अतिरिक्त शिखर मण्डारी उपरोक्त से अपेक्षा की जाती है कि वह मा० न्यायलय के समक्ष शीघ्र उपस्थित हो। अन्यथा की स्थिति में मा० न्यायलय से आदेश प्राप्त कर कुकी की कार्यवाही की जायेगी।

PUBLIC NOTICE: It is notified for the information of general public that my client Mrs. Usha Madan W/o Late Subhash Chander Madan has the owner of 1/3rd undivided share of Property No. B-458, Plot No. 44, measuring total land 80 sq. yrd., Kharsa No. 630, Village-Basai Darapur, Sudershan Park Ext., New Delhi on the basis of Relinquishment Deed dated 27.08.2019 after death of Late Subhash Chander Madan. Survivor Certificate of Late Subhash Chander Madan has not been obtained. Any person having any right or interest on the basis of Relinquishment Deed/Survivor Certificate in respect of the said property are hereby required to give notice of the same to the undersigned 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 no binding on our Clients. C.K. Jha (Advocate) E-524, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110032. (M): 9811295674

Sircap: SIRCAP PAINTS INDIA LIMITED: Regd & Corporate Office: Plot No. 50, Phase-2, Badli, Industrial Area, Registered Office of the Company at Plot No. 50, Phase-2, Badli Industrial Area, Delhi-110034 to consider, inter-alia, the Unaudited Financial Results of the Company for the Quarter Ended on 31st December, 2019 and other business (s). For Further Details, Please visit the website of the Company (www.sircapaints.com) and National Stock Exchange of India Ltd (www.nseindia.com). For SIRCAP PAINTS INDIA LIMITED: Sd/- Sanjay Agarwal (DIN: 01302479) Chairman cum Managing Director

Manufacture and Supplying hard stone ballast: Tender Notice No. CON/2020/JAN/01; Dated: 13-01-2020 (Single Packet Tender). Open tender through e-Tendering system is invited from experienced and reputed contractor(s)/firm(s) for the following works: Tender No.: Dy. CE-CON-DK-BL-2020-2-R73. Name of work: Manufacture and supplying of 50mm size hard machine crushed stone ballast of Pakur variety stone ballast of approved quality with quarry Pakur/Tajhar/Bakudi/Sahibganj for the section from Dhanisi (Km. 0.00) to Sukhi (Km. 17.00) in connection with Dimapur (Dhanisi) - Kohima (Zubza) New Line. Project. Tender Value: ₹.20,33,700/-, Earnest money: ₹.3,10,200/-. Completion period: 12 Months. e-Tender will be closed at 14:30 hrs. on 11-02-2020 and opened at 15:30 hrs. on 11-02-2020 at the office of the General Manager/Con/ Maligaon. The complete information with tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 14:30 hrs. of 11-02-2020 on website www.irps.gov.in For Dy. CE/Con-DMV, Lumding Northeast Frontier Railway (Construction Organisation) "Serving Customers with a smile"

WESTERN RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION OF STATION BUILDING: For & on behalf of the President of India, Dy. Chief Engineer (Construction/II), Western Railway, Pratnagar, Vadodra - 390004, invites e-tender as per the details given below: Tender No.: Dy/CE/IB/RCR/ MYG-DB-SMLA/23. Name of the work: Construction of Station building, platforms, platform wall, water tank staging, approach road, fencing, water supply arrangements, RCC Overhead tank, pump house, toilet blocks, water huts etc. with other ancillary Building works at Miyaagam (B class), Kayavarohan (B-Class) & Nada (D-Class) and between MYG-Dabhoi section in connection with Miyaagam/Dabhoi - Samalaya gauge conversion project. Approximate cost work: ₹ 2081.52 Lakhs. Availability of online Tender for bidding: From: 31.01.2020 at 10.00 hrs. To: 14.02.2020 up to 15.00 hrs. Date of opening & time: 14.02.2020 up to 15.30 hrs. Regarding detailed notice containing cost of tender document (non refundable), EMD, eligibility criteria, Similar Nature of work, detailed tender conditions, please visit www.irps.gov.in Manual offers will not be considered.



# Be smarter than AI

AI is growing in every sector and creating fear for many job holders and seekers. However, there are programmers who can do what AI can't and may never be able to, says ANKIT DUDHWEWALA

In the early part of the last decade, the word outsourcing struck fear in the hearts of professionals in developed countries. White-collar workers feared their jobs would be outsourced to India, where someone would do them for a fraction of the salary than those expected in industrialised countries. Thankfully, outsourcing was a win-win for those in western countries and Indians because it created more jobs in developed countries than were offshored.

Today, there is fear that jobs of almost every kind will be automated. Physicians, lawyers, software architects, and others with highly-skilled, well-paying jobs never feared their jobs would be outsourced. Still, today they are concerned that Artificial Intelligence will become sophisticated enough to make them redundant. Software is becoming exceptionally advanced: What seemed impossible 10 years back, today seems just over the horizon. Self-driving vehicles are an example. Before 2008, few believed AI would be intel-

ligent ever to drive cars itself. Today while much needs to be done to improve AI, most believe it is only a matter of time before it replaces humans behind the wheel.

The prowess of AI behind the wheel is only one example of machines doing jobs that were believed only humans could. Artificial Intelligence is getting better every year at writing its own software code. But AI's growing prowess doesn't mean it is only a matter of time before programmers become obsolete. There are a lot of programmers that can do what AI cannot and may never be able to. Programmers and designers who have expertise in the following software can rest easy that their jobs are unlikely to be assigned to AI.

## AUTOCAD

Engineers, architects, and designers who know AutoCAD will remain in demand. The modelling capabilities of AutoCAD let virtually any form and its components be modelled. What will make knowledge of AutoCAD so

**FUTURE WILL BE DATA-DRIVEN, SO THERE WILL BE DEMAND FOR THOSE WHO UNDERSTAND HOW TO USE THE TOOLS LIKE SPARK, WHICH WILL GIVE PROFESSIONALS AN EDGE OVER AI**

valuable to employers is it requires users to have an imagination as well as technical skills. Artificial Intelligence may be able to replicate human actions and make accurate predictions using more data points than humans. Still, it cannot, and may never be able to imagine. The ability of humans to imagine is a reason professionals who know AutoCAD will always be in demand.

## SPARK

The economy of the future will be data-driven, so there will continue to be a massive demand for those who understand how to use data science tools. Spark is the most popular data science tool. Hence, professionals who know how to use it will have little difficulty working in well-paying jobs. Using Spark, they will be able to accurately model consumer behaviour and make predictions that result in higher sales. While AI's ability to make predictions is uncanny, employers need people who know how to extract compelling stories from data. A critical reason expertise

in Spark will be crucial for future success is it will remain the best data science tool for the foreseeable future.

## SELENIUM

Software testing is essential to roll out products that work as expected. Selenium is a vital software testing tool because much of it is automated. Software testers need to know how to use Selenium to put the software through the right tests. To do so, they must select the proper tests and author computerised tests. Knowing Selenium, they can do both.

The software is essential because it saves enormous time and effort in testing: Those with knowledge of the software will enjoy careers that are future proof.

## C# FOR UNITY

Creating games is challenging, fun, and can be extremely lucrative. Unity is one of the most popular game engines. Newbie game developers can bring their vision to life using C# for Unity. In addition to game developers, design-

ers can use C# for Unity to work inside Unity's Integrated Immersive Environment and create a virtual world. Because consumers have grown accustomed to outstanding visual experiences in games and also expect interactive virtual environments, knowing how to use C# in Unity is a hugely valuable asset. Those who know how to use C# in Unity will be prized resources for many organisations.

Depending on whose narrative is believed, automation is either a decimating job or is overhyped. The reality likely rests in the middle and should be cause for concern among professionals. Millions of developers are working to make AI smarter. AI is doing the same itself as well. While fear of outsourcing was overblown, AI's ability to replace humans is not. Gradually more jobs will be assigned to AI. Yet, engineers and designers with expertise in the mentioned software may remain immune to its encroachment for decades, if not longer.

The writer is Co-Founder, SoftwareSuggest

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
**I tell students that the opportunities I had were a result of having a good educational background. Education is what allows you to stand out.**  
— Ellen Ochoa

## DIPLOMA COURSES

The Indian School of Hospitality in collaboration with At-Sunrice GlobalChef Academy, Singapore, invites applications for admissions to its Diploma in Pastry & Bakery and Diploma in Culinary Arts.

**Duration:** One and a half year

**Eligibility:** Applicants who have completed Class XII or equivalent, Graduates, Professionals and PG students who are planning to change career or venture in the exciting world of bakery or culinary art are eligible to apply for this course.

Also, students with IELTS 5.5/TOEFL 46-59/WPLN Level 5 or at least 75 per cent in English in Class XII exams can apply.

**How to apply:** Log on to <http://ish.edu.in/how-to-apply.html>.

**Last date to apply:** January 31, 2020.

## PGDM PROGRAMME

The JK Business School (JKBS) invites applications for admissions to its AICTE approved PGDM programme.

**Duration:** Two years  
**Eligibility:** Graduate in any discipline from a recognised university with minimum 50 per cent score is eligible to apply for the PGDM programme.

Selection is based on CAT/MAT/CMAT/other



national management entrance exams, JKBS written aptitude test, group discussion, personal interview, past academic record, extra-curricular activities and work experience.

**How to apply:** Log on to [www.jkbschool.org](http://www.jkbschool.org) or call at 18001020240.

**Last date to apply:** January 31, 2020.

## FINE ARTS

Delhi Collage of Art (DCA) invites applications for admission to its Fine Art (BFA) and Super Professional Diploma programme in Fine Art (DFA) courses.

**Duration:** Two years for BFA and four years for DFA.

**Eligibility:** Class XII pass from any stream who wants to work in Fine Arts industry can apply.

**How to apply:** Log on to [www.delhicollageofart.co](http://www.delhicollageofart.co) or the Application forms & brochure may be obtained from admission office of Delhi Collage of Art.

**Last date to apply:** January 31, 2020.

## New president for ICSI

A fellow member of the institute CS Ashish Garg, has been elected as President of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India for the year 2020 w.e.f. January 19, 2020. A nominated Director on the Board of ICSI Institute of Insolvency Professionals, he has also chaired several in-house Committees of the ICSI of the likes of Placement Committee, PMQ Committee and Direct Tax Code Committee.

CS Nagendra D Rao, a fellow member of the institute has been elected as the Vice-President of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India for this year w.e.f. January 19, 2020.

He is a whole time Practising Company Secretary and is the Designated Partner and Founder of Nagendra D Rao & Associates LLP. He has been elected to the Central Council of Institute of Company Secretaries of India for the term 2019-2022. He was also the Chairman of Southern India Regional Council for the year 2015.

## 'Liberal Arts help prepare good leaders'

MUSBA HASHMI speaks with Elizabeth Bradley about what the approach is, its benefits and how it makes students future ready

### What is the liberal arts approach to education?

It is focused on providing students a world view, empowering them to approach complexity, change and diversity in a better manner, for example through the lens of science, culture and society.

A liberal arts education is needed to impart key communication skills (writing, speaking and negotiating); expose students to many disciplines like arts, humanities, and the social, natural and information sciences; and empower students to innovate, be creative and entrepreneurial, and chart their own paths in becoming engaged citizens and community role models.

### What are its benefits?

A liberal arts education teaches one how to learn, how to think creatively, and how to communicate effectively. These are critical skills for leadership in the 21st century.

### How does this approach help prepare students for all the challenges that lie ahead?

In a changing world, the most important skill is to be able to adapt, to take in new information and make sense of the situation. Learning how to learn is consistent with the liberal arts approach, where stu-

dents learn across many different styles, topics and paradigms.

The liberal arts and humanities are vital to our future, preparing students for the challenges they will confront in their professional, political, social and cultural lives.

### What should the Indian government do to promote liberal arts education?

The draft new education policy is a great step to recognise the importance of the liberal arts education.

Next will be needed resources devoted to infrastructure, increasing awareness about the benefits of such education, supporting faculty and students, and perhaps even supporting more international exchange programmes to learn from other countries as well.

### How does the approach help in getting better jobs?

If there is one thing common in every job, it is human interaction. The humanities — the academic fields that study the human condition, society and culture — prepare young adults for the most essential aspects of work: getting along with other people, understanding multiple points of view and coming to terms with one's place in the world.

As such, students of all majors need



Elizabeth Bradley  
President, Vassar College

exposure to the humanities to be adequately — and practically — prepared for the working world. The return on investment of a Vassar liberal arts education can be seen in our excellent outcomes, with 95 per cent of students being employed, in graduate school or on a competitive fellowship within six months of graduation.

### Partnership/collaborations that Vassar has entered into?

In the summer of 2019 Vassar partnered with the University of Global Health Equity (UGHE) in Rwanda, to teach classes in the humanities and sciences, helping shape the way medical education is delivered in Africa in the future; and forged a partnership with Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, enabling Vassar students to earn a master's degree in public health a year after they graduate from Vassar.

Vassar was also in China this summer, exploring opportunities to incorporate a liberal arts model in a local context with gifted high school students there. In partnership with the Diligence & Delight Learning Center in Beijing, we ran a three-week program taught by Vassar faculty, exposing students to a liberal arts classroom environment.

## Fight career barriers

### ITCOUNTS



Every number in numerology indicates towards a certain career and the person should choose his career according to the number of his destiny/conductor number. Through numerology we also understand the relationship or affinity or enmity between various numbers. So, we should not select that career, which becomes a barrier towards our success.

Let us take a few examples. Suppose a person whose destiny number is two, ruled by Moon and which is soft, artistic, caring, has interest in music, singing, and in case if he chooses the career of marketing, architect, salesman, which are characteristics of number five, then he is bound to fail. So, in this way we can avoid misfortunes.

Similarly, a person having destiny number one, ruled by Sun always aspires for managerial positions, head of the company, bureaucrats, politicians and if they choose a career in media, film industry, cosmetics, which are characteristics of number six, they will never be successful and will have to leave the job.

A person having destiny number seven is inclined towards spiritualism, meditation, politics and now if they choose a career in salesmanship, job in defence forces like army and air force, which are characteristics of number nine, then they will not get with the



JC CHAUDHRY

profile. People having destiny number eight are good organisers, inclined towards justice, good in banking and commerce, if they choose the career of share market, gambling, entertainment, which are characteristics of number seven, then their chances of growth will become less.

Hence, if a person chooses a career matching with his destiny number then his/her chances of becoming successful increases.

The writer is a renowned entrepreneur, motivational speaker and numerologist

## Celebration time for FIITJEE

### PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Testing Agency has declared the results of Joint Entrance Examination (JEE Main Jan 2020). The Joint Entrance (JEE Main) examinations were held in between January 6 and 9, 2020 in 233 cities across India.

With the JEE Main Jan 2020 results declared by NTA, FIITJEE has a reason to rejoice and celebrate its students' feat.

Nishant Agarwal, a student of FIITJEE South Delhi Centre has been declared Delhi (NCT) Topper by securing NTA score 100.000000 in JEE Main (Jan) 2020. He scored NTA score 100 in Physics, 100 in Chemistry and 99.9846935 in Maths respectively.

Nishant Agarwal is NTSE scholar in 2017 & KVPY fellow. He is also qualified National Standard Examination in Astronomy (NSEA) in 2018.

Another FIITJEE Student, Nisarg Chadha, three-year classroom programme student of FIITJEE Vadodara Centre has also scored perfect 100 percentile, thereby becoming a Gujarat State Topper.

Subsequently, in JEE Main 2020 (January), 12 FIITJEE Students have Topped their respective States- Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

A total number of 9, 21,261 candidates had registered for Paper-I (BE/BTech) in the examination.

## Fellow programme in management

### PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The FORE School of Management, New Delhi offers a full-time fellow programme in Management (FPM) approved by AICTE. The objective of this programme is to enhance the body of knowledge in the research domain and its dissemination.

It is aimed at admitting scholars with exceptional academic background, strong motivation, discipline and having a strong inclination towards good quality research.

Dr Hitesh Arora, Dean (Academic Services), FORE School of Management says: "The FPM at FORE is built on its strong foundation and long experience of eminent FORE Faculty members in creating industry-ready researchers and academicians. FORE scholars are exposed to a carefully designed curriculum that prepares them for the rigours of the research."

Additionally, a full-time fellow programme in Management always gives an extra edge in knowledge creation and a strong inclination towards good quality

research. Specialisations offered are in the areas of economics and business policy, finance and accounting, information technology, international business, marketing, organisational behaviour & human resource, quantitative techniques and operations management, communication, strategy.

The highlights of the programme are that it provides financial assistance, support to attend international/national conferences/workshops and a contingency grant.

## IELTS prize for students

### PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The British Council, owners of IELTS, the global English Language proficiency test are offering ten prizes of up to £3,000 to help students who are studying in autumn/winter 2020, and early 2021.

On December 23, 2019, The British Council launched a campaign for students who are considering studying next year.

For filling in an online form with just 500 words, explaining why they deserve the money and where they

could potentially win £3,000 toward their study fees. The only stipulation is that they must be studying in the next academic year and have taken an IELTS test between January 2019 and February 2020.

To be in with a chance of winning the IELTS prize, all students will need to submit their details into the application form and tell why they would like to win!

For more information log on to <https://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/take-ielts/study-work-abroad/ielts-prize>.



# IMPROVE YOUR SCORE

Some may not have fared well in the JEE Mains held in January. Fret not, the April session gives another chance. Here's what aspirants need to do this time to ace it, says RAMESH BATLISH

The JEE Main 2020 was held in January between January 6-9, 2020. Around 9.2 lakh candidates had registered out of which around 8.7 lakh appeared. The result was announced and nine students scored 100 percentile from across the country.

However, the Common Rank List for JEE Main 2020 will be available in the first week of May after the declaration of the results of the April exam. The higher of the two scores of candidates who have appeared in either/both JEE Main January and April 2020 will be considered for final ranking of JEE Main 2020.

The list will denote the All India and category ranks of the candidates in addition to the details of the candidates and marks obtained. The JEE Main rank will be the basis for admissions to the NITs, IITs and GFTIs.

For those who could not do well in the January session need not worry as the April session is another chance for all students who wish to improve their scores. The following points must be kept in mind when taking up the April session of JEE Main 2020.

Here are some dos and don'ts to avoid for the session in April:

- One must not repeat the same mistakes committed in January session of JEE Main. Learning from mistakes is important.
- Complete your syllabi if not done earlier.
- Practice questions from previous year JEE Main papers and even from January session of JEE 2020.
- Use the gap between your Boards to revise and take up mock tests on online mode from reputed source for consistency in preparation.
- Keep a check on your speed and accuracy as it is also important as to how you solve the paper for a high score.
- You must have done the test analysis of the JEE Paper you took in January and ensure you are confident with each of those questions now.
- Take help from your subject teachers to clear your doubts and speak to them in case of any conceptual doubts or problems which you are unable to solve.
- Prepare a quick revision

WHILE REVISING TAKE HELP FROM YOUR TEACHERS FOR THE DIFFICULT CHAPTERS AND GET ALL CONCEPTS CLEARED AS MERELY DEVOTING TIME ON THESE MAY NOT HELP. YOU CAN JOIN CRASH COURSE FOR THESE TOPICS AS WELL

plan and categorise the chapters like:

**EASY:** Generally you can solve any problem from these chapter/topic

**MODERATE:** You take time to solve but your concepts of these chapters are clear

**DIFFICULT:** You have not been able to understand the concepts in these chapter and find questions from these chapters tough.

■ While revising ensure you take help from your teachers for the difficult chapters and get all your concepts cleared as merely devoting time on these chapters may not help. You can join crash course for these topics.

■ For moderate chapters you will need more practice so devote time daily so that you have completed solving adequate no. of questions from these chapters.

■ For the chapters/topics you find easy it is important that you are always able to solve any given question from them. You must solve some questions even from these topics but avoid spending too much time on these as you are already good in these chapters.

■ While solving questions keep a check on your time and develop short cuts to avoid lengthy calculations. Use of diagrams/graphs will expedite your answers.

■ Try to remember all important formulae, named reactions as this will add to your speed while solving.

■ Your speed, accuracy and time management will be an important parameter for success in JEE Main (April), 2020.

■ Most importantly take care of your physical and mental fitness as there are external factors influencing your performance in the exam.

■ Avoid taking up new books or start any new chapters before the exam as this may spoil your confidence level.

■ Maintain a positive attitude throughout your preparation and remain focused. Staying confident and keeping calm while taking the exam also helps get a desired score.

Remember, it is the relative performance and not just how you have performed on the exam day.

Give in your best shot and you will ace JEE Main. The writer is Head, FIITJEE Noida

# 'Learn & develop with content in real time'

Organisations are making jobs leaner. It is important that new employees learn work assigned as quickly as possible, say SJ RAJ

As organisations continually work toward making jobs leaner and people more efficient, jobs are quickly being automated. The speed with which a new employee can learn their job directly affects the speed of production and efficiency of the employee. And so, it is not only the nature of work that is changing, but also the way work is learned.

## Learning and Working Simultaneously

Picture an industrial set up where a new engineer, who was given on-the-job training through audio, visual, and demonstrative sessions, comes across a machine he has never operated before. Considering that it is likely that engineer would not remember their training completely, they may fumble with the machine.

Now picture the same new engineer faced with a new machine, but this time, the machine has an automated bot giving real-time instructions on how to operate it. The new employee not only hears the content, but simultaneously gets hands-on experience with the machine directly.

Since participative learning methods, such as practice, result in a much higher retention rate of new learning than passive learning methods, such as lectures and demonstrations, this real-time training not only results in faster learning, but also makes the employee productive much sooner.

As repetition is the best way to strengthen new skills, a new employee may use the instructions from the bot every time until they feel completely ready to operate/work on their own. Such participative learning methods are more engaging, and the learner is unlikely to zone out while learning hands-on.

## Rise of Smart Technology-Aided Learning

While more and more companies have incorporated virtual training labs, some are now also experimenting with virtual reality and augmented technology-based learning programmes, creating life-like situations to learn from.

Such applications are especially valuable in supporting engineers and technicians to learn the specific nuances of their roles on the job itself. For other non-mechanical roles, cloud-based, hands-on virtual labs continue to offer the cognitive learning and practice required for better retention.

AI is being used to design individual learning programmes by understanding and capitalising upon the individuals' information, such as experience, educational backgrounds,



SJ Raj Senior Vice-president, HR Operations, Newgen Software

personality insights, career goals, and learning preferences. This AI-assisted learning allows employees to take control of their learning and development with content that can be updated in real time.

AI and bots are also enabling faster and more accurate learning. Bots used for hands-on training may be programmed to pick up on feedback and comments from new employees in real time, tag that feedback appropriately, and get other employees or trainers to share their thoughts, expertise, and experiences, thus maintaining the human touch to the learning process.

## Ideal Training Model

Great on-the-job training is a collective of methods, including simulation, practice, coaching, experiencing, and peer learning. On-the-job training must allow a learner to continuously reinforce what has been taught through practice.

As organisations step into the future and push to train their employees more efficiently and comprehensively, support from automated bots and artificial intelligence, paired with the expertise of mentors and senior management, is helping to build the ideal on-the-job training platform.

Empowering one's own self should trigger from within. Many of us have those triggers coming from within but, we succumb to the external factors and consciously make that voice coming from within, die down. This is worst we can do to ourselves.

Nature in its grand design has empowered us with unmatched inner strength and powers. All one needs is to do that introspection and find our own legend.

Applying the power of three As, one would not have to wait for an external trigger to experience empowerment. The three As — Accept, Analyse, and Adopt — help one to experience empowerment inside-out. We all are having multiple

influencing layers on to our own real-self. These layers influence our belief system and the subsequent thoughts and actions. One needs to identify these layers, and peel them to reach their core to further empower it.

## Accept

Relieving oneself from own belief system is a process which requires a lot of determination. The first step to empowerment is to accept. Accept that you need to explore your real self, Accept that you are influenced by multiple external layers which need to be handled and accept that you have enough power to bring the best out of you.

These little acceptances coupled up with

# MINDIT

a persistent process of being mindful will start a journey of exploring yourself. Be aware of what your real self is saying to you, listen to it. Remember, you can listen to it only when you are ready to question your self and the surrounding circumstances. If you do not question you will not be able to accept. Acceptance of your current circumstances is key to your journey to empowerment.

## Analyse

The second part of your journey is to

decide what to do and what not to do. This is another important aspect of your journey where you use your intellect to identify and weigh various pros and cons of your decisions. Identify the you in you. The easiest way to know it, is to identify and analyse your feelings to various experiences and circumstances.

You need to removed multiple layers on your belief system which stop you to take action in particular direction. You should identify your core interest and strength then identify and select the field you wish to grow

your career. This analysis is never easy to come. If your decisions continue to be influenced by your belief system your journey to the core will become equally difficult.

You must have a flexible mindset while you do this analysis. This flexible mindset will allow you to be more pragmatic in your reasoning and dealing with your influencing layers. Listen to your heart and the language of your heart is feelings. Never, let your feelings go waste, analyse them.

## Adopt

The third A — adopt, is the most important as it lies in the action zone and requires you to take action for actualising

your decisions. This requires a lot of resolve, will power and focus. Resolution remains weak if it is not coupled up with will power and focus to drive it.

All you need to do is to take the first step with full conviction, will power and focus. You must identify gaps in your resolution, reason out the lack in your will power and focus to adopt changes to go after your decision with full zeal.

You are already empowered, all you need to do is to be aware of the fact that you are empowered and take pragmatic logical steps to bring the power within to life.

The writer is Achal Sharma, Secretary, Corepeeler Foundation and author of Corepeeler: Journey to Your Core



The Association of Banks in Singapore is providing the Dr Goh Keng Swee funding for the brilliant applicants at local universities in Singapore.

The financial aid positions will be awarded for pursuing undergraduate studies at local universities in Singapore— National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore Management University and Singapore University of Technology and Design.

Eligibility: Demonstrate leadership qualities and possess good academic and co-curricular activities (CCA) achievements; Applicants will need to present proof of language proficiency. It means applicants have to pass an official language test (for example - TOEFL or IELTS).

Benefits: Scholarship supports a maximum of four years of UG study (including Honours). It provides the following: Tuition and other compulsory fees; Airfare (to Singapore and return to home country upon completion of study); Annual maintenance allowance of SGD6500; Hostel allowance based on the institution of

study; Settling-in allowance (one-off expense) of SGD200 upon arrival in Singapore.

How to apply: Submit application at [www.pscgate-way.gov.sg/app/gks/account/uidsignin](http://www.pscgate-way.gov.sg/app/gks/account/uidsignin)

Application deadline: March 15, 2020.

The University of Edinburgh invites applications for MBA scholarships for international students in the UK.

Eligibility: Details of any degrees applicants hold or expect to hold, Any relevant details from employment or training history; Details of journal articles applicants have had published; The topic of applicants proposed research; A research outline of no more than 300 words; A personal statement of no more than 300 words; Details of any other programmes or awards applicants hold or have held.

Admission requirement: Candidates must have, or expect to obtain, a UK first-class or 2:1 honours degree at undergraduate level or the international equivalent. English language requirements: All students of every nationality are required to prove their English language competence.

Application deadline: The last date to apply is March 11, 2020.

## DATA ENTRY AT MS SUPPORT SERVICES

Location: Delhi  
Stipend: ₹2,000-₹3,000 per month  
Link: [internshala.com/i/2813877](http://internshala.com/i/2813877)  
Application deadline: January 31, 2020

## VIDEO MAKING/EDITING AT BLUE DROP PICTURES

Location: Delhi  
Stipend: ₹5,000-₹7,000 per month  
Link: [internshala.com/i/2813878](http://internshala.com/i/2813878)  
Application deadline: January 30, 2020

## POLICY RESEARCH AT PAIGAM

Location: Delhi  
Stipend: ₹10,000-₹15,000 per month  
Link: [internshala.com/i/2813879](http://internshala.com/i/2813879)  
Application deadline: January 31, 2020

## WEB DEVELOPMENT AT WILD VOYAGER

Location: Work From Home  
Stipend: ₹5,000 per month  
Link: [internshala.com/i/2813880](http://internshala.com/i/2813880)  
Application deadline: January 31, 2020

## CONTENT WRITING AT KREDX

Location: Bengaluru  
Stipend: ₹10,000 per month  
Link: [internshala.com/i/2813874](http://internshala.com/i/2813874)  
Application deadline: January 31, 2020

## HUMAN RESOURCES AT TAGLYNK CAREERS

Location: Bengaluru  
Stipend: ₹7,500 per month  
Link: [internshala.com/i/2813875](http://internshala.com/i/2813875)  
Application deadline: February 15, 2020

## WEB DEVELOPMENT AT INFOBRANDZ

Location: Bengaluru  
Stipend: ₹8,000-₹13,000 per month  
Link: [internshala.com/i/2813876](http://internshala.com/i/2813876)  
Application deadline: January 31, 2020

## STUDY ABROAD

'Time is of essence when applying for a UG course'

Want to study abroad after Class XII? The prep needs to start now, says ABHISHEK SINGHAL

What is the right time to begin preparations for studying abroad?

The answer to this is quite simple. Now! Given that the application can

be filed in even two weeks, there's nothing to stop you from giving it a shot. While it is possible to apply for admission over a fortnight, an application that can pull its own weight, something that is bound to stand out and get noticed, that takes much longer. It is not a preparation for going abroad that you are looking for, it is preparation to be the best you can be. And for that, the earlier you begin, the better it is.

## For UG Programmes

If you are in Class IX or X, and are keen on studying abroad start by exploring topics of interest. Aim to increase your general awareness, and then establish long term interests and commitments. Over a period of time, enroll in activities that could showcase your interests and skill sets. This kind of exposure helps students develop a better sense of maturity.

A child who follows international conflicts closely, understands diplomatic relations, and keeps tabs on current developments could possibly benefit. Similarly, children from a science background could increase their awareness in a specialised area by reading up about it, by participating in workshops, or even possibly doing online courses.

Expand interests by exploring different avenues. Join classes, camps, or workshops. Try out new activities, hone your existing skills, and use your free time proactively. Starting out early is ideal not just to build your portfolio, but also, most importantly, to figure out what your strengths and interests really are.

In Class XI/XII, it will be time to begin preparation for tests like SAT, ACT or AP. These are key scores for admission applications. An early start gives you the upper hand in preparations.

Consider how you can give better shape to your interests and activities. At this time, give direction to interests. If you are a football player, try to play at a higher level. You could even consider doing online courses (MOOCs) if you have time and inclination.

The writer is co-founder, UnivAdmitHelp



## IN BRIEF

### WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THIS BUDGET

According to Rupal Dalal, Executive Director, JD Institute of Fashion Technology: "The education needs an overhaul and we expect to see a reform-oriented education policy in 2020. The biggest challenge in the education sector is achieving higher literacy and employment."

Today youths comprise 34.33 per cent of India's population. In the last Budget, the Centre had allocated ₹93,847.64 crore for the education sector, of which ₹37,461.01 crores was earmarked for higher education. We

expect the allocation to increase in the upcoming Union Budget 2020.

The Government should focus on providing affordable and quality education to all. "The role of technology and e-learning programmes will be key. We hope to see the Budget to introduce new programs in higher education. These schemes should offer re-skilling, up-skilling, e-education and vocational studies. The government should also create low-cost institutions for primary, secondary and higher education," she added.

### NEW UG AND PG COURSES AT RISHIHOOD VARSITY

The Rishihood University invites applications for the first batch of students looking to apply for undergraduate and post graduate programmes in Entrepreneurship, Healthcare, Education and Creativity. First phase of courses is slated to begin in the third week of July, 2020.

The university aims to integrate lifelong learning

transcending age, subject choice and society by working with students, individuals pursuing higher education and working professionals.

A recent Niti Aayog report states that more than 53 per cent of individuals passing out from higher education institutions are unemployable.

Speaking on the launch of the

programmes, Sahil Aggarwal, Co-Founder & CEO of Rishihood University said: "India is on the cusp of becoming a major contributor to the world's knowledge economy by 2030. Therefore, the entire ecosystem of educational institutions, Government and corporations must prepare today's youth for an ever evolving and volatile transition."

### PARTNERSHIP FOR MICRO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Shadowfax, a cross-category, full-stack logistics platform, has joined hands with the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India, ASSOCHAM, in a first-of-its-kind and an exclusive partnership to promote micro entrepreneurship in gig economy under the aegis of Government of India's Skill India Mission initiative.

With the gig economy gaining traction, logistics and delivery are the sunshine sectors providing immense

employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Under this partnership, ASSOCHAM will work closely with the Government to create awareness about benefits of working in this attractive sector. Right candidates shall be trained to make them employment ready for the delivery and hospitality sector. This association is expected to create an additional resource pool of 1.6 lakh personnel in the course of next two years.

# SHARAPOVA HITS ALL-TIME LOW

Maria fails to overcome first round hurdle in third consecutive Slam; Nadal launches record bid with easy win

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Top seed Rafael Nadal turned on the style as he launched his bid for a record-equalling 20th Major title at the Australian Open on Tuesday, but falling star Maria Sharapova hit a career low. Australia's Nick Kyrgios also cantered into the second round, but fourth seed Daniil Medvedev had to fight his way past American Frances Tiafoe in four sets. Nadal, one shy of Roger Federer's Grand Slam mark, dropped only five games as he swatted aside Bolivia's Hugo Dellien 6-2, 6-3, 6-0 in just over two hours at a sunny Rod Laver Arena. "It was a positive start," said the reigning Roland Garros and US Open champion, wearing a bright pink singlet and matching trainers. "What you want in the first round is just to win, and it's better if it's in straight sets." He joins Federer and defending champion Novak Djokovic in



Spain's Rafael Nadal makes a backhand return to Bolivia's Hugo Dellien during their first round singles match at the Australian Open

round two as the Big Three look to tighten a stranglehold that has brought them all but one of the last 14 Australian Open titles.

Nadal, the first player to be world number one in three different decades, is still thriving at 33 but it's a different story for five-time Grand Slam winner Sharapova.

The 32-year-old, playing on a wildcard as she wrestles with a shoulder injury, lost 6-3, 6-4 to Croatian 19th seed Donna Vekic, making her an opening-round loser at three straight Grand Slams for the first time.

The future looks uncertain for the former world number one, who won Wimbledon when she was just

17 but has not reached a Grand Slam final since she lifted the 2014 French Open trophy.

"I can speak about my struggles and the things that I've gone through with my shoulder, but it's not really in my character to," Sharapova said.

"I was there, I put myself out there (playing). As tough as it was,

I finished the match — it wasn't the way that I wanted." Britain's Johanna Konta, a two-time Slam semi-finalist, also fell at the first hurdle as she battles to overcome a knee problem, losing 4-6, 2-6 to unseeded Tunisian Ons Jabeur.

**STORMY FOGNINI**

On a bumper day of 88 first-



Maria Sharapova makes a forehand return to Croatia's Donna Vekic

round matches, after rain wiped out half of Monday's schedule, former US Open champion Marin Cilic and Milos Raonic both moved safely through.

Italy's Fabio Fognini, two sets down against America's Reilly Opelka when their match was suspended on Monday, returned to win it in five after a stormy encounter when both players argued furiously with the umpire. A new star emerged in 18-year-old Italian Jannik Sinner, last year's NextGen champion, who earned his first Grand Slam victory against Australia's Max Purcell. Australia's Kyrgios, who has spearheaded fundraising efforts for the country's deadly bushfire disaster, kept his notorious temper in check despite being taken to two tie-breaks in a 6-2, 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (7-1) win over Lorenzo Sonego of Italy.

"I feel super-comfortable, you guys are the best. I feel the support.... I am ready to go again,"

Kyrgios told the crowd.

Medvedev, the narrow loser to Nadal in September's US Open final, dropped the second set against Tiafoe before recovering to win 6-3, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Austria's Dominic Thiem, who has reached the last two French Open finals, went through in straight sets against Adrian Panatta, while 2014 champion Stan Wawrinka needed four to get past Damir Dzumhur.

Seventh seed Alexander Zverev beat Marco Cecchinato in straight sets but there was disappointment for France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, the 2008 finalist, who retired with a back injury against Australia's Alexei Popyrin.

Elsewhere, women's fourth seed Simona Halep survived some painful-looking falls to beat America's Jennifer Brady, and 2016 champion Angelique Kerber dropped only four games against Elisabetta Cocciaretto of Italy.

## Ankle tear rules Ishant out of NZ Test series



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Senior India pacer Ishant Sharma has been ruled out of next month's two-Test series in New Zealand after sustaining an ankle tear during a Ranji Trophy game here, a Delhi state cricket association official said on Tuesday.

"Ishant Sharma's MRI report shows a Grade 3 ankle tear and it is serious. He has been advised three to six weeks of rest and rehabilitation. It is indeed a big blow," DDCA general secretary Vinod Tihara told PTI.

Another DDCA official added: "Luckily there is no fracture. There is an ankle tear. The moment he is in a position to walk, he will travel to NCA."

However, the Indian cricket board is yet to issue a statement on Ishant's injury.

"It's a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in BCCI as we will again do his MRI to ascertain degree of tear and decide on his rehabilitation," a BCCI source said.

Fellow Delhi pacer Navdeep Saini is likely to

## Samson replaces Dhawan for T20s; Shaw in ODIs

PTI ■ DELHI

Wicketkeeper-batsman Sanju Samson and talented opener Prithvi Shaw replaced injured India opener Shikhar Dhawan for the upcoming T20 and ODI series against New Zealand respectively.

Dhawan dislocated his shoulder while fielding in the third ODI against Australia in Bengaluru on Sunday.

Shaw returns to the senior team after a gap of one year following an ankle injury and an eight-month doping ban. Samson, who played in the T20 series against Sri Lanka earlier this month, was back as a reserve opener cum keeper.

India's T20I squad: Virat Kohli (C), Rohit Sharma (VC), Sanju Samson, KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant (WK), Shivam Dube, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Washington Sundar, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Navdeep Saini, Ravindra Jadeja, Shardul Thakur

India's ODI squad: Virat Kohli (C), Rohit Sharma (VC), Prithvi Shaw, KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant (WK), Shivam Dube, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Ravindra Jadeja, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Navdeep Saini, Shardul Thakur, Kedar Jadhav.

replace the 96-Test veteran in the Test squad.



Akash Singh in a file Photo Twitter

## India outplay Japan by 10 wickets in mismatch

PTI ■ BLOEMFONTEIN

Defending champions India outclassed debutants Japan by 10 wickets in their second match to all but secure a spot in the quarterfinals of the ICC U-19 World Cup here on Tuesday.

Opting to field first, four-time champions India bowled out a hapless Japan for 41 runs in 22.5 overs with leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi taking four wickets. It was the joint second lowest total by a team in the Under-19 World Cup and joint third lowest in the under-19 cricket history.

Pacers Kartik Tyagi and Akash Singh shared five wickets among themselves as none of the Japanese batsmen entered double digits.

India needed just 4.5 overs to complete the formalities with Yashasvi Jaiswal and Kumar Kushagra remaining unbeaten on 29 and 13 respectively.

India captain Priyam Garg, however, said his fast bowlers could have done a better job.

"Very happy with the performance. The spinners were good, but the lines and lengths could have been better from the pacers. There's no pressure as such. We want to do well, we take every game as it comes," said Garg.

## 'NZ need to win 2 out of 3 formats to get pass marks'

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

New Zealand are up against a "powerhouse" in the visiting Indian cricket team, says former all-rounder Craig McMillan who feels the Black Caps will have to win two out of three formats to be eligible for at least the "pass marks".

New Zealand will host India for five Twenty20s, three ODIs and two Tests beginning here on January 24 and the hosts will be desperate to bounce back from the recent 0-3 Test drubbing at the hands of Australia.

"It's big. This whole Indian tour is big after what happened in Australia," McMillan was quoted as saying by *Radio Sport Breakfast*.

"This Indian side are a powerhouse. Doesn't matter if it's Tests, ODIs, T20s, they are the real deal so it's going to be a really intriguing tour. For New Zealand to get a pass mark for this tour they need to win two of the three series."

The series against India will start with the T20 rubber on Friday and McMillan feels with the ICC T20 World Cup scheduled to be held later this



Ross Taylor poses for a photo

Black Caps/Twitter

year, it is imperative for New Zealand to win this assignment.

"Five Twenty20s to start and I know it's not everyone's favourite format of the game but we've got a T20 World Cup

later in the year in October in Australia so straight away these five matches become important. Because of the performance in Australia we need to start winning again and get that support

## De Kock replaces Faf as ODI skipper

AFP ■ JOHANNESBURG

Quinton de Kock was on Tuesday named as South Africa's one-day international captain as part of a long term transition plan.

His first assignment will be to lead the team in a three-match series against World Cup champions England, starting in Cape Town on February 4.

Test and Twenty20 captain Faf du Plessis was not in a 15-man squad named by Cricket South Africa on Tuesday despite committing himself to the organisation until the World Cup T20 in October and November.

Independent selector Linda Zondi said Du Plessis' omission did not signal the end of his ODI career.

"We decided to rest Faf and Kagiso Rabada for this series because they have both played

a lot of cricket," said Zondi.

"A different squad will be picked for a T20 series against England after the one-day games and after that there are still T20s and ODIs against Australia."

Zondi said the appointment of De Kock was part of succession planning leading up to the 2023 Cricket World Cup.

In his press conference after the third Test against England on Monday, Du Plessis said there was an opportunity to relieve some of the pressure on his captaincy.

quod includes new ODI caps in batsmen Janeman Malan and Kyle Verreynne, all-rounder Jon-Jon Smuts, fast bowlers Lutho Sipamla and Sisanda Magala and left-arm spinner Bjorn Fortuin. Of these Magala and Verreynne have yet to play at any international level.

back," he said. "They're still trying to find in T20 what our best side is. We've just seen the Super Smash

and there's an opportunity for some young guys who performed in that to be given a chance," McMillan added.

## Character of pitches in NZ has changed: Tendulkar



Indian team celebrates after winning the match Twitter

ODIs and Tests on green tops, to 2009, when India won only their second Test series in 32 years, Tendulkar has seen it all in New Zealand.

"I remember when we played in 2009, the Hamilton pitch was different compared to other pitches. Other pitches got harder (Wellington and Napier) but not Hamilton. It remained soft.

"But Napier became hard with passage of time (where Gautam Gambhir scored an epic match-saving 12-hour hundred in 2009). So, from my first tour (in 1990 till 2009), I realised pitches got harder with passage of time," Tendulkar said.

Tendulkar is confident that the

Indian bowling attack, spearheaded by Jasprit Bumrah, has the ammunition to put New Zealand in trouble.

"We have a good bowling attack with quality fast bowlers as well as spinners. I believe we have the ammunition to compete in New Zealand."

However, in Wellington, Tendulkar wants the team to be well-prepared to counter the breeze factor.

"Wellington, I have played and it makes a huge difference if you are bowling with the wind or against the wind. The batsman needs to be judicious in the choice of which end he wants to attack, it is very important," he said.

## Sarfراز hits unbeaten ton as Mumbai fight back against UP

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Young Sarfaraz Khan hit an unbeaten century as Mumbai fought back on the third day of their Ranji Trophy Elite Group B game against Uttar Pradesh here on Tuesday.

UP had posted a mammoth 625/8 declared in their first essay, courtesy Upendra Yadavs unbeaten double hundred (203 not out).

Mumbai resumed the day on their overnight score of 20/2 and had a mountain to climb. Thanks to herculean effort by 'crisis man' Siddhesh Lad (98 off 174 balls; 10x4x1x6), who lived up to his billing and 22-year-old Sarfaraz (132 not out off 160 balls; 14x4; 4x6), the duo gave Mumbai the confidence that UP's first-inning score could be overhauled.

Overnight batsmen Bhupen Lalwani (43 off 80 balls; 5x4) and Hardik Tamore (51 off 94 balls; 10x4) had an uphill task on hand of surviving the morning session against the experienced Ankit Rajpoot and Yash

Dayal.

They negated the challenge well and stitched a crucial 75-run stand for the third wicket.

Pacer Wajid Ali gave the visitors the much needed break-through after he trapped Lalwani in front of the wicket as Mumbai lost their third wicket at 91.

Tamore then notched up his maiden first-class fifty by driving Ali through the covers for a four, but could not convert it into a big score.

### BENGAL ROUT HYDERBAD IN 3 DAYS

**Kalyani (WB):** Rookie spin all-rounder Shabbaz Ahmed shone with a first-innings hat-trick in a six-wicket match haul as Bengal thrashed a sloppy Hyderabad by an innings and 303 runs for their first win of the ongoing Ranji Trophy season, here on Tuesday.

The 25-year-old, who was bought by Royal Challengers Bangalore for the 2020 edition of the IPL, claimed the feat in his seventh Ranji appearance.



Sarfraz Khan reacts during the third day of Ranji Trophy Match against Uttar Pradesh

Shabbaz (4/26) ran through the Hyderabad lower order to help his side bundle out the visitors for 171 in their first innings. Following on, Hyderabad were all out for 161 with Shabbaz (2/51) accounting for two batsmen.

Shabbaz became the seventh player from Bengal, and first since India pacer Mohammed Shami, to claim a Ranji Trophy hat-trick. Shami had achieved the milestone against Madhya Pradesh in 2012-13.

Rookie pacer Akash Deep (4/38) was the star in Hyderabad's second essay as Hyderabad were bundled out in 46.2 overs.

Bengal had scored 635 for seven declared in their first innings after electing to bat.

### J&K POSTS WIN OVER ODISHA

**Cuttack:** Jammu & Kashmir bounced back superbly after conceding first innings lead to pull off a four-wicket win over Odisha on the third day of the Ranji Trophy Group C match here on Tuesday.

## BCCI says 'no' to Saha's Ranji test

PTI ■ KALYANI (WB)

Indian wicketkeeper batsman Wriddhiman Saha, who is recovering from a finger surgery, has been asked to skip Bengal's next Ranji clash against Delhi to keep himself ready for the upcoming Test series in New Zealand.

The 35-year-old sustained a fracture on the ring finger of his right hand during the historic

Day/Night Test Test against Bangladesh in Kolkata in November and consequently underwent a surgery in Mumbai.

"Wriddhi will not be available for Delhi match (at Eden Gardens from Sunday). I think the Board (BCCI) has said no to him," Bengal coach Arun Lal said after he scripted an innings and 303 win over Hyderabad to brighten their qualifying hopes.

Resuming its second innings at 136 for seven, Odisha could add only 30 runs as Umar Nazir picked up the last three wickets—Rajesh Mohanty, Suryakant Pradhan and Rajesh Dhuper.

Chasing 204 for a win, J&K opener Suryansh Raina (69) and Shubam Pundir (45) added 79 runs for the third wicket to lay the platform for an easy win.

Abdul Samad with a knock of 30

not out and the first-innings bowling hero Aquib Nabi (26 not out) too the side over the finish line.

For the home team, Basant Mohanty bowled his heart out and picked up four wickets in the second innings but could not prevent J&K from romping home.

In Delhi, Services pulled off an exciting one-wicket win over Haryana despite being shot out for 97 in the first innings.

# Reality check for Atalanta

Petagna inspires SPAL to 2-1 comeback win over his former club in Serie A clash

AFP ■ MILAN

Andrea Petagna ignited a come-from-behind victory for struggling SPAL to hand his former club Atalanta a shock 2-1 defeat in Serie A on Monday.

The Champions League-chasing side from Bergamo had won their last two home games against AC Milan and Parma with 5-0 scorelines each time.

But they slipped up against SPAL who snatched just their fourth win of the season to move off the bottom of the table.

Gian Piero Gasperini's team missed the chance to climb above Roma into the final Champions League place, and are now three points behind the side from the capital in fifth.

"Today more than a few players were not at their best," said Gasperini. "It was clear we were down a gear."

"But we will have to be ready to immediately redeem a bad performance, because the standings are very tight." Slovenian forward Josip Ilicic put Atalanta ahead after 16 minutes with a clever back-heel flick beating Etrit Berisha in the SPAL goal.

But Petagna pulled SPAL level after 54 minutes by scoring his fifth goal in four meetings against his former club.

Mattia Valoti snatched the winner six minutes later with a new signing Bryan Dabo playing a role in the goal on his first start for SPAL.

"I left a piece of heart in



**Gian Piero Gasperini's team missed the chance to climb above Roma into the final Champions League place, and are now three points behind the side from the capital in fifth**

Bergamo because I started here," said Petagna. "But today we had to win, now we must continue like this if we want to save ourselves." Duvan Zapata missed chances to equalise for the hosts following a long injury layoff with fellow Colombian forward Luis Muriel coming on for the

final half an hour in place of defender Mattia Caldara, who started on his return on loan from AC Milan.

But despite laying siege to the SPAL goal the hosts fell to their fifth defeat of the season and fourth at home.

"You have to give credit to SPAL, despite being last in the standings, they tried to play a decent game," said Gasperini.

"Once in the lead, SPAL attacked with many men, but we weren't good at fighting them."

Gasperini's side have the best attack in the league with 50 goals scored in 20 games.

But he had conceded that his players were suffering from fatigue after their surprise elimination from the Italian Cup by Fiorentina.

Atalanta are playing their first season in the Champions League and host Valencia in the last 16, first leg at San Siro on February 19.

Champions Juventus beat Parma 2-1 to open up a four-point advantage on second-placed Inter Milan who were held 1-1 at promoted Lecce on Sunday.

Lazio are third, a further two points behind with a game in hand, after hammering Sampdoria 5-1 on Saturday.

# Mbappe dreams of CL, Euro and Olympic treble

AFP ■ BAGNOLET (FRANCE)

Kylian Mbappe says he is dreaming of helping Paris Saint-Germain win a first Champions League trophy this year, as well as leading France to the title at Euro 2020 and the Olympic Games in Tokyo.

The 21-year-old PSG and France star, a World Cup winner in 2018, was asked what was on his wish list for the new year while launching his charity in the Paris suburbs on Monday.

"It would be a treble of Champions League, European Championship and Olympic Games. That wouldn't be bad," said Mbappe, with a smile.

"That seems unattainable for the time being but I'm going to make sure I fulfil this dream. It would be a proud moment to be able to win the first European title for PSG and for our country to keep winning."

Mbappe's charity, "Inspired by KM", was set up to help 98 children — a nod to his birth year — between the ages of nine and 16 from various social backgrounds to accomplish "their dreams".

Last month, Mbappe put himself forward for the French team at the Tokyo Olympics, while adding he would not want to fight his club over taking part in Japan.

"Playing in the Olympics, I don't control everything," he told France Football



Kylian Mbappe controls the ball during the French League

magazine. "Of course I want to go, but if my club, which is my employer, doesn't want me to go, I won't force a clash."

He said he would hold talks with PSG sporting director Leonardo, who is said to be hesitant to allow

Mbappe to play at the Olympics for fears over his fitness.

Euro 2020 will be held across 12 different cities over the continent from June 12 to July 12, with the men's Olympic football tournament scheduled for July 23 to August 8.



Indian Table tennis team poses for a photo

## Paddlers primed to create history at Olympic qualifiers

PTI ■ GONDOMAR (PORTUGAL)

The Indian men's table tennis squad is well placed to create history at the Olympic qualifiers beginning here on Wednesday, the fifth seeds needing just a quarterfinal finish to ensure its maiden qualification as a team at the Summer Games.

Unless the team comprising G Sathiyam (world rank 30), veteran Sarath Kamal (WR 33) and Harmeet Desai (WR 86) play badly, India should not have a lot of difficulty in making the Olympic cut. The other members of the team are Anthony Amalraj and fast rising Manav Thakkar.

In the past games, Indian players have played only in individual events but now three of them being in top-100 shows the rapid strides India has taken at the highest level.

The men, who have been given a first-round bye in the draw of 64, take on Luxembourg in their opener. Sarath and Co effectively need to win two matches to qualify. Their round of 16 opponent will be 11th seed Slovenia or 20th seed Iran.

The women's unit, led by Manika Batra, has a much tougher task at hand as it runs into a much stronger Sweden in its opener.

Ahead of the tournament, the entire contingent had a camp in Chennai before it travelled to Germany to train with its national team.

**IN THE PAST GAMES, INDIAN PLAYERS HAVE PLAYED ONLY IN INDIVIDUAL EVENTS BUT NOW THREE OF THEM BEING IN TOP-100 SHOWS THE RAPID STRIDES INDIA HAS TAKEN AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL**

Despite the lack of a head coach since the 2019 Asian Games, Indian players have been producing impressive performances on the professional circuit.

The men's team had ended a 60-year wait by winning a historic bronze at the Asian Games in Jakarta.

The contingent's campaign got even better Sharath and Manika, who won four medals at the preceding Commonwealth Games, bagged a surprise bronze in the mixed doubles.

Nine qualifying spots are on offer at the ITTF organised event. A top-eight finish guarantees Olympic qualification while the last spot available will be fought among the teams that lose in the round of 16 with their eventual winner filling the slot.

Korea is the top seed in men's category, followed by Chinese Taipei, Sweden, France and India.

Hong Kong is the top seed in women's event, followed by Chinese Taipei, Singapore, Korea and Romania.

## Wounded Bengaluru FC host high-flying Odisha

PTI ■ BENGALURU

An intriguing duel is on the cards as Bengaluru FC face Odisha FC square off in a top of the table Indian Super League clash here on Wednesday.

Bengaluru FC, the defending champions, are coming off a 2-0 defeat against Mumbai City FC and will be eager to get back to winning ways. Odisha FC, on the other hand, are on a four-game winning streak which has established them firmly in the top four.

Interestingly, a win on Wednesday could see either side rise to the top of the table. Bengaluru, currently third on the table with 22 points, can leapfrog both FC Goa and ATK who have 24 points each, with a win. Odisha, who have 21, can go level with Goa and ATK.

Carles Cuadrat's side have had a water-tight defence this



Bengaluru FC players during training session

season, conceding just nine goals in 13 games.

But the Spanish coach would not be happy after two defensive errors helped Mumbai City beat them in the last game.

He will hope that was just an aberration. Moreover, at home, Bengaluru have conceded just four goals at home.

Another worry for Bengaluru will be their attack.

Apart from Sunil Chhetri, who has scored eight goals, none of the forwards have put in meaningful contributions.

Ashique Kuruniyan and Udanta Singh have struggled for form and consistency. Udanta's form, especially, has dropped when compared to last season with just one goal to his name. In fact, Cuadrat has even dropped Udanta from the starting XI in the recent matches.

Bengaluru will hope strikers Manuel Onwu and Deshorn Brown come to the party and provide some support to Chhetri.

Odisha FC will be looking to cash in on their terrific form. They have scored eight goals and conceded just two in their last four games. If they win in Bengaluru and make it 5 consecutive wins, they will overtake FC Goa and become the team with the most consecutive wins

in the ISL this season.

Aridane Santana and Xisco Hernandez have been key to Odisha's revival. Santana, specifically, has scored nine goals this season and has risen to the top of the scoring charts. In fact, five of his goals have come in the last four games.

Three of their four wins have come at home in Bhubaneswar.

Though their last win against Hyderabad came away from home, Josep Gombau will want his team to improve their away record. However, to beat Bengaluru in Bengaluru is a tough task, something only Mumbai City have been able to do this season.

Odisha do have a couple of concerns with Vinit Rai suspended and Nandhakumar Sekar injured but Gombau will hope the rest of the team step up against Bengaluru.

## Tai shines for Raptors



PNS ■ CHENNAI

World No. 2 Tai Tzu Ying of Bengaluru Raptors put up a masterclass on her return to the Star Sports Premier Badminton League 2020 as she coasted to an easy win over rising star Ashmita Chaliha of the North Eastern Warriors here in Chennai today. In a much-anticipated clash of youth and experience, the former World No. 1's brilliant anticipation skills and finesse were too much for the South Asian Games gold medalist to handle even though Chaliha did have her moments.

After trailing 0-4, the youngster rode on her aggression to bag some quickfire points and close the gap between them to two points at 4-6. It was, however, not enough to thwart PBL5's joint-costliest player who soon doused the Chaliha fire to soar to a 15-7, 15-5 win.

Earlier, in an enthralling battle between two Olympic medallists, 2016 Rio Olympic silver medallist Chan Peng Soon beat 2008 Olympic champion Lee Yong Dae to give the defending champions a very good start. In partnership with multiple World Championship medallist Eom Hye Won, Soon put up a solid display against the Warriors pair of Lee Yong Dae and former World No. 1 Kim Ha Na.

In his fourth consecutive appearance at the league, Lee, who recently triumphed at the Malaysia Masters, could not find his champion form as the first match of the tie went in favour of the Raptors 15-8, 15-11.

Fresh from reaching the semi-finals of the Indonesia Masters, North Eastern Warriors' World No. 18 Lee Cheuk Yiu showed remarkable resolve to eke out a tight first game and then sailed through the second to register a 15-14, 15-9 win over World Championship bronze medallist Sai Praneth. The two had met only once before with the match finishing in favour of the Hong Kong shuttler. This time too it was no different with Lee refusing to give the Indian any opening in a performance that showed his determination and steely nerves.

## Sky high expectations makes me work even harder: Sindhu



P.V. Sindhu plays a return shot

PTI ■ CHENNAI

World champion P.V. Sindhu said sky-high expectations from her makes her work even harder as she aims at a second medal in the upcoming Tokyo Olympics in July-August.

"From the Rio Olympics to now, my life has changed a lot. I won a lot and I lost some. I have been improving step by step. Not much was expected of me when I went to Rio but now people look for a gold medal from me," Sindhu, who is here to play for Hyderabad Hunters in the fifth edition of PBL, said.

"I look at it in a positive way when everyone expects me to do well. I don't consider that as added pressure and that will only make me work even harder. It's not going to be easy but I'm prepared for the challenges awaiting me," she added.

Being an Olympic year, the world No 6 said it was good to play the PBL because one got to play with top players which is helpful.

"We get to play with top quality players in PBL like Tai Tzu Ying, which is helpful in an Olympic-year. We get to learn a lot from the foreign players, who come up with useful inputs. Even I get to improve

some aspects of my game by interacting with foreign talent. They offer useful tips that can help the growth of a player."

"There is a lot more time before the Olympics. We have a couple of important events in the run-up to Olympics. For now, my focus is on helping my team in the PBL. I just want to play my game and enjoy," she added.

The 24-year old shuttler, who has had an up-and-down run since winning the world title in Basel last year, said she was working on her mental fitness, adding it was important to be in a positive frame of mind and come back stronger.

"I have been working on mental fitness. There have been close matches in the past where I won and some that I lost. It's important to be in a positive frame of mind and come back stronger and rectify the mistakes," Sindhu said.

The Hyderabad ace also said it was important to pick and choose tournaments.

"It is important to pick and choose tournaments because at times you might not be feeling 100 per cent. Some people say that you have to play as many events as you can but only if you believe you can give your best should you play," she added.

Sindhu said the PBL is a great platform for youngsters like Lakshya Sen and she was impressed with her Hunters' teammate Priyanshu Rajawat, who made his debut in the league yesterday.

"The PBL is a great platform for youngsters like Lakshya Sen. For Priyanshu, it was his first match on such a big stage and he played well. It's a good exposure for the younger crop because they get to learn a lot more from the senior pros. It's a learning process and they will get more familiar with high-pressure matches," she added.

## Saina, Srikanth hope to keep Olympic dream alive



Saina Nehwal in a file photo

PTI ■ BANGKOK

Their Olympic berths still not secured, ace Indian shuttlers Saina Nehwal and Kidambi Srikanth will hope to put up a good show when they begin their campaign at the Thailand Masters Super 300 tournament here on Wednesday.

Owing to their inconsistent outings in 2019, Saina and Srikanth are placed at the 22nd and 23rd spots in BWF's Race to Tokyo rankings with April 26 being the cut off date for Olympic qualification.

According to the BWF Olympics qualification rules, only two players from each singles category can qualify if their ranking lies within the top-16 by April 26.

At this moment, world champion P.V. Sindhu (6th) and B Sai Praneth (11th) and men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty (8th) have more or less assured their berths for the Tokyo Games.

After a series of early exits

last year, which dented their chances, Saina and Srikanth pulled out of the Premier Badminton League to train and give themselves a better chance at the qualification.

But Srikanth didn't have a good start to the new year as he faltered in the first round in the first two tournaments — losing to Chinese Taipei's Chou Tien Chen at Malaysia and local player Shesar Hiren Rhustavito at Indonesia.

Saina, a London Olympics Bronze medallist, made it to the quarters at Malaysia but she couldn't defend her title at Indonesia Masters, falling at the first round to Japan's Sayaka Takahashi.

With the Olympic qualification cut off date ending in April, there are only eight tournaments, including the Thailand Masters, left in the calendar and the Indian duo will have to produce consistent performances to earn a ticket to Tokyo.

Saina will begin her campaign here against Denmark's Line Højmark Kjærfeldt, an opponent against whom she has a 4-0 record.

Srikanth, on the other hand, will face Shesar Hiren Rhustavito once again in the opening round and would hope to settle the score this time around.

Among other Indians, Sameer Verma, who also had a disappointing 2019 season, will take on Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia, seeded seventh, while H S Prannoy faces another Malaysian Liew Daren in the opening round.