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BRAD: NO COMPLAINTS IN LIFE
13 VIVACITY



Akhilesh, Maya take up Shah gauntlet

SP, BSP chiefs accept CAA debate challenge; Owaisi asks HM to invite 'daadhi wale' too

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a new twist to the ongoing fracas over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act or CAA, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and BSP supreme Mayawati have accepted Home Minister Amit Shah's challenge for debate on the CAA.

While Akhilesh is prepared for such an engagement while keeping economic slowdown and development as part of the package, Mayawati said her party is ready for a debate on the CAA on any platform.

Meanwhile, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi chipped in, telling Shah, "Daadhi wale se karo na" (debate with a bearded man).

Addressing a rally in support of the CAA in Lucknow on Tuesday, Shah had dared Opposition leaders like Mayawati, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav to debate with him on the law on a "sarvanjan manch" (public platform).

Picking up the challenge, Akhilesh said, "I'm ready for the debate on CAA. Ask them to fix a place or a forum, with their favorite channels and anchors, also for a debate on development. We Samajwadis are ready for it. But the BJP should also debate on the issues like economic slowdown, unemployment, poverty and death of people due to

Government harassment."

Accusing the BJP of discriminating on the basis of religion, Akhilesh said those who understand the soul of the country are opposed to the amended citizenship law. He also alleged the BJP is playing with the Constitution as it has majority in the Lok Sabha.

"I am glad that women have taken the lead and youth are protesting in large numbers," Akhilesh said after garlanding a statue of SP leader Janeshwar Mishra at a park here on his death anniversary.

BSP chief Mayawati, who along with Akhilesh, had skipped the Opposition meeting in Delhi to oppose the CAA, on Wednesday said her party is ready for a debate on the CAA on any platform.

"The BSP is ready to accept the challenge thrown by the Central Government, which is troubled by the organised struggle and agitation all over the country against the most controversial CAA/NRC/NPR, especially by the youth and women, for a debate on the issue on any platform and anywhere," Mayawati said in a tweet in Hindi.

Mayawati had obviously come under pressure to take an aggressive stance against the CAA after another Dalit leader Chandrasekhar Azad occupied centre stage in Delhi in mobilising protest against the CAA.

Meanwhile, asserting that Mahatma Gandhi and BR

Ambedkar were against discrimination, the SP chief accused the BJP of practising discrimination on the basis of religion. "Every Indian is against it. Will they (the BJP) kill the soul of the country and create fissures in society for votes," he said.

Accusing Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath of using words like "thok diya jayega" in his speeches, he said, "This cannot be the language of a politician. 'BJP used 'kabristan and shamshan' and 'Diwali and Ramzan' during poll rallies for the sake of votes."



Won't stay CAA without hearing Centre: SC

Govt gets four weeks to reply; 5-judge Bench to hear matter

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday issued notice to the Centre on pleas challenging the constitutional validity of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act saying it will not issue any order to stay the Act without hearing the Government's argument. The court gave the Government four weeks to respond. A five-



judge Constitution Bench will hear the matter.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde restrained all high courts from hearing pleas on the CAA till it decides in the matter. As many as 143 petitioners have approached the SC on CAA questioning its constitutional validity.

The Bench, also comprising Justices S Abdul Nazeer and Sanjiv Khanna, said it will hear

the petitions related to Assam and Tripura separately as the problem with the CAA in these two States is different from rest of the country.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for some petitioners, said the issue be referred to a Constitution Bench and the NPR exercise be postponed by a couple of months. He also urged the Bench to put on hold the operationalisation of the CAA.

Asserting that it will not pass any ex-parte order without hearing the Centre on staying the operation of the CAA and exercise of the National Population Register (NPR), the court said it will pass order on

granting any interim relief to petitioner opposing the CAA after four weeks.

The petitions concerning Tripura and Assam as well as the matters related to Uttar Pradesh, which is going ahead with the implementation of the CAA without framing any rules, can be dealt with separately, the Bench said. It said the earlier cutoff date for citizenship in Assam was March 24, 1971 and noted that it has been extended till December 31, 2014 under the CAA.

The SC said it will decide in-chamber the modalities of hearing the batch of petitions on the CAA and may fix them for day-to-day hearing after four weeks.

Govt wants 7 days deadline for execution

Centre moves SC to amend rules to do away with delaying tactics

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of delaying tactics adopted by the death-row convicts in the Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case, Union Home Ministry on Wednesday approached the Supreme Court for amending the 2014 guidelines regarding the timeline for the execution, filing of review and curative petitions and mercy petitions.

Asserting that the need of the hour is to lay down guidelines in the interest of the victims rather than keeping the rights of the convicts in mind, the Centre wants the SC to fix a deadline of seven days for the execution of death penalty of condemned prisoners after issuance of the death warrant.

The affidavit filed by the Government also sought clarifications with regard to cases involving multiple convicts who time their petitions in such a way that the execution of the death warrant could be delayed indefinitely. The Nirbhaya case is perfect example of such delaying tactics.

The MHA's plea sought a direction from the top court in



fixing the deadline for filing of curative pleas after the rejection of review petitions.

It also sought a direction that "if the convict of death sentence wants to file mercy petition, it would be mandatory for a convict of death sentence to do so only within a period of seven days from the date of receipt of death warrant issued by the competent court."

The MHA submitted that the top court should "mandate all the competent courts, State Governments, prison authorities in the country to issue death warrant of a convict within seven days of the rejection of his mercy petition and to execute death sentence within seven days thereafter irrespective of the stage of review petition/curative petition/mercy petition of his co-convicts."

Illegal constructions Dept to swing into action after Feb 5

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Government is unlikely to extend the last date for the Amnesty Scheme that allows the residents to regularise the unauthorised constructions, which is ending on February 5.

The Housing and Urban Development Department has informed that the existing Amnesty Scheme expires on February 5 in the areas under

At end of Amnesty Scheme

nine development authorities in the State.

The existing scheme is in force in Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA), Cuttack Development Authority (CDA), Rourkela Development Authority (RDA), Talcher-Angul-Meramandali Development Authority, Brahmapur Development Authority, Sambalpur Development Authority, Puri-Konark Development Authority, Kalinga Nagar Development Authority and Paradip Development Authority.

Naveen woos airlines to boost link in State

CEOs agree to introduce 14 new flights

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday urged the Union Government and all airline operators (AOs) to introduce more flights for both domestic and international destinations and improve air connectivity in Odisha.

Addressing a meeting of 25 chief executive officers (CEOs) of different airline operators, Patnaik asked them to introduce flights from Bhubaneswar to Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong and Bangkok in view of presence of techno-savvy diaspora in different countries, the emergence of globe-trotting middleclass, growth of tourism and rapid growth in various sectoral economies.

"Odisha has witnessed rapid growth over the years and made its foothold strong in many areas including mining, manufacturing, tourism, culture, sports, education and IT. In last few years, the aviation traffic in Odisha has seen immense growth. Though the domestic flight connectivity has seen a noticeable improve-



ment, there is greater scope for international connectivity," pointed out Patnaik.

Stating that a sizeable techno-savvy Odia Diaspora is active mainly in the countries like the United States of America, Europe, Australia and the South East Asian countries and a substantial population is also working in Middle-East countries, he noted, "I strongly believe that our 'Skilled in Odisha' module has strengthened Brand Odisha, making our

He requested the Ministry of Civil Aviation to introduce new connectivity from Odisha to domestic destinations like Pune, Jaipur, Lucknow, Chennai, Vizag, Kochi and Ranchi.

He said the state

Government will provide all necessary support for not only developing infrastructure for aviation but also consider incentives in the shape of Viability Gap Funding (VGF) for the airline operations.

The Government has proposed to provide aviation fuel at one per cent Value Added Tax to private carriers for flights to North East and areas lacking air connectivity, informed the Chief Secretary.

In last 5 years, air traffic from Bhubaneswar has seen a growth of 29 per cent against national average of 17 per cent. The State has potentiality which we are chalking out an action plan, said Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola.

It was informed that 14 new

flights are planned to/from Odisha at the meeting. Most of the flights are scheduled to operate between January to Summer 2020. The planned destinations are Kolkata-Jharsuguda, Bhubaneswar-Varanasi, Varanasi-Bhubaneswar, Jharsuguda-Mumbai, Prayagraj-Bhubaneswar, Delhi-Bhubaneswar, Bhubaneswar-Rourkela, Bhubaneswar-Kalaikunda, Bhubaneswar-Bangkok, Bangkok-Bhubaneswar, Singapore-Bhubaneswar, Bhubaneswar-Abu Dhabi.

Among others, Commerce and Transport Minister Padmanabha Behera, Airport Authorities of India Chairman Arvind Singh and Civil Aviation Joint Secretary Usha Padhee spoke.

Vyommित्रा charms all with her hello before spacewalk

ISRO to send lady robot in unmanned Gaganyaan ahead of human spaceflight

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Before orbiting astronauts on India's first manned mission to space in December 2021, the Indian Space Research Organisation will send "Vyommित्रा", a "lady robot" in the unmanned Gaganyaan spacecraft.

The robot was the centre of attraction at the inaugural session of the "Human Spaceflight and Exploration — Present Challenges and Future Trends" here on Wednesday.

Vyommित्रा, a combination of two Sanskrit words Vyoma (Space) and Mitra (Friend), took everyone by surprise when she introduced herself to the audience gathered there. "Hello everyone. I am Vyommित्रा, the prototype of the half-humanoid, been made for the first unmanned Gaganyaan mission," the robot said.

ISRO chairman K Sivan told reporters the half humanoid will simulate human



ISRO Chairman Kailasavadi Sivan, Principal Scientific Adviser to Government of India K Vijay Raghavan and others look at a humanoid robot during the inauguration of Symposium on Human Spaceflight and Exploration in Bengaluru on Wednesday.

Explaining about the role in the mission, she said, "I can monitor through module parameters, alert you and perform life support operations. I can perform activities like switch panel operations..."

The robot said she can also be a companion and converse with the astronauts, recognise them and can also respond to their queries.

ISRO chairman K Sivan told reporters the half humanoid will simulate human

functions in space and also interact with the environment control life support system.

"It will be simulating exactly the human functions there (in space). It will check whether the system is right. This will be very useful to simulate, as if a human is flying," he added.

The humanoid, which Sivan said was functioning well, has the human simulation system.

Car overturns: Close shave for SP



PNS ■ SONEPUR

Subarnapur Superintendent of Police (SP) Debi Prasad Dash had a narrow escape after a four-wheeler by which he was travelling with two other persons met with an

accident at Sindhol village on the Sambalpur-Sonepur road on Wednesday.

Dash and the two other occupants of the car suffered injuries when the vehicle overturned near a dhaba at Sindhol. They were soon admitted to a hospital for treatment.

5 women killed in road mishap in S'garh

Eight including 2 women injured

PNS ■ ROURKELA

As many as five women engaged in road construction work lost their lives and eight other persons sustained critical injuries in a road mishap at Ramabahal Chhak on the Biju Expressway at Rajgangpur of Sundargarh district on Wednesday.

A speeding car jumped the divider of the road and hit the walking women workers before ramming into an SUV on the other side of the road. While two women died on the

spot, three others were declared dead at the Rourkela Government Hospital. Two other woman workers, three occupants each in the car and the SUV sustained critical injuries in the mishap. They have been shifted to Rourkela hospital. The car was on way from Rourkela when it hit the SUV coming from opposite direction. There were seven occupants in the car and the SUV, sources said.

Rourkela Government Hospital Chief Medical Officer S Kabi Satpathy said, "Three women brought to the hospital were declared dead on



arrival while two others died on the spot."

"We are crossing the road after being dropped by a vehicle at the construction site when the car hit us in the middle of the road. Subsequently, it hit an SUV," said a woman injured in the mishap.

Later, police reached the spot and began an inquiry into the incident.

Inmates bring sexual slur against ashram owner

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

Three inmates of an ashram at Chakarkend in Bargarh district have levelled sexual harassment allegations against the head of the NGO that runs it. They have informed District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) Manju Ekka about the alleged sexual harassment made to them and many others at different points of time.

They have also informed the matter to district ADM Mirdha Toppo.

The NGO owner also makes video shootings of the sexual scenes, the women are learnt to have alleged before the district authorities.

Getting the allegation, the ADM and the Assistant District

Welfare Officer (ADWO) made a joint enquiry in this regard on Wednesday. When contacted, ADM Toppo said, "We have got certain evidence in the matter." But further enquiry would be made by police as the case has been handed over to them, Toppo added.

"If the allegations come out true, action as per the criminal procedure will be taken against all involved in the matter including the owner of the NGO," said district Additional



SP Amarendra Rana.

However, the NGO owner denied the allegation and said that some inmates who are behaving unruly are bringing such allegations. He further said that different police stations are sending women to this ashram for their rehabilitation.

Swain writes to Paswan

'Release subsidy for paddy procurement'

OSCSC lacks funds to buy crops further

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain has written to Union Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Minister Ram Vilas Paswan urging him to release subsidy for paddy procurement in the State.

Swain mentioned that more than 30 lakh metric tonne of paddy has already been procured and Rs 5,400 crore towards MSP transferred to the bank accounts of farmers during the current Kharif Marketing Season 2019-20 and non-release of subsidy by the

Centre has disturbed the procurement process. "Due to non-release of funds, the Odisha State Civil Supplies Corporation (OSCSC) has faced difficulties in taking up further procurement. The Centre has released subsidy of Rs 1434.90 crore only against claim of Rs 4307.17 crore for the quarter ending December, 2019. Rs 2,872.27 crore is yet to be received. The advance subsidy (Rs 1400 crore approximately) for the quarter ending March, 2020 is being submitted within a couple of days. Though as per norm advance subsidy is released in the first month of a quarter, no such subsidy has been released during the entire



FY 2019-20," mentioned Swain. Swain requested Paswan to personally intervene and ensure pending subsidy and advance subsidy released to the State soon. "Since all the resources, including sanctioned limit of bank finance, have already been exhausted, further paddy procurement from farmers may be severely affected, if the subsidy is not received at the earliest," he added.

Odisha's Yash receives Rashtriya Bal Puraskar



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Bringing laurels to Odisha, Yash Mishra from Bhubaneswar received the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar from President Ram Nath Kovind at a special function held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Wednesday on the eve of Republic Day. Mishra, a former student of

the DAV Chandrasekharpur here, received the award for his excellence in the field of scholastic achievement. He received a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh, a medal, a certificate, a tablet and a citation. Currently, he is studying at the Sir Padampat Singhania School in Kota. Earlier, he had won gold medal for India in the Singapore Asian Mathematical Olympiad. He has over 400

prizes and around 200 medals to his credit so far. As many as 22 children, including 10 girls, received the Bal Puraskar from the President. Every year, the award is given to children in recognition of their outstanding achievements in the fields of innovation, scholastic achievements, social service, arts and culture and sports.

KBC fraud

K'handi youth shoots video before suicide

PNS ■ BHAWANIPATNA



Pratap Barik, a youth from Lanjigarh of Kalahandi district, who had committed suicide at the Titilagarh railway station on January 18 by jumping before a train, had allegedly lost Rs 70,000 in an online fraud in the name of Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC). The startling fact was revealed from a video recorded by the deceased Pratap himself prior to his suicide.

As per reports, though the exact reason behind Pratap's death was then not clear, the matter of online cyber fraud came to fore after the recorded video was recovered from his mobile phone.

In the video, Pratap can be heard narrating how he fell victim to the fraud and lost around Rs 70,000 to the fraudster.

Sources said Pratap received a call from a person, who identified himself as Rana Singh of KBC's Kolkata office, informing that he had won Rs 25 lakh lottery in KBC. However, the caller asked Pratap to deposit Rs 60,000 to Rs 70,000 in four installments as tax if he wanted to claim the Rs 25 lakh.

In the video, Pratap claimed that he was forced to end life after he failed to contact Rana Singh and realised that he was cheated. He urged the police to nab the fraudster, so that no one else falls prey.

Further investigation in this connection is on, police said.

AT's Sethi again attempts suicide



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Artha Tatwa chit fund scam prime accused Pradeep Sethi, who is the company's CMD, attempted to commit suicide at the Jharpada jail here, where he has been lodged since long.

Sources said Sethi went to use the toilet of the jail and tried to end his life by strangulating himself with an electric wire of an inverter.

Soon after, the jail staffs rescued him by breaking open the toilet door. He was then sent to the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack's mental wing for examination of his health. It is noteworthy that this was the third time that Sethi attempted to commit suicide following his arrest.

Prabhat Nayak new ICSI BBSR head



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Prabhat Kumar Nayak took charge as the new Chairman of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI), Bhubaneswar Chapter for the year 2020.

The ICSI, Bhubaneswar Chapter has also elected Rajendra Kumar Kar as its Vice-Chairman, Jyotirmoy Mishra as Secretary and Ajay

Kumar Majhi as Treasurer for 2020. The new office bearer will look after the development of the profession of Company Secretary in the State.

The Institute is providing class room teaching, reading room, library facilities to the students pursuing company Secretaryship course. The Institute has been organising various academic and professional development programmes for the members and students.

Soumya Sujit Mishra and Bimal Prasad Patnaik are other members of the Managing Committee and Priyadarshi Nayak is also the ex-officio members of the committee. Priyadarshi Nayak, who was the former Chairman of the Chapter, also took charge as the Chairman of ICSI EIRC, Kolkata for the year 2020.

44 specially-abled kids enjoy flying

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

As many as 44 specially-abled children, including 20 girls, enjoyed flying high in a special Alliance Air flight here on Wednesday morning.

The Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT) carried the children by two buses to the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA).

On Sunday, the Ministry of Civil Aviation had tweeted about the arrangement, "Wings to the dreams of Divyang children! 44 Divyang children from across Odisha will experience the joy of flying high aboard a special flight from Bhubaneswar on January 22.



Comments to Airports Authority of India (AAI), Air India, Alliance Air, Odisha Government and Swabhiman for making this happen."

The special flight took off from the BPIA at 9 am returned after a 40-minute tour.

This is for the first time that the underprivileged children experienced plane ride. Ministry of Civil Aviation

Joint Secretary Usha Padhee has extended her gratitude to the AAI for waiving all charges for the special flight.

Notably, the Alliance Air is a regional airline and a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Air India. The Swabhiman is a State-level organisation working towards empowering persons with disabilities.



A tableau of Odisha's Lingaraj Temple and its Rukuna Rath, which will be showcased at this year's Republic Day parade in New Delhi, is being given final touches in the national Capital on Wednesday. Pioneer photo

HITTING THE BULL'S EYE

Odisha least corrupt State, international tourism hub



BISWARAJ PATNAIK

There is big news about Odisha being the least corrupt State of India. The enigmatic Naveen Patnaik's Government has always been firm on a 'zero tolerance' approach to the malaise right from the day he occupied the loftiest executive chair. Delhi, Haryana, Gujarat, West Bengal, Kerala and Goa are in the same respectable league after Odisha.

The corruption survey was conducted by the Transparency International India, and the Local-Circles, a community social media platform to figure out the level of corruption in the country as perceived, felt and experienced by ordinary citizens. The survey also says that Rajasthan, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand and Punjab are now known to be extremely corrupt.

Two lakh respondents drawn from different sections of the society including 36 per cent women had replied to queries. More than 1.20 lakh responses were analysed for the study. Across the States, 70,000 respondents shared their views on corruption by

Governments. Fortunately, bribe incidents in India have reduced by 10 per cent over the past one year with around 51 per cent people having paid a bribe in the last 12 months. India's ranking in the Corruption Perception Index 2018 released by the Transparency International has improved three places over the previous year. India is now 78th clean country among 180. While the introduction of systems in public services has largely reduced corruption in centralised services like securing a passport or buying a railway ticket, most citizen services at the state and local levels are still ridden with bribery and kickbacks, says the survey report.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has taken severely stringent action against corrupt officials, no matter how big. In the old times, even Indians of other regions would hardly know Odisha. Most of them believed it was like an African forestland with only tribal communities chasing animals with bows and arrows. After Independence too, the perception about Odisha has not changed much. Only, a few educated people across India knew the Jagannath Temple popular from the ancient times. Guru Nanak in the 15th century and Raja Ranjit Singh in the following one had turned devotees of the Lord believed to be a living one. So, Hindus and Sikhs across the Indian subcontinent knew Odisha because of the unique deity; others knew the State for its

beautiful coastline as the temple town of Puri is on the sea. Legendary Biju Patnaik became one of the youngest Indian Chief Ministers in the early 1960s and shot Odisha to big fame by presenting it as an important region. He set up the deepest port at Paradip, a god-forsaken place then, brought several Defence establishments, set up a Sainik School and so many other eye-catching, enviable projects. He stepped down in honour of the Kamraj Plan and many of his dreams of making Odisha a foremost State remained unfulfilled.

Subsequently, a number of spineless and shaky governments came and went without being able to last a full five-year term until 1980 when Janaki Ballabh Patnaik arrived as Chief Minister. He was shrewd and knew the art of keeping everyone happy for hassle-free survival. He was of course a visionary but with a few terrible personal blemishes. Sycophants, crooks and scoundrels virtually kept sticking to him and misled him on countless fronts. His Government, doing so fine in the beginning, degenerated into one of the most corrupt regimes.

Then, Naveen Patnaik happened. He became CM in 2000. Odisha gradually began regaining the lost glory of being a clean State again. Naveen knew from the beginning that the career politicians are essentially a spoils lot across India who exploit situations to keep power and make money by guile so as to win the next election with-

out trouble. They first master the art and craft of abusing power and intimidating the ordinary citizens as if they are above law. Even today, in most corrupt States, ordinary legislators make senior police officials and administrators behave like slaves to them. Unfortunately, civil servants having no option left toe the line and join the looting act or leave job and run away. So, Naveen fixed the politicians first. Thus, he told the law-knowing senior bureaucrats to take complete charge. This handful of trusted lieutenants would not only guide the Government but also keep watch over erring politicians who are perpetually hungry for money and power to be used for personal gains. As time rolled by, legislators and Ministers became aware of the fact and began behaving accordingly. The bigger reason for their agreeing to be tamed was that Naveen is perceived as a messiah by the people for his simple lifestyle and gentlemanly reticence. Naveen began kicking out any Minister found guilty of taking bribe and giving undue favours to anyone. This beginning was so dramatic as to send chill down the spines of all politicians who came to power politics only to make merry.

By now, critical bureaucratic guidance is the key to governance in Odisha. And the people have liked it too well though there is quite a great deal of murmur about the State being run by bureaucrats. Ordinary citizens need to know

that the Naveen regime runs on the rule of law mode which is only possible if the executive is law-conversant and understands the spirit of the Constitution. But most politicians including Ministers cannot distinguish between 'executive and legislature' if suddenly asked to do so.

Naveen has his own likes and dislikes. His trusted lieutenants have no right to override him on his preferences. They have only the duty to figure out his vision and dreams. And then start slugging to keep the Ministers on toes by telling them what not to do. Ministers with commonsense and fundamental knowledge have a smooth sailing. The dumb ones have to keep quiet and go by what's told by the seasoned bureaucrats. Hence, Odisha is the cleanest State today.

Odisha became the sports capital of India two years ago. It is already a great tourist destination globally. The Puri-Konark-Bhubaneswar triangle is truly a golden triangle now. The face of Puri has been lifted so magnificently as to turn the bitterest Naveen critic his ardent fan now. Not surprisingly, the national meet of Tourism Ministers and secretaries is being held on January 23 and 24 at the most-talked about 'Eco Retreat' on the marine drive near Konark. Best policies are expected to be made and contentious issues resolved jointly at the out-of-the-world facility on the sea.

Evidently, Odisha is truly the 'best kept secret' in India!

MCL CSR project for clean rural households

Toilets, bathrooms built in 364 houses in J'suguda, S'pur

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

Under the MANTRA project which the MCL is executing in partnership with 'Gram Vikas', the coal major is making available toilets and bathroom facility in 364 households.

The villages for this project were meticulously selected based on select indicators of remoteness, institutional support, demography, socio-economic status, and overall backwardness. The project is being implemented in Panchgaon, Pokharasabhe gram panchayats of Jharsuguda district and Kukramunda and Pumerjore and Khukhandabahal gram panchayats in Sundargarh district.



The project started in Q2 of 2018 has seen completion of toilets and bathrooms in October, 2019. In the second stage, work of piped water supply is under process.

The project is modeled as participatory community mobilization in the form of labour and building material by households. In addition, each household contributes Rs 1,000 towards creating a village cor-

pus fund to support new households coming up in the future. O and M cost is met by mobilization of village committee.

It may be noted that, MCL has signed MoU with Railways for commissioning of toilet blocks in the circulating areas of all 232 railway stations of Odisha. This project is being implemented by RITES and the MCL is financing Rs 58 crore.

Bangladeshi sex workers racket: Ibrahim's aide held

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Later, she was arrested for staying illegally in Bhubaneswar without valid documents. Reports said that she had come to Odisha on basis of a fake Aadhaar card which she had obtained during her stay in West Bengal.

The subsequent investigation revealed that apart from her around 20-25 girls from Bangladesh were also engaged in the sex trade.

According to sources, Sunil was supplying the girls from Bangladesh to Kolkata and Parida was involved in the racket by trafficking the girls from Kolkata to Odisha. The girls were handed over to Ibrahim and his wife Anjali, who were operating the racket in Bhubaneswar.

Based on inputs, the STF formed a team and arrested Ibrahim and Anjali from Danagohiri area under Pipili police station. The couple, the mastermind of the sex racket, was running it at a rented accommodation at Rath Road in Old Town.

Ganjam DM's move on land registration decried

Parishad questions efficacy of system for quick issue of RoR

KRUSHNA CHANDRA PANDA ■ BRAHMAMAPUR

The Bharatiya Bikash Parishad, which leads an anti-corruption movement in Ganjam district led by its State president Surendra Panigrahi held a Press meet here on Wednesday against the reported circular of the district Collector to all Sub-Registrars of the district not to allow the registration of any immovable property, be it land or house, without submission of Record of Right (RoR) of the property.

Panigrahi expressed serious concern over the recent circular.

Panigrahi said that the circular issued by the Ganjam Collector on 1.11.2019 not only violates Sub-Section-2 of Sec.22-A of the Registration Amendment Act 2013 of Odisha, but also the verdicts passed by the Orissa High Court wide Writ Petition WPC



No.9997/2014 (Petitioner Dhabal Prasad Pradhan vrs. State of Odisha).

The Parishad described the DM's circular as "Kongaru" circular which is discriminatory and unilateral applicable only for Ganjam district which violates the principles of equality.

It may be recalled here that, the district administration reportedly had convened a meeting on October 14, 2019 on implementation of ORERA Act and Rules on registration of immovable properties in the district in which the builders, realtors and deed writers and Sub-Registrars of the district were present. The district administration then had made clear in that meeting to strictly adhere to the provisions of ORERA Act and Rules pertaining to the registration of immovable properties. As a result, the Brahmmapur Builders' Association, the Deed Writers' Association and the Legal Cell jointly earlier had also alleged that consequent upon the said circular, the Sub-Registrars of the district were not accepting the document presented before them for registration of immovable property without the presence of RoR, causing inconvenience and loss to the public.

The Government has spent Rs 800 crore from its exchequer for purchasing and developing advanced software to develop a most comprehensive database of land records and for smooth and timely issue of RoRs to the public in least possible time, but in vain, Panigrahi charged. He said that, the Government takes one year to one and a half years time to issue the RoR to the owners/public, instead of one week or one month. If a RoR is not issued to the public within a week time or so, then what is the use of the software, he questioned.

Beggar pays power bill, honoured



PNS ■ BHADRAK

Two days after Kartik Nath of Uttara Bahini Saripur village in Bhadrak district paid the arrear electricity bill of his house, Nesco officials on Tuesday felicitated him. He paid his bill of Rs 2,500 despite being extremely poor.

Notably, Kartik's locality does not come under the jurisdiction of Cesu, which has launched a disconnection-and-collection drive in its areas. He, however, is aware about the necessity of clearing the arrear bills.

Officials of Nesco visited Kartik's home and thanked him for making the payment. Though Kartik begs to feed his family of eight, he did not want to be called a defaulter in payment of electricity bill set an example for many, said an official.

Ahead of R-Day fest in R'gada Odishi competition among girls held



PNS ■ RAYAGADA

Ahead of the Republic Day celebration on January 26 at Rayagada, an Odishi dance competition was held among the girl students of various schools of Rayagada recently.

The event was organised by the Sanskruti Ladies Club, Rayagada. Three students namely Samruddhi Das, Anita Padhi and Sheetal Maharana were adjudged 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively.

The selection committee comprised Rabintra Patakhandal from Zilla

BeMC Commissioner saves student

PNS ■ BRAHMAMAPUR

Brahmapur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) Commissioner Chakravarti Singh Rathore turned a Good Samaritan when he saved the life of a school student, who fell ill while on the way to school, on Tuesday.

Rathore, who was on his way to office, came across the student who fell down and became unconscious when he was going to school near Gandhi Nagar Square here.

Rathore immediately



stopped his car and took the student to the City Hospital.

Earlier, Rathore was also in news during the Cyclone Titli for carrying relief bags.

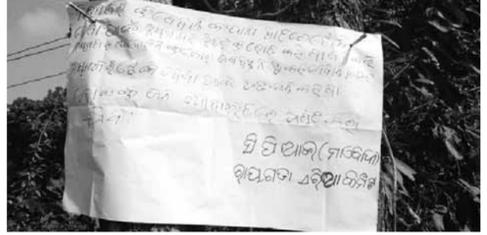
Maoists torch road building equipments in R'gada

Also thrash workers

BADAL TAH ■ RAYAGADA

After a few days' lull, Maoists went on a rampage in Rayagada district and thrashed several vehicles engaged in a road construction work near Gumma village under Kalyansinghpur block late on Tuesday night. Posters, bearing the name of the Maoists of Rayagada Area Committee, opposing the road construction project were also found on the spot. Sources said the Rural Development Department has taken up a road project worth Rs 10 crore from Naringtoli to Gumma to fulfill the much-needed road communication for the welfare

of local Dongria Kondh community. However, over 60 ultras reached the construction site at around 12 pm and attacked two workers after snatching



their mobile phones. The rebels also asked the workers to leave the place immediately. Later, they set afire two JCBs, a roller and a mixture machine engaged in the construction work. The Maoists left behind some posters alleging that the road is being constructed to facilitate entry of Vedanta Mining Company into the Niyamagiri hills and forcibly suppress the movement of tribals against bauxite mining. Those people would be punished in the 'Jan Adalats' if they supported handing over Niyamagiri to the Vedanta Company, the posters stated.

Notably, the Red rebels had earlier indulged in violent activities twice at that spot opposing the road construction.

Labour Dept clerks held taking bribe

PNS ■ BALESWAR

Two clerks of the Labour Department were caught red-handed by the Vigilance police while they accepted a bribe of Rs 3,000 from a person for issuing him labour card.

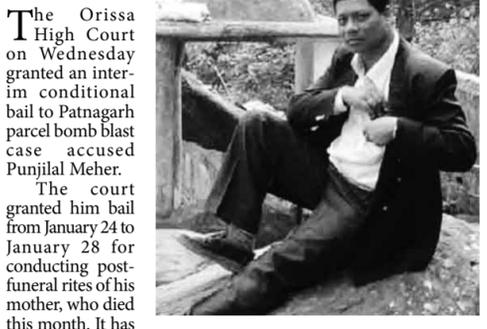
The accused were identified as Satyabrata Behera and Suchismita Singh.

According to reports, the duo had demanded the illegal gratification from one Rakesh Mahal for issuing a labour card to him. Following this, Rakesh lodged a complaint with the Vigilance department.

Based on the complaint, the officials of the anti-corruption wing laid a trap and nabbed the two accused while accepting the gratification from the complainant.

HC interim bail to Punjilal

PNS ■ CUTTACK



The Orissa High Court on Wednesday granted an interim conditional bail to Patnagarh parcel bomb blast case accused Punjilal Meher.

The court granted him bail from January 24 to January 28 for conducting post-funeral rites of his mother, who died this month. It has asked Meher not to speak to mediapersons during the period.

Notably, Meher had performed the last rites of his mother Indumati earlier this

Sahu gets Goenka Award posthumously

DD scribe from Odisha martyred in C'garh in 2018

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Doordarshan cameraperson Achyutananda Sahu from Subarnapur, who was martyred in Maoists' attack at Dantewada in Chhattisgarh, has been conferred with the Ramnath Goenka Excellence award for Journalism posthumously.

He was given the award in the category of Reporting in Conflict Zones.

On behalf of Sahu, his wife Himanchali received the award from President Ram Nath Kovind at a function held in New Delhi on Monday.

Sahu had joined the Doordarshan in New Delhi in 2011. He was killed when a group of Maoists attacked police personnel escorting a three-member DD team near Nilaway village on October 30, 2018 ahead of Assembly elections in Chhattisgarh.



In Cuttack Fake edible oil unit busted



PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Tangi police on Wednesday busted a spurious edible oil manufacturing unit at Manguli Chhak on the outskirts of Cuttack city.

Acting on a tipoff about the adulteration unit, a police team raided the place and seized hundreds of packets of spurious edible oil and packaging machines. The factory was sealed after the raid, which was conducted in the presence of the Tangi police station IIC and the SDPO. Efforts were on by police to apprehend those involved in adulterating edible oil and selling it in market.

Safe adoption meet held at B'ngir



PNS ■ BALANGIR

Workshop and training on "adoption" was held here on Wednesday.

Organised by the District Child Protection Unit, it was inaugurated by Balangir Sub-Collector Sanjay Mishra. Among others, Chairman of Balangir Block Golap Bag and District Child Protection

Paradip TU leader remembered



PNS ■ PARADIP

Memorial meeting for noted farmer leader cum founder of Paradip Port Affected Land Losers Farmers Association late Gauramohan Sahoo's was held here at the union's Zero Point-based office premises.

Prominent trade union leader and BJD State secretary Santosh Kumar Patnaik presided over the meeting. A silent prayer was held at the outset.

On the 11th day of his death, various activities would be held by the association, it was informed.

Baishnab Charan Patnaik was chief guest and EIORW secretary Ranjan Kumar Palai, Trailokya Nath Samantaray, Niranjana Samal, Sukadev Das, Prafulla Mishra and Mihirkant Sahoo spoke. Association president Chinmay Das coordinated the programme.

AYOS meet supports new citizenship law

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Academy of Yoga and Oriental Studies (AYOS) organised a seminar on "Citizenship in India" here on January 19. The meeting was presided over by Sudarsan Nayak. AYOS director Dr Indulata Das, in her introductory speech, said the AYOS has always extended moral support to causes concerning the identity of India and Indian culture.

AYOS president Sudarsan Nayak explained every detail about the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the false propagation of a group of persons about it. Granting citizenship to the persecuted minority of Pakistan and Bangladesh was a longstanding demand. It was advocated by Gandhi, Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Manmohan Singh, etc., he added.

Scholar Arun Kumar Upadhyaya said 19th January is the 30th anniversary of holocaust and exodus of Kashmiri Pandits. Muslims did not want to live with Hindus. Where is the question of Muslims getting citizenship in India again?

Dr Indulata Das said the persons who are agitating against the CAA and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) are ignorant. But they are misguided by people who are sympathisers of infiltrators and miscreant elements hiding in the country.

Every participant in the meeting shared his views about the CAA and reiterated that the law is harmless and causes no inconvenience to any citizen of India. The participants also expressed a unanimous view that the NRC is the basic need of a nation.

Club cricket tourney ends at Khariar



PNS ■ NUAPADA
The 10th Gandhi Nagar Club Cricket Tournament that started from January 6 at the cricket ground of Gandhi Club at Khariar culminated on January 21 with the final match played between the teams of Tukla and Chindaguda. Chindaguda became the champions by winning the final 20-over match by four

wickets. A total of 16 teams of Kalahandi and Nuapada districts participated in the tournament. Tukla had entered the final by defeating the organising club team and Chindaguda made the entry by defeating Dargao. Jyotiprakash of Chindaguda team was declared man of the match for scoring 49 runs in 40 balls and

Gobardhan Patel of Tukla team was selected man of the series. Journalists Ajit Panda and Tapan Dash, Jharamani Devi, teacher attended the semi-final held on Saturday as the guests of honour. Local MLA Adhiraj Mohan Panigrahi, former Khariar NAC Vice-Chairman Chhabila Deep and ZP Member Ujjwal Gupta were present during the final match.

AAI urged to hand over Dakota to State

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Initiating steps to bring back the abandoned Dakota (VT-AUI) aircraft from Kolkata, the State Government has requested the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to give permission for handing over of the aircraft to the State at the soonest.

The Commerce and Transport Department wrote a letter in this regard on Tuesday.

The aircraft belonging to the erstwhile Biju Patnaik-founded Kalinga Airlines has been stationed at the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport in Kolkata since 1947.

As per the decision, the aircraft would be brought back and displayed at Bhubaneswar Airport as a befitting tribute to the legendary leader.

It may be noted that the Government had earlier planned to park the aircraft in front of Anand Bhavan in Cuttack for public view.

Fake notes of ₹1.06L face value seized



PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Commissionerate police on Wednesday seized fake currency notes with face value of Rs 1.06 lakh and arrested a person in this connection in Cuttack city. One Satyajit Panda of the Tangi area had deposited 53 counterfeit currency notes in denominations of Rs 2,000 in a cash deposit machine of the SBI at Market Nagar on January 17. Later, he lodged a complaint with the bank saying the amount was not deposited in his bank account.

During a probe, bank officials examined the cash inside the machine and brought the notes deposited by the accused to the Bidanasi branch of the SBI, where it was established that the notes are fake. The Branch Manager informed the Market Nagar police about it, following which cops initiated an investigation and apprehended Satyajit under Sections 489 A and 489 C of the IPC.

Efforts are on by police to ascertain involvement of others in the offence. Police suspect that the accused was a member of a fake currency note racket.

INBRIEF

DAV FELICITATES JEE MAIN ODISHA TOPPER



Bhubaneswar: DAV Public School, Chandrasekharpur Principal Dr KC Satapathy felicitated the Odisha topper in JEE Main 1 Sourabh Soumyakant Das and other rank holders in a special felicitation ceremony held in the school premises on Wednesday.

RED CROSS PROVIDES FIRST-AID SERVICE



Bhubaneswar: The Indian Red Cross Society Odisha State Branch organised a first-aid service at the 8th State-level Science Exhibition and Project Competition here recently under the guidance of Secretary CTM Suguna. Junior Red Cross Officer Laxman Swain and first-aid Coordinator Gulsan Kumar Dash, YRC volunteers Deepak Ranjan Pradhan, Kahnu charan Pradhan, MD Mustaffa and Himansu Sekhar Behera provided first-aid service at the camp.

NIMAPARA WOMEN'S COLLEGE ANNUAL FEST HELD



Nimapara: The annual function of the Indra Gandhi Women's Degree College here was held on Wednesday. School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash was chief guest. Among other, Mass Education Deputy Secretary Dr Surekha Sundari Swain, writer Dash Behur, college Principal Sradhanjali Sahu, former Principal Sanjukta Mohanty, Chhapala Chhanda Biswal and Junior College Principal Anupama Swain were present. Students were awarded for their accomplishments in sports, cultural activities, education, etc. Lastly, a cultural programme was performed by students.

LANKESWARI CUP FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT HELD



Balanga: A State-level Lankeswari Cup Football Tournament organised by the Lankeswari Football Club, Balanga was inaugurated here on Tuesday. Puri MLA Jayanta Sarangi inaugurating the tournament said the Central Government has introduced the Khelo India and Fit India programmes to promote sports and develop sports skills of youths. In the inaugural match, the Jaga United Club, Bhubaneswar defeated the Friends Paradise, Jatni. Among others, BJP Mahila Morcha State president Pravat Parida, BJP puri district president Ashrit Kumar Pattnayak and club president Pravat Kumar Roy were present.

Woman stabs hubby to death in M'giri

PNS ■ MALKANGIRI

A woman allegedly stabbed her husband to death after an altercation between the two at Apanmala village under Balimela police limits in Malkangiri district.

According to reports, a heated exchange of words erupted between Antu Muduli and his wife Chandrama after an

issue. The incident took a violent turn as the woman lost her cool and thrust a knife into his chest killing him on the spot.

Being informed, Balimela police reached the village, recovered the body for post-mortem and started an investigation. A case has been registered in this connection while the accused has been detained by cops for questioning.

Youth held with brown sugar in underwear

PNS ■ PURI

Excise officials on Wednesday nabbed a youth from Sakhigopal and seized 30 gram of brown sugar from his underwear. The contraband worth around Rs 3 lakh brought from Jaleswar in Baleswar district was about to be sold by the youth, said excise officials.

The youth, who was later remanded to judicial custody, was identified as Gagan Sahu (27) of Hatapada village under the Delanga police station. At about 6.30 am on the day, he was returning from Jalweswar to his village after getting down at the Sakhigopal railway station. Acting on a tipoff, the



excise sleuths stayed alert on the National Highway at Sakhigopal and caught him after a search. They found the drug in a polythene packet hidden in his underwear.

Incision of rare pseudoaneurysm performed



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Manjulata, a 46-year-old woman, had been brought to the BR Life Kalinga Hospital here with complaints of a large painful swelling on the right side of neck for past three months. A CT angiogram was conducted which revealed pseudoaneurysm, which is a collection of blood that forms between the two outer layers of an artery, arose from the occipital artery.

In Bhubaneswar, this was the first time that such a rare operation was done successfully under the supervision of Dr Karunakara Padhy, Director CTVS at BR Life Kalinga Super Specialty Hospital. The size of the pseudoaneurysm was 10x14cm. Speaking about the treatment, Dr Padhy said, "At the time of diagnosis, Manjulata was diagnosed with a pseudoaneurysm in the occipital artery. The clots were

cleaned, and bleeding occipital artery was repaired in the surgery which lasted for three hours. The patient has recovered now and will be able to lead a normal life."

Thanking the doctors and the hospital Manjulata said, "I am fortunate to have visited the hospital on time and got treated before it was too late. I am thankful to the doctors and the other staff members who supported me and took care of me during my hospital stay."

Three Odisha girls to get Bravery Award

CM announces cyclone shelter in K'pada girls' honour

January 2, 2019, Srimati Badra (10) of Angul district has been chosen for the ICCW Prahalada Award for helping a friend who lost her right leg in a train accident.

Soon after a picnic boat down and lost her right leg. Srimati pulled Pramila forcefully out of the track and carried her on her shoulder for 300 metres up to her residence. Thereby she could be saved.

On Wednesday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik conveyed his greetings to Sabita and Purnima for being chosen for the National Bravery Award.

Patnaik also announced that a cyclone shelter would be constructed at the high school where the two are currently studying. He sanctioned Rs 1.20 crore for the purpose.

The two girls would lay foundation-stone for the building, added an official release.



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Three girls from Odisha among 22 children would receive the ICCW National Bravery Awards 2019 at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on the eve of Republic Day this year.

While Purnima Giri (16) and Sabita Giri (15) of Kendrapada district would get the ICCW Dhruvi ward for their heroic act of saving 12 persons from drowning in a river full of crocodiles on

carrying 52 persons sank in a river in Nipania village on January 2, Purnima and Sabita dove into the river and saved as many as 12 persons from drowning. As many as 11 picnickers had died in the incident.

On November 27, 2018, Srimati along with Pramila Munda were crossing a railway track when a stationary goods train suddenly started moving. Though Srimati successfully crossed the track, Pramila fell

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Newly-wed woman killed for dowry in D'nal

PNS ■ DHENKANAL

The body of a newly-wed woman was found wrapped in a sack was found in a forest near Parshurampur village under Rasol block in the district on Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as Aarti Sahoo (27), daughter of Santosh Sahoo of Parshurampur village.

Sources said Aarti was in a love relationship with one Sujit Sahoo, a resident of Colony

Sahi of Parshurampur. The couple got married around seven months ago. During the time of marriage, Aarti's in-laws had demanded dowry, following which her parents had given them Rs 1 lakh cash.

But her in-laws were allegedly demanding more dowries since then.

On the day, when Aarti's father visited her house after hearing about her illness, he found the house locked. When he inquired, a neighbour told him that Aarti's in-laws killed her and took the body in an auto-rickshaw somewhere.

Later, her father lodged a murder complaint against her in-laws at the Rasol police station. Following which police conducted a search and found the body stuffed in a sack in the jungle. The cops sent the body for postmortem to ascertain the exact cause behind her death. Later, the police arrested Aarti's husband, father-in-law and mother-in-law in this connection.

Tourism conf at Eco Retreat from today

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Tourism will host a National Tourism Conference on January 23 and 24 at the Marine Drive Eco Retreat at Konark with an objective of building strategic Centre-State and inter-State partnership for boosting sustainable tourism. The conference will be organised in association with the FICCI.

"Under the leadership Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, the Government of Odisha has always emphasised that East and Northeast India in particular will greatly benefit from best practices in cooperative federalism in tourism and hospitality. High spending tourists seek long stays and diverse experiences. If we can jointly curate circuits and collaboratively devise strategies to refine tourism across inter-State borders, we will all win. The objective of the conference is to formulate such a shared vision," said Tourism Minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi.

U'khand Police hold second training session for Kumbh Mela 2021



PNS ■ HARIDWAR

The second training session of the police personnel deputed to Kumbh Mela 2021 duty was inaugurated by the Director General of Police Anil Raturi on Wednesday. Along with the police personnel, representatives of various Akhadhas and Ganga Sabha were also present on the occasion.

Raturi sought the blessings and cooperation of the religious fraternity for the Kumbh Mela to be held at Haridwar in 2021.

The DGP further expressed confidence that any problems faced will be overcome to ensure successful completion of the Kumbh Mela.

In addition to Raturi, the DG (Law and Order) Ashok Kumar, Kumbh Mela inspector general Sanjay Gunjyal and Kumbh Mela senior superintendent of police Janmejy Khanduri also shared their views with the police personnel on the occasion.

Further, Mahant Ravindra Poori from Mahanirvani

Akhada and Ganga Sabha president Pradeep Jha also assured that coordination among the religious fraternity, local people and visiting devotees will make the Kumbh Mela 2021 successful.

Later, those undergoing the training were also taken to the Kumbh Mela control room building. They were informed about the police control room, CCTV network and communication system by Haridwar deputy superintendent of police Mukesh Thakur.

Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. 09 of 2019-20

1.	Number of Works	:	12 nos of Road works
2.	Estimated Cost	:	Varies from Rs 4.42 Lakhs to Rs 26.52 Lakhs
3.	Period of Completion	:	1 calendar month
4.	Date & Time of availability of Bid documents in the Portal	:	29/01/2020 at 11:00 hrs
5.	Last date & time for receipt of Bids in the Portal	:	04/02/2020 at 17:00 hrs
6.	Last date & time of seeking tender clarification in the Portal	:	03/02/2020 at 15:00 hrs
7.	Date of Opening of Tender	:	05/02/2020 at 11:00 hrs
8.	Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	:	Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Jagatsinghpur

Further details can be seen from the Government website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Rural Works Division
Jagatsinghpur

25056/11/0007/1920

CRPF facing critical shortage of armoured troop carriers

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Amid heightened threat to its troops and Amarnath Yatra pilgrims later this year, the CRPF — the lead agency for internal security and conduct of Yatra — is facing a critical shortage of armoured troop carriers to transport the paramilitary personnel in Jammu & Kashmir.

Officials said, the paramilitary is facing a shortage of up to 40 per cent of the sanctioned strength, a figure being withheld in order to avoid any risk to the troopers from the terrorists in the Valley.

The preparation for the Amarnath Yatra begins in March and a meeting was held

in the Home Ministry for procurement of the armoured troop carriers, sources said.

The shortage of the armoured troop carriers has accrued over the years as the paramilitary has not been able to procure bullet proof vehicles from Original Equipment Manufacturers during the last one decade, leading to an alarming shortfall in such vehicles, they said.

The security forces especially the CRPF is facing enhanced threat from the terror groups post-abrogation of Article 370 and reorganisation of the erstwhile State of Jammu & Kashmir into two Union Territories — J&K and



Ladakh, officials said, adding approvals for procurement of the specialised vehicles are yet to see the light of the day

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The security forces especially the CRPF is facing enhanced threat from the terror groups post-abrogation of Article 370

The Amarnath Yatra that is held between July and August is estimated to be tough from the security perspective as it will be the first such Yatra to be conducted after change in the special status of J&K

Last year, the Amarnath Yatra was called off midway ahead of the decision to scrap Article 370 on August 5 as a well calculated move to avoid any risk to the pilgrims

despite the Pulwama incident last year in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed while travelling in a convoy consisting of

non-armoured buses.

"The sanctioned numbers of bullet-proof bunker vehicles are badly needed as addition-

al deployment of 25 battalions of the CRPF was made in the Valley in anticipation of aggravated law and order situation following nullification of Article 370 that granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir," an official said.

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The terror groups are also seeking to find traction among the youth as the jihadi ranks are facing crisis due to the wiping out of the terror leadership in the Valley owing to counter-

terror action by the security forces in the last two years.

Last year, the Amarnath Yatra was called off midway ahead of the decision to scrap Article 370 on August 5 as a well calculated move to avoid any risk to the pilgrims.

In 2017, Amarnath pilgrims were targeted by the terrorists in July 2017 in which eight religious tourists were killed and over 30 others injured.

Likewise, in June 2016, the banned terror group Lashkar-e-Tayyeba ambushed a convoy of CRPF vehicles in Pampore and killed eight uniformed men of the paramilitary and injuring over 20 others.

INSHORT

JAPAN'S HUGE INFRA INVESTMENT IN N-E

New Delhi: Japan has huge investment in infrastructure projects in the Northeast and is collaborating with several States in the region in areas like forest, sewerage and disaster management, the Centre said on Wednesday. The issue was discussed threadbare when a delegation led by Japanese Ambassador Satoshi Suzuki called on Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region Jitendra Singh, an official statement said.

GOVT TO UNVEIL ACTION PLAN TO BOOST ECONOMY

New Delhi: The Government will unveil its "plan of action" to boost the economy in the Union Budget to be presented on February 1, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said asserting that economic fundamentals remain very strong.

43 FLIGHTS SCREENED FOR NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

New Delhi: A total of 43 flights and 9,156 passengers were screened for novel coronavirus till Tuesday at the seven identified airports including Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, Union Health Ministry said on Wednesday. Till now, no cases have been detected through these screening efforts, the Ministry added.

MoRD SIGNS MoU WITH BILL GATES FOUNDATION

New Delhi: The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) on Wednesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana — National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), for furthering their mutual objectives of strengthening grassroots institutions of the rural poor.

CBI ARRESTS 2 ENGINEERS FOR TAKING BRIBE

New Delhi: The CBI on Wednesday arrested an assistant garrison engineer and a junior engineer from the Garrison Engineer's office in Dehradun for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 40,000 for clearing bills.

Children in J&K are nationalists not culprits: Rajnath

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat said girls and boys between the age group of 10 and 12 years were being radicalised in Jammu & Kashmir, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday said the children from there are "nationalists" but sometimes get motivated in the wrong direction and those guiding are the "culprits."

Rawat had also said the misguided youth have to be weaned away by lodging them in deradicalisation camps.

Dispelling the notion of radicalisation, the Defence Minister said those youngsters "should not be seen in any other way."

Making this observation when asked about his opinion on the children from Jammu & Kashmir being motivated to join the National Cadet Corps (NCC), he said, "Youngsters are youngsters only. Sometimes, the way they should be motivated, people do not motivate them. In fact, they are motivated in the wrong direction."

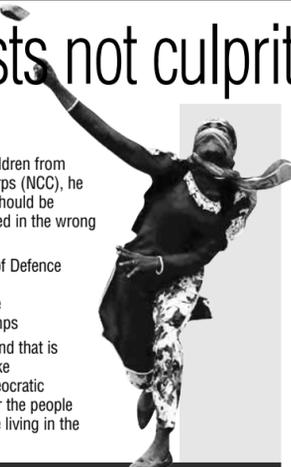
"That is why the kids should not be blamed for this. The ones who are wrongly motivating them should be

Dispelling the notion of radicalisation, the Defence Minister said those youngsters 'should not be seen in any other way'

Making this observation when asked about his opinion on the children from Jammu & Kashmir being motivated to join the National Cadet Corps (NCC), he said, Youngsters are youngsters only. Sometimes, the way they should be motivated, people do not motivate them. In fact, they are motivated in the wrong direction

In his address during the Raisina Dialogue here last week, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin had said children as young as 10 to 12 years are being radicalised in Kashmir and there is need to isolate those completely radicalised and put them in deradicalisation camps

Defence Minister said Indian values consider all religions equal, and that is why the country is secular and never became a theocratic state like Pakistan...Even America is a theocratic country. India is not a theocratic country. Why? Because our saints and seers did not just consider the people living within our borders as part of the family, but called everyone living in the world as one family," the Minister said



everyone living in the world as one family," the Minister said.

Singh underlined that India had never declared its religion would be Hindu, Sikh or Buddhist and people of all religions could live here." They (saints and seers) gave the slogan of 'Vasudev Kutumbakam' — the whole world is one family. This message has gone to the whole world from here only," he added.

He later presented Raksha Mantri Padak and commendation cards to NCC cadets and observed band and cultural performances of NCC cadets. Praising the parade and various performances of cadets, the Defence Minister said it has been able to boost the sense of national pride among Indian youth.

He also said the NCC plays an unparalleled role in transforming the youth into future leaders. "Today, NCC cadets can be found in almost every field, including Armed Forces, politics and sports. Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is taking our country to newer heights, was an NCC cadet," Singh said. He also recalled his days as a cadet of the largest uniformed youth organisation in the world.

blamed. The ones who are motivating them in wrong direction are the culprits," the Defence Minister added. He made these remarks after attending the Republic Day annual camp of the NCC.

In his address during the Raisina Dialogue here last week, Rawat had said children as young as 10 to 12 years are being radicalised in Kashmir and there is need to isolate those completely radicalised and put them in deradicalisation camps.

He said radicalisation can be countered by looking at

where it is happening and who are behind it. The CDS also said radicalisation is happening in schools, universities, religious places and sites and then there are people spreading this. "First we need to get to the nerve of who is radicalising people. You can start isolating these people gradually and then start a counter radicalisation programme by identifying people who have been radicalised, to what degree..." he had said.

Meanwhile, addressing the NCC cadets, the Defence Minister said Indian values consider all religions equal,

and that is why the country is secular and never became a theocratic state like Pakistan. "We (India) said we would not discriminate among religions. Why did we do that? Our neighbouring country has declared that their state has a religion. They have declared themselves a theocratic state. We didn't declare so."

"Even America is a theocratic country. India is not a theocratic country. Why? Because our saints and seers did not just consider the people living within our borders as part of the family, but called

Gadkari convenes 2-day marathon review meet of all ongoing projects

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Road, Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari has convened a two-day marathon review meeting on Thursday and Friday of all the ongoing projects, worth Rs 3 lakh crore, of his Ministry as also that of the central road making agency NHAI.

Ministry sources said progress of about 500 projects especially struck/delayed projects will be taken up during the meeting to be held at Manesar near national Capital. Various stakeholders numbering about 600 Concessionaries/Contractors/Bankers and concerned officials of Union Governments and its Departments/Organisations, State NH Division, State PWD Departments will be attending the review meeting on January 23-24.

"This meeting is an important platform for ironing out issues and exploring the way forward for pending projects and helping in expediting the implementation," said a MoRTH official. Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways General (Retd) VK Singh will also attend the marathon meeting.

Officials said the first day of the meeting projects of South Zone (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Pondicherry, Karnataka) and Central Zone (Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat) will be reviewed while projects

of Haryana, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal will be taken up on Friday.

The projects in the States of Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra and Goa will be taken up afterwards. It may be stated that issues related to projects of North-Eastern States, and NHIDCL have already been reviewed in a separate meeting early this year.

This is the second time

within a week when Gadkari will be chairing a meeting of entire Transport Ministry and stakeholders with the first being the National Road Safety Council meeting last week when it was deliberated to improve road and highways infrastructure.

In the meeting, expressing concern for fatalities on roads, Gadkari had advocated to penalise the officers for faulty engineering of road infrastructure.

PM takes stock of progress made in 9 delayed projects

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday took stock of progress made in nine delayed projects, worth Rs 24,000 crore and spread across as many States at the first meeting of 'Pragati' this year.

These projects are in Odisha, Telangana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Bihar, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh. These include three from Railways, five from the Road Transport and Highways and one from the Petroleum and Natural Gas ministry, the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

Modi also reviewed the performance related to insur-

ance schemes — 'Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana' (PMJJBY) and 'Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana' (PMSBY).

The progress under the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) project, which is a comprehensive and integrated system for effective policing through e-governance, also came up for review.

In the last 31 'Pragati' interactions, Modi has reviewed a total of 269 projects with a total investment of Rs 12.30 lakh crore.

He has also reviewed the resolution of grievance redressal related to 47 Government programmes and schemes across 17 diverse sectors.

BJP calls Cong 'Muslim League Congress'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Charging the Congress with "Muslim appeasement" and "insulting Hindus", the BJP on Wednesday quoted Maharashtra Minister Ashok Chavan's comments on installation of a non-BJP coalition Government in the State to say the party should be termed "Muslim League Congress".

Citing Chavan's reported remarks that the Congress joined hands with the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra as Muslims also wanted the party to stop the BJP from coming to power, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra accused Congress of betraying interests of Hindus and appeasing Muslims.

"The Congress leader says they joined the Government for Muslims. What is the sin of Hindus, Sikhs and others. The Congress has insulted Hindus and this comment has exposed it," the BJP leader claimed.

At his press conference Patra referred to comments of many opposition leaders, including those from AIMIM, to allege that they were "abusing" Hindus in the name of anti-CAA protests and sought apology from Congress president Sonia Gandhi and NCP's Sharad Pawar.

Patra also drew attention to the reported comments of AIMIM leader Akbaruddin Owaisi, whose brother Asaduddin Owaisi heads the party that Muslims ruled over the country for eight centuries to refer to him as Jinnah, Pakistan's founder

Citing Chavan's reported remarks that the Congress joined hands with the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra as Muslims also wanted the party to stop the BJP from coming to power, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra accused Congress of betraying interests of Hindus and appeasing Muslims

For his part, Union Minister Giriraj Singh reacted saying, "Wo Mughal lutere thay. Aap Bharat ko darane ka kaam na karen. Jinnah ke raaste par na chalein. Bharatvanshi ab jaag chuke hain."

Asked about Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge's reported jibe at the RSS for its "non-participation" in the freedom movement, Patra shot back, asking if parents of Sonia Gandhi, who is of Italian origin, had fought in India's independence struggle.

The Indian National Congress, he said referring to the opposition party's full name, should be called "Muslim League Congress". The Congress does "Muslim appeasement" for the community's votes but has never done any good for it, he claimed.

Pointing to a report in an Urdu daily, Patra said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had once described his party as a 'party of Muslims' and its leaders coined terms like saffron terror. Since 1946, Patra claimed the Congress has done "Muslim vote bank politics".

BJP's focus is only 'Loot & Scoot': Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday said the "Suit-Boot" BJP Government's focus is only on the industry of "Loot & Scoot" and under its rule "Common man is in pain but Con-man is in gain". The party questioned whether the BJP-led dispensation is involved in Frost International Bank Scam of Rs 3,592.48 crore and in the escape of its directors.

The Congress alleged the total bank fraud during the BJP's tenure amounted to over Rs 2.7 lakh crore.

The party stated political accountability must be fixed on Prime Minister and Finance Minister for Rs 2,70,513.49 crore public money looted from banks and Rs 5,00,000 crore written off of willful defaulters.

Congress spokesperson Jaiveer Shergill slammed the Government for not taking timely action against the directors of Frost International which is alleged to have defrauded banks to the tune of Rs 3,592 crore. He alleged that it was the Government that prevented the lodging of complaint in the scam.

"When the consortium of lending banks had authorised registration of complaint on June 15, 2019, why did it take more than seven months to register a complaint? Was someone in the BJP Government preventing the

registration of complaint?" Shergill questioned at a Press conference.

"When the PSBs having Government nominees on board were aware that the company is unable to return the money, why did it take them a year to request the MHA to issue a lookout notice?" he said.

The grand old party also

queried as to why the lookout notice was delayed.

"Despite issuance of LOC on January 18, 2019, why and on whose directions in the BJP Government did the investigating agencies not register a case till January 19, 2020, for an entire year against the suspected offenders who remain untraceable till date?" Shergill said.

NPR good when UPA brought it, bad when we repeated it: Javadekar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Prakash Javadekar on Wednesday hit out at parties questioning the National Population Register (NPR) saying it was welcomed in the past when the then Congress-led Government introduced it but is being dubbed as "bad" when the NDA regime is repeating it.

He also said the provision of "naturalisation" to grant Indian citizenship to foreign nationals in the principal Citizenship Act of 1955 still remains and Pakistani singer Adnan Sami became an Indian citizen due to that.

"That provision (of naturalisation) still remains. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) takes note of persecuted minorities in three countries (Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan) who came to India seeking justice ... The amendment is about giving citizenship and not taking it," Javadekar said at a briefing of the decisions taken by the Union Cabinet.

Kerala and West Bengal are some of the States who have opposed the NPR exercise. The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to stay the amended citizenship law without hearing the Centre.

Responding to a question on the issue, Javadekar said, "Those who are opposed to the Citizenship Amendment Act made have their own views,

but the Supreme Court decided not to give it (CAA) any stay," he said.

Responding to questions on the NPR, he said giving date of birth or place of birth of parents is optional in the exercise. "If you don't have it or don't remember, don't give it... Many questions are optional," he said.

Referring to the origin of the NPR, he pointed out that it was introduced by the Congress-led UPA Government in 2010. "Then you all welcomed it. They bring it, it is good. When we bring, it is bad. This cannot be the case. This is not fair," he said.

The Minister said the National Register of Citizens is limited to Assam and it was brought by then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. "They brought it (NRC) so it is good. We did not bring, so we are bad," he quipped.

To a question, the senior BJP leader said at one point of time, thousands of Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka were given Indian citizenship.

Responding to a question on "proposed" police action in Delhi's Shaheen Bagh, he said no action is on in the area.

"No action is being taken in Shaheen Bagh, there is a complaint... Police went to Jamia (university) there was a complaint, they did not go (enter) the JNU (campus), there is a complaint. This is not done (Aisa toh nahin chalta hai)," he said.

India bans toxic chemical hydrochlorofluorocarbon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to combat climate change, India has banned import of toxic chemical hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC)-141b used in the production of rigid polyurethane (PU) foams by foam manufacturers from January 1, 2020.

Since HCFC-141b, greenhouse gases that damage the earth's ozone layer, was not produced in the country, all the domestic requirements were being met through imports.

However, the Union Environment Ministry issued a notification last year in December seeking ban on import of the foam manufacturing companies. With this, India has completely phased out the important ozone-depleting chemical, said an official from the Ministry.

HCFC comprises inert compounds of carbon, hydrogen, and fluorine, and it is used instead of chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) as it is less destructive to the ozone layer. At present,

HCFCs are used in various sectors like refrigeration and air conditioning (RAC) and foam manufacturing. These sectors are directly related to urban development, agriculture through cold chain, and industrial development.

Simultaneously, the use of HCFC-141 b by foam manufacturing industry has also been closed as on 1st January 2020 under the Ozone Depleting Substances (Regulation and Control) Amendment Rules, 2014, said

a senior official from the Union Environment Ministry.

Nearly 50 per cent of the consumption of ozone-depleting chemicals in the country was attributable to HCFC-141 b in the foam sector.

The Ministry had adopted a structured approach to engaging with foam manufacturing enterprises for providing technical and financial assistance in order to transition to non-ODS and low GWP technologies under the HCFC Phase-out Management Plan

(HPMP), said the official.

Around 175 foam manufacturing enterprises have been covered under HPMP out of which, 163 enterprises are covered under stage II of HPMP. The complete phase-out of HCFC 141 b from the country in the foam sector is among the first at this scale in Article 5 parties (developing countries) under the Montreal Protocol.

The implementation of HPMP through regulatory and policy actions, implementation of technology conversion pro-

jects has removed around 7800 Metric Tonnes of HCFC 141-b from the baseline level of 2009 and 2010 of the country, he said.

The phase-out of HCFC-141b from the country has twin environmental benefits viz. assisting the healing of the stratospheric ozone layer, and towards the climate change mitigation due to transitioning of foam manufacturing enterprises at this scale under HPMP to low global warming potential alternative technologies.

CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT

Speak the truth about it: Didi to Shah

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A day after Amit Shah attacked her for spreading disinformation about the Citizenship Amendment Bill inviting her to an open national debate on the issue, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday lashed out at the Union Home Minister for talking big but hesitating to come out with the truth about the CAA.

Banerjee who led an anti-CAA rally in Darjeeling with more than a thousand people referred to Shah's speech saying "yesterday I heard the Home Minister making tall speeches saying that I am telling lie about CAA and National Population Register... Now if we are lying let him tell the truth to the people. Let him tell whether

CAA is a selective Act which discriminates among people. Let him tell about the conditions mentioned in the NPR. Let him mention whether those who will be granted citizenship will have to live as foreigners for the first five years or not."

"And if such be the conditions then he will have to say whether the people will lose jobs because aliens cannot work in India... whether the children will lose their school certificates and whether the citizens will lose their rights to property they now own."

Wondering whether most of the people in the crowd had the date of births of their parents, Banerjee asked, "Do you have date of births of your parents? Is this how a responsible

Government works. They do not even the same thing at the same time. In the something they say something and in the evening they other something. They say date of birth is not mandatory. If it is not mandatory, why is it there in the columns?" she added.

Referring how thousands of Nepali speaking people had been banished from the National Citizenship Register, Banerjee said, "People are scared that if CAA and NRC are implemented they will be uprooted. I want to tell the hill people not allow NRC and CAA."

Referring to the rising inflation and decreasing jobs Banerjee said, "see what they have made of the Indian economy. They promised acchhee din (good days) but where the

jobs. Why so many people are unemployed today. Why the farmers are not getting their due and respect. Why Government factories like ordinance factory (in Kolkata) are being shut down... They are selling the country... and to hide these all they are raising the issues of CAA."

Claiming that in order to turn the attention of the people from grim economic scenario and failed promises she said, "they are setting people of one religion against the other. They are dividing the people to rule but implementing CAA, NRC and NPR," adding those who are protesting are being termed anti-Indians.

"The students are being beaten up if they raise their voices, the Opposition is harassed by the Agencies (read

CBI, ED etc) when they are raising the contentious issues. They are calling them Pakistanis. I want to ask why do you always bringing in Pakistan. Do you have extra love for that country to invoke its name always?" Banerjee asked.

She said the BJP leaders always were foul-mouthing her for protesting against their policies. "I want to tell the BJP that foul-mouthing me all the time will not work. Tell us whether you will withdraw CAA or not. If CAA is not a mischievous Act then why did you leave out Assam and Tripura, the States ruled by BJP? Why are these BJP-ruled states out of the purview of CAA?" There would be no CAA, NRC or NPR in Bengal she insisted.



Protesters participate in a demonstration against CAA and NRC at Shahjahanpur Eidgah in Aligarh on Wednesday PTI

Prashant Kishor dares Shah over CAA-NRC

Patna: Poll strategist-turned-politician Prashant Kishor fired a fresh salvo at the BJP on Wednesday, daring Union Home Minister Amit Shah to "go ahead and try implementing" the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the National Register for Citizens which the latter had "audaciously announced to the nation."

Kishor, who is the national vice president of the JD(U), is helping Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party for the upcoming Assembly polls even though his own party headed by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has tied up with the BJP to take on the less than a decade old party.

"Being dismissive of citizens dissent could be the sign of strength of any Govt. @amitshah ji, if you dont care for those protesting against

#CAA_NRC, why dont you go ahead and try implementing the CAA & NRC in the chronology that you so audaciously announced to the nation!", Kishor wrote on his twitter handle.

The 42-year-old, whose first claim to fame was his handling of Narendra Modi's spectacularly successful election campaign in 2014, made the remarks in the backdrop of Shah's assertion at a pro-CAA rally in Lucknow that "CAA is here to stay and it will not be taken back", countrywide protests by opposition parties and others notwithstanding.

The Bihar BJP was, expectedly, ruffled by the latest outbursts of Kishor, who joined the JD(U) about two years ago, got elevated to the top party post within weeks, and has been taking a public stand on the burning issue that has embarrassed the NDA. "There is no move

on #NRC by the Govt but #CAA is now a legislation made by Parliament. Respect the Constitution. Dont worry. The Supreme Court has agreed to listen to the voice of dissent. Just to satisfy the professional ego and political frustration why creating hue and cry", state BJP spokesman Nikhil Anand said replying to Kishor's tweet.

"You have all the right to disagree but selective propaganda on religious lines to suit the Congi (sic) style politics of Muslim appeasement must not be encouraged. The Gazette notification to start the process of #NPR and implement #CAA is published. Won't be taken back at any cost, Anand added.

The JD(U) did not react to Kishor's comment. Party leaders are refraining from saying anything on the poll strategist-politician's assertions in recent times. PTI

Protesters 'lathicharged' by police in Etawah

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

People protesting against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act were allegedly lathicharged by police in a Muslim-dominated area in Uttar Pradesh's Etawah district even as demonstrations continued against the legislation in Lucknow and Aligarh.

A video of the Etawah incident, where policemen can be seen using batons and chasing away protesters in the area on late Tuesday night, has also gone viral on social media.

Violence broke out when police tried to disperse the protesters who were observing a sit-in since Tuesday morning in Pachraha area, defying prohibitory orders imposed there.

"Police used force against us while we were holding a peaceful protest. Our brothers and cousins were beaten up and we were abused. We were physically tortured. We have a right

to protest," one of the women protesters said.

Responding to the allegations, police said the protesters had staged a dharna defying prohibitory order imposed in the area and pelted them with stones. Police said they had to use mild force to chase the protesters away.

In the video, policemen can be seen entering houses and shops.

The sit-in was organised in solidarity with the women protesting at Shaheen Bagh in Delhi against the new legislation.

"Police are citing prohibitory orders to end our protest. What about the large public meetings being held by ministers," another protester said. In Lucknow, protesters at the Clock Tower (Ghantaghar) in old city area of Lucknow held a symbolic 'havan' with Hindu women joining them.

Rajnath: India fulfilled its 'moral duty' by enacting it

Meerut: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday said religious minorities in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh are living a "life of misery" and India has fulfilled its "moral duty" towards them by enacting the CAA.

Addressing a rally in support of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in Shatabdi Nagar here, he also questioned those opposing the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and said the government has not discussed it.

Dismissing allegations that the Centre is pursuing a "divisive agenda" through the CAA, Singh said the BJP doesn't do politics on religious lines for selfish gains.

"In Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, religious minorities are living a life of misery. India has fulfilled its moral duty (by enacting the CAA)," he said.

"The entire world is accepting India's power. We don't do politics on the lines of religion for selfish reasons," he said.

The citizenship law is being viewed from a Hindu-Muslim perspective, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks of justice, he added.

Singh said the NDA had prepared the citizenship legislation in its first tenure, but it could not be enacted.

On the NRC, Singh said, "The government has had no discussion on the NRC. And suppose it has, then what is the problem with having a register of citizens?"

"Shouldn't there be a register of citizens? Shouldn't there be a document for people to seek benefits of government schemes," he asked the crowd at the rally.

Singh said the BJP wants to do politics by winning people's hearts and asserted that the

party is working to fulfil all its promises.

"Whenever a political party contests elections, it makes various kinds of promises. I was given the responsibility to prepare the BJP's manifesto for the 2019 (Lok Sabha) elections. Within seven months of being elected, the BJP has been rapidly fulfilling its promises," he said. "I want to assure the people of India that our party will deliver on whatever it promises. We do not want to cheat the people," he said. "By the end of 2022, every house will have a pucca roof. Tap water will reach every household by the end of 2024. PM Modi put Rs 6,000 each in the bank accounts of farmers," he added.

The minister said the BJP had also taken steps for farmers' welfare. "Farmer brothers need not worry, we will pay you every single penny for your hardwork," he said. PTI

Khadi fights back to prevent misuse of trademarks globally

Seeks protection under article 6ter of Paris Convention

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has stepped up efforts to prevent misuse of its brand and symbol both within the country and on foreign soil. KVIC is proprietor of over 100 trademarks including the symbol of 'Charkha' in India and other countries like Russia, China, Germany, Australia, UK and Bhutan.

These trademark and symbols have been misused time and again by private players. In an initiative to prevent such misuse, KVIC has taken up the matter with the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Commerce and Permanent Mission of India at UN, Geneva seeking International Trademark protection of symbol of 'Charkha' under the article 6ter of the Paris Convention.



Article 6ter of the Paris Convention for the protection of Industrial property of 1883 (1967 Stockholm Act) safeguards armorial bearings, flags and other State emblems as well as official signs and hallmarks of the States party to the Paris Convention. The signs published with World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) under this act are prevented from being registered or used as trademarks, across the world, without authorisation.

Speaking about the initiative, Chairman KVIC VK Saxena said, "KVIC is one of those unique institutions in India that links the nation's past, present and future on its

functional plane, through self-reliance and sustainability. Ever since the pre-independent era, Khadi has been considered as the national symbol for Swadeshi. The word marks KHADI, KUTIR, "SARVO-DAYA and the logo of Khadi India and Charkha are the harbingers of this spirit of Swadeshi, hence, must be protected at all cost."

Saxena said that due to the negligence of earlier Governments, some private entities managed to register these symbols to fulfill their personal material motives. This initiative to prevent wrongful use of the trademarks will help reinstate the dignity and pride attached with Khadi and the

symbols representing it, he said.

Saxena has written to Commerce Minister Shri Piyush Goyal seeking his intervention so as to expedite the matter pending with the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) which comes under the Ministry of Commerce.

KVIC is fighting cases in several countries for violation of the Khadi Mark Regulations. The regulations issued in 2013 by the Ministry of MSME, empowered KVIC to grant 'Khadi Mark' registration and take royalties from any producer using the Khadi Mark. In continuation, KVIC has issued notices against 600 entities in India, including a renowned garment chain and 3 entities in the International market for misusing these symbols and indulging in unfair trade practices in the recent past.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been endorsing Khadi and due to his appeals the sale of Khadi has gone up manifold," Saxena said.

CBI registers fresh four cases against Chhota Rajan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has taken over the probe into an attempt to kill a veteran journalist in 1997 and three other fresh cases allegedly involving jailed gangster Chhota Rajan.

Noted crime reporter in Mumbai Baljeet Shersingh Parmar was severely injured when motorcycle borne shooters of Rajan allegedly attacked him outside a building at Antop Hill on June 12, 1997.

The agency has taken over the Mumbai police FIR in the case filed under IPC Section 307 (attempt to murder).

The agency has registered two more cases of extortion by alleged gang members of Rajan and one case related to issuing threats to life, according to the FIRs.

The agency has booked Rajan and his henchmen Guru Satam and Suresh for allegedly demanding Rs 20 lakh as extortion money from businessman Devang Bipin Parikh in 1995.

The other case pertains to alleged demand of ₹ 25 lakh in 1998

from a man named Ghisulal Jain by Hemant, who is believed to be a member of Rajan gang, officials said.

The Mumbai police had filed charge sheets in both the cases but Rajan remained absconding, they said.

The last case is related to threats issued to the life of builder Shabbir N Patel and his son in 1996..

In November last year, the CBI had taken over 10 cases, including those of extortion and murder, in which Rajan was an accused. These cases were registered in a 14-year period since 1992.

These cases include killing of trade union leader Datta Samant in 1997 in Mumbai in which Rajan's role is suspected.

Rajan was arrested at Bali airport in Indonesia on October 25, 2015, and deported to India.

He is an accused in around 70 cases in Maharashtra, including the J Dey murder case in 2011. After this, the Maharashtra government had handed over all the cases relating to Rajan to CBI.

Pavan Varma's conduct an act of indiscipline: senior JD(U) leader

PTI ■ PATNA

Janata Dal (United) leader Vashishtha Narayan Singh on Wednesday took strong exception to party colleague Pavan Varma questioning 'in public' the tie-up with BJP for the Delhi Assembly polls by extending the alliance beyond Bihar, calling it 'absolutely' an act of indiscipline.

Singh, a Rajya Sabha member and the head of the JD(U)'s state unit, asserted that the decision to align with the BJP was taken after "due deliberation".

He further said although the party respected freedom of thought of every member, it was 'anuchit' (inappropriate) on part of the career diplomat-turned-politician to make public his letter to the Chief Minister and national president Nitish Kumar.

"I consider his (Varma's) conduct as inappropriate and will put forth my views forcefully whenever a party meeting takes place", Singh told a news channel. He also said "if there were any reservations, these ought to have been expressed in a party forum. People may have their individual opinions and the party respects that. But airing these in public is something I do not approve of".

He also said Varma had 'absolutely' committed an act of indiscipline by sharing on the social media his two-page letter to Kumar in which the chief minister was reminded of the unease he had been allegedly expressing 'in private' over the BJP's ideology and agenda.

KPCC to announce jumbo office bearers list this week

ARUN LAKSHMAN ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Congress which has been without a proper committee will be announcing the list of office bearers by this week end. While State Congress chief and former Union Minister of State for Home, Mullappally Ramachandran was adamant for a "One man, One post" rule to be implemented in the list of office bearers, the powerful "A" and "I" group managers of the party scuttled the move.

The "A" group led by former Chief Minister Oomen Chandy was somehow accommodative to the suggestion of the KPCC president, but the "I" group led by the Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala did not budge for the "One man, One post" theory and hence the party will once again be having a jumbo list of office bearers.

In addition to the KPCC president, there will be five working presidents in Kodikkunnil Suresh, PC Vishnunath, K Sudhakaran, KV Thomas and VD Satheshan. There will be six vice presidents and thirty general secretaries in the list followed by sixty secretaries. The number of state executive members of the party is yet to be decided.

With the advent of Sonia Gandhi back as the AICC president, senior leaders of the party had a major say and it was after much confabulations and inter party discussions, the list is to be finalized. However it is learnt that KPCC president Mullappally Ramachandran was adamant that party leaders with criminal antecedents will not be accommodated as office bearer which was met with stiff resistance from the group managers.

Interestingly in the agitation against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA),

Mullappally has taken a stiff position that there will not be any joint agitation with the CPM. This was after the opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala had taken the initiative for a joint agitation with the CPM and other left forces and Oomen Chandy supporting this. Mullappally had stayed out of the meeting.

Incidentally the AICC high-command - read Sonia Gandhi - had stood by the position taken by the KPCC president and in the press conference held at Kerala house, New Delhi both Chandy and Chennithala had to bite humble pie and subscribe to the position taken by the KPCC president. In the list of party office bearers also, the KPCC president had done his maximum to reduce the number of contenders and sources in the Congress party told *The Pioneer* that the list would have been double the present figure had not Mullappally taken a strong stand.

Antony, Venugopal, Mullappally axis developing in Kerala Cong

ARUN LAKSHMAN ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A new troika has emerged in the Kerala Congress scheme of things with two powerful leaders of the party, AK Antony, CWC Member and close confidant of Sonia Gandhi and KC Venugopal, AICC general secretary (Organisation) and close associate of Rahul Gandhi putting in their weight behind the beleaguered KPCC president Mullappally Ramachandran who was being pushed around by the "A" group and "I" group.

Sources in the Congress told *The Pioneer*, that it was the strength of these two leaders that Mullappally had taken on both Chandy and Chennithala on the CAA issue and raised the red flag for the joint agitation with the CPM.

To solve the vexed issue of announcing the list of office bearers, both these leaders had thrown their weights behind the KPCC president and at the same time carefully seeing it to that the group managers are not offended.

The support of these two powerful leaders who have a major say in the organisational affairs of the Congress party has given a fresh impetus to Mullappally who is fast emerging as a major power centre in the state

Congress.

With the state going to polls in 2021 and the Congress led UDF all set to replace the LDF Government led by the CPM, there are possibilities of Mullappally being considered as the Chief Minister candidate as there is bound to be fight between Ramesh Chennithala and Oomen Chandy for the CM post.

There is already a subtle whispering campaign in the corridors of State Congress that an Ezhava leader has not don the mantle of Chief minister of the Congress since R Shankar who was Chief minister from 1962-64.

With the Congress led UDF winning nineteen of the twenty lok Sabha seats in the last general elections, the graph of Mullappally Ramachandran has gone high and the seven term lok Sabha member who has won the parliamentary elections from the CPM bastion of Vatakara is keeping his fingers crossed. "These are early days to comment on the Chief ministership and my primary responsibility is to work among the grass root and to strengthen the party machinery. 2020 we have to face the local body elections and in 2021 the assembly elections and these two are my present priorities", Mullappally told *The Pioneer*.

Suspect in Mangaluru airport bomb case surrenders

Bengaluru: A 36-year-old man, who is suspected to have planted the explosive at the Mangaluru International Airport, surrendered before the police here on Wednesday, officials said.

The suspect has been identified as Adithya Rao, a native of Manipal, police said, adding that he resembled the one captured on CCTV footage at Mangaluru airport.

The man turned up at the DG and IGP office here in the morning, where he was detained and taken for medical tests and preliminary inquiry done, they said. The suspect confessed to having planted the bomb at the airport, police said.

He is reported to have got information on making the explosive via internet, sources said.

"One suspect named Adithya presented before police between 8-9 am, claiming that he was responsible for Mangaluru incident—he will

be handed over to Mangaluru police team for further investigation..." Bengaluru (Central) DCP Chetan Singh Rathore told reporters earlier in the day.

A team of police officials, led by an Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) from Mangaluru arrived in the city later to question the suspect and carry out necessary legal procedures.

Police sources said, Rao, an engineering graduate and an MBA holder, who was taken to Ulsoor Gate police station in Bengaluru for questioning, was subsequently handed over to Mangaluru police, which is investigating the case.

He was presented before the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) court here and transit warrant secured, officials said, adding that he will be produced before a court in Mangaluru on Thursday to obtain his custody. PTI

Trump offers to 'help' resolve Kashmir issue

Davos: President Donald Trump has said that the US is watching the developments between India and Pakistan over Kashmir "very closely" and repeated his offer to "help" resolve the dispute between the two neighbours during his meeting with Prime Minister Imran Khan here.

Addressing the media with Prime Minister Khan prior to their private meeting on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum here on Tuesday, President Trump asserted that trade and borders were both critical points for discussion, while Khan said that for him, Afghanistan was the top priority.

Trump told Khan, whom he referred to as 'my friend', that he would speak to Prime Minister Narendra Modi about



the ongoing Kashmir issue. The US president is expected to visit India in the coming weeks, marking his first visit after taking up his post in the White House.

"What's going on between Pakistan and India... if we can help, we certainly will be willing to. We have been watching it very closely and it's an honour to be here

with my friend," Trump said.

"The Pakistan-India conflict is a very big issue for us in Pakistan and we expect the US to always play its part in deescalating the tensions, because no other country can," Khan said.

President Trump has repeatedly offered to mediate following India's August 5 decision to revoke the special status to Jammu & Kashmir and bifurcate the Sate into two Union Territories, evoking strong reactions from Pakistan which has been trying to internationalise the issue.

No scope for third party mediation: Govt sources

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As President Donald Trump again offered to "help" India and Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue, New Delhi on Wednesday categorically asserted that there is no role for any third party on the issue.

Government sources also said India's long-held position has been that Kashmir is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan.

Responding to Trump's offer, they said there is no question of any mediation or intervention by any third party.

This assertion came after the US President, while addressing the media with Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan in Davos on Tuesday, said the US was watching the developments relating to Kashmir "very closely" and repeated his offer to "help" resolve the dispute.

It was Trump's fourth offer in last five months to help both the countries resolve the Kashmir issue after India withdrew the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated the state into two union territories.

"What's going on between Pakistan and India... if we can help, we certainly will be willing to. We have been watching it very closely," Trump said.

Official sources said India's clear and consistent position has been that there is no role to play for any third party on Kashmir. The US President is expected to visit India in the second half of February.

It is learnt that India had communicated to Washington after Trump's offer to mediate on Kashmir last year that it is a bilateral matter with Pakistan.



Villagers at a polling station during the second phase of Panchayat elections at Nasirabad in Ajmer district on Wednesday

Mumbai gets nod to remain open 24x7 from January 27

New 'Vibrant Mumbai Nightlife' policy will not be applicable to bars, pubs and restaurants serving liquor

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

After initial resistance from certain quarters, the Maharashtra Government on Wednesday approved the implementation of its much-discussed 'Mumbai 24x7' or 'Vibrant Mumbai Nightlife' policy from the intervening night of January 26 and 27.

At a weekly meeting presided over by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, the State Cabinet gave a go-ahead for the 'Mumbai 24x7' policy without tweaking the current excise rules which permit service of alcoholic beverages only till the existing time limits of 1.30 am.

In effect, the new 'Vibrant Mumbai Nightlife' policy will not be applicable to bars, pubs and restaurants serving liquor, which will be permitted to serve alcoholic beverages only till the existing time limits of

1.30 am.

The new 'Mumbai 24x7' policy — which is a brain child of Shiv Sena leader and current Tourism and Environment Minister Aditya Thackeray — will allow malls, multiplexes and eateries in the designated areas to function round-the-clock.

State Home Minister Anil Deshmukh, who had initial reservations about implementing the Mumbai 24x7 because of security reasons and on the ground that bars and restaurants cannot serve liquor, came around after Aditya — at a meeting held a few days — convinced him that the policy could be implemented without tweaking the current State excise rules and imposing a lot of burden on the city police force.

Addressing a news conference jointly with the State Home Minister after the State

Cabinet gave a nod for the Mumbai 24x7, Aditya said: "Mumbai's identity is being that of a safe city. In Mumbai, you can get to see women and women moving around Marine Drive and other places safely at around 2 am or 3 am. Mumbai police perform their duty well. But, take the case of tourists coming to Mumbai, they would not be in the city for more than 36 hours. To increase the employment and tourism in Mumbai, we came up with the Mumbai 24x7 proposal in 2013. We are implementing it after seven years."

"We will implement this policy in malls and mill compounds coming under the Shops and Establishment Act. The malls and mill compounds are in non-residential areas. The people do not live inside these places. There are facilities like parking lots, CCTV, decibel limits, solid waste management. All the establishments there are licenced ones. We are giving permission to all these establishments to remain open for all 24 hours."

In fact, the Maharashtra Shops and Establishments

(Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 2017, allows all establishments to operate around-the-clock.

"There would not be any change in the excise rules. The liquor will be served only up to 1.30 am in bars and restaurants. We are changing that. We are providing facilities who want to eat out, go for shopping or movies. The MVA Government is a people's Government. We are Government of aspirations. Unlike the BJP Government, we want to encourage the youngsters," the Tourism Minister said.

Home Minister Anil Deshmukh said that the State Government would ensure that there was no stress on the police force.

"We do not enforce anything here. If some units are not able to keep their establishments for all 24 hours, they can do so. It is not the job of the state government to increase the footfalls. We are enabling the owners of these establishments. Mumbai being an international city, we are giving a 24x7 facility," Aditya said.

"London's nightlife econo-

my is 5 billion pounds. In Mumbai, there are five lakh people who directly employed in this service sector. When we say that employment will increase because of Mumbai 24x7, it is because the owners of these establishments will have to employ their staff in three shifts. Going that logic, we will have an employment potential of 15 lakh people or at least 10 lakh people in this service sector. Keeping these establishments open, state revenue will increase through various taxes," he said.

"I do not think there will be tension for the police. Currently, the police personnel do is to track if the establishments are open beyond the stipulated hours rather than controlling crime. Now they do not have to do that job and can concentrate on the job they are meant to do. If the establishments want more security, they can employ private security or hire police security by paying money," Aditya said.

Public distribution and civil supplies minister Chhagan Bhujbal said that Mumbai

Police Commissioner and Municipal commissioner would decide where nightlife would be allowed. "During the meeting a lot of suggestions came in. Like in some of the railway stations of Mumbai where there is rush for 24 hours, people come and go, eateries could remain open there," Bhujbal said.

Earlier this week, at the bi-annual crime conference, Uddhav, along with his Cabinet colleagues and bureaucrats, held a meeting with the city police officers Mumbai 24x7 proposal.

Police Commissioner and Municipal commissioner would decide where nightlife would be allowed. "During the meeting a lot of suggestions came in. Like in some of the railway stations of Mumbai where there is rush for 24 hours, people come and go, eateries could remain open there," Bhujbal said.

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Tribal boy commits suicide at Govt school in Maha's Palghar

Palghar: A 14-year-old boy allegedly committed suicide at a Government-run residential school for tribal children in Maharashtra's Palghar district, the police said on Wednesday.

Sunil Khandvi, resident of Beriste village, was the student of a government-run Ashram school at Hirve Pimpalpada in Mokhada tehsil, a police official said.

His body was found hanging from the window grill of the school toilet on Sunday.

The school superintendent told the police that Khandvi had written in the school register on January 19 that he was going home and would remain absent for a few days.

However, the next day he was found to have hanged himself with a bed sheet in the school toilet, the police officer said. The reason for committing suicide was yet to be ascertained, he said, adding that further probe was on.



President Ram Nath Kovind on Wednesday conferred the Bal Shakti Puraskar 2020 to 49 children in the age group of 5-18 years at a ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhawan here. The Bal Shakti Puraskar is given to children in the fields of innovation, social service, scholastic, sports, art and culture and bravery and carries a medal, a cash prize of ₹ 1 lakh, a certificate and a citation

NIA shifted Davinder Singh to Jammu

PNS ■ JAMMU

National Investigation Agency (NIA) team, interrogating Davinder Singh, DySP arrested by the police along with Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist Naveed Babu from Jammu-Srinagar National Highway on January 11, shifted him to Jammu along with other arrested terrorists on Wednesday.

The NIA team, which took over the probe from the Jammu & Kashmir police recently, is trying to establish the link whether Davinder Singh was regularly transporting HM terrorist Naveed Babu to a relatively safe hideout in Jammu and whether he was also in touch with over ground workers (OGWs) active in the region to facilitate hassle free stay of HM commander.

Last week, police had also arrested younger brother of Naveed Babu, studying in Chandigarh.

According to highly placed sources, Naveed's brother had carved out a safe hideout for his brother in Bhatindi area of Jammu and the same was likely to be used for accommodating terrorists, ferried by Davinder Singh at the time of arrest.

Anantnag and also took stock of the security in other districts," DGP Singh said.

"We have strengthened the security measures in Srinagar ahead of the Republic Day," he added. In the run up to the Republic day celebrations, a high alert has been sounded in Jammu and Kashmir after intelligence inputs suggest of possible terror strikes.

According to latest intel reports, a joint module of Jaish-e-Mohammed and Hizbul Mujahideen militants have been tasked by their handlers in Pakistan to carry out dastardly attacks in the run up to the Republic day.

There are inputs that militants could launch suicide attacks on security installations in south Kashmir and defence positions across the south of Pir Panjal in the Jammu region.

According to inputs, terrorist movement has also been traced in areas of Srinagar and Budgam districts.

Raut: Uddav to visit Ayodhya on completion of 100 days of power

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

In an apparent effort to indicate that it has not deviated from its Hindutva path after forming a Government with the Congress and NCP, the Shiv Sena on Wednesday announced that its president and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray would visit Ayodhya after the MVA Government completes 100 days in office.

Announcing the Chief Minister's impending visit to Ayodhya, Shiv Sena MP and spokesperson Sanjay Raut tweeted: "Chalo Ayodhya! CM #UddhavThackeray will visit Ayodhya on the completion of 100 days in power! @OfficeofUT"

In another tweet, Raut said: "Our government has begun performing its duties in great vigour. We shall complete five years in office. After government completes 100 days. CM Uddhav Thackeray shall go to Ayodhya. After seeking blessings of Lord Ram, will decide on future course of action."

Uddhav, who had announced after the Supreme Court verdict in the Ayodhya dispute case that he would go once again Ayodhya on November 24, 2019, had postponed his visit then, owing to the impasse in the govern-

ment formation in the state. The public perception was that the Sena would soft-peddle its Hindutva agenda as long as it is running the government in the state with the Congress and NCP.

It may be recalled that Uddhav had on November 25, 2018 — along with his wife Rashmi and son Aditya, had visited Ayodhya. On June 16, 2019 year after the Lok Sabha polls, he once again visited Ayodhya and offered prayers at the makeshift Ram Lalla shrine.

However, atmosphere has changed after he joined hands with the "secular" and NCP to form a Maha Vikas Agadhi government in Maharashtra. The perception that has been gaining ground in the state political circles that in order to ensure that there is no threat to its government in the state the ruling Shiv Sena is pursuing the Hindutva as vigorously as it was doing earlier. So much so that its erstwhile ally BJP has been taking pot shots at the Shiv Sena for giving up on its Hindutva agenda for the sake of power.

Interestingly enough, Raut came out with a tweet a day ahead of the first grand convention of the Raj Thackeray-led Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS). It is speculated

that at the convention, MNS chief Raj Thackeray embrace the Hindutva path and change the colour of his party flag.

Raj had recently met former Maharashtra chief minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis, sparking speculation about the possibility of the MNS joining hands with the Amit Shah-led party.

Meanwhile, talking to media persons, Raut extended invitation to Congress' former president Rahul Gandhi and NCP chief Sharad Pawar to accompany Uddhav Thackeray to Ayodhya. "We want that our alliance leaders should also come along. Rahul Gandhi also visits several temples."

On her part, BJP national spokesperson Meenakshi Lekhi had earlier in the day wanted to know if Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray would also take Congress leaders along with him to Ayodhya. How the alliance partners of the Sena react? How will he show his face to them — to the ones who questioned the very existence of Lord Ram, even went to the Supreme Court stating the same," she said.

Uttar Pradesh's deputy chief minister Dinesh Sharma described Uddhav's impending visit to Ayodhya as a "political stunt".

Maha makes film 'Tanhaji' tax-free

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

The Maharashtra Government on Wednesday announced that the historical drama 'Tanhaji — The Unsung Warrior' would be tax-free in the State till April 30, 2020. At its meeting presided over by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, the State Cabinet decided to waive State Goods and Services Tax (SGST) on the tickets of Tanhaji — The Unsung Warrior and compensate for the loss from its exchequer. "Thank you Uddhav Thackeray ji for declaring #Tanhaji The UnsungWarrior tax-free in the State of Maharashtra. @OfficeofUT @CMOMaharashtra," lead actor in the film Ajay Devgn tweeted.

The martyrdom of Tanaji Malusare — the Commander of the Maratha Empire headed by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj — in the bloody battle of Sinhagad Fort in Pune with the then commander of the fort Udaybhan Sinh Rathore allied with the Mughals, holds a special place in the state's history.

The governments of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana had earlier exempted 'Tanhaji — The Unsung Warrior' from tax.

High alert in J&K ahead of R-Day

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

After losing two soldiers, one each from the Indian Army and Jammu & Kashmir police during fierce gunfight in Khrew area of Pampore in South Kashmir's Pulwama district on Tuesday, a joint team of security forces on Wednesday once again trapped group of terrorists responsible for killing their buddies, one kilometre away from the encounter site, and eliminated at least one terrorist.

According to ground reports, massive searches were going on in the Khrew area after the initial gunfight with terrorists resulted in killing of two soldiers. Due to bad weather and poor light conditions, the search operations were halted and the same were resumed early Wednesday morning.

After the fresh contact was established with the hiding terrorists, the security forces tightened the cordon and eliminated at least one of the terrorists in the ensuing encounter, official sources said.

Confirming the elimination of one of the terrorists, twitter handle of the Jammu & Kashmir police posted a message which read, "Police & Security forces killed one of the killers of Martyred SPO



Shahbaz Ahmed and Martyred Rifleman Rahul in this operation even before bodies of these martyrs reached their respective homes. Operation is going on at Nagander one kilometre away from yesterday encounter site."

Official sources claimed, security forces were conducting random searches in the area since Wednesday morning to track down the foot prints of the terrorists hiding in the area. Meanwhile, mortal remains of both the soldiers were dispatched to their native places after a formal wreath laying ceremony in Srinagar. Senior police and Army officers paid their tributes to both the martyrs. Interacting with the media in Srinagar, DGP Dilbagh Singh said, the security has been beefed up in Kashmir.

"All arrangements have been made with regard to security measures on ground, the security in South Kashmir has been reviewed. We visited

Jammu: Police recruitment drive for women gets good response

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

To realise their childhood dream of donning 'khaki' uniform and serve the mother Nation, large number of 'enthusiastic' young girls from remote areas of Jammu region are queuing up outside Police headquarters for last couple of days, braving adverse weather conditions, to participate in the special recruitment drive aimed at raising two women battalions.

So far aspirants from hilly districts of Doda, Ramban, Kishtwar and twin border districts of Rajouri, Poonch have attended the first leg of the special recruitment

drive, currently underway at Gulshan ground.

Since early morning, aspirants start converging along with their parents and family friends to attend the rally. Since they are travelling from far off places they prefer reaching venue at the earliest to avoid any last minute hiccups. The atmosphere inside the Gulshan ground was electrifying when group of media persons reached the venue of the special drive.

In the first leg, the candidates were undergoing physical endurance/standard test. After clearing the first hurdle, jubilant candidates were allowed to interact with media persons for

a short span of time. The candidates, greeted them with patriotic chants and loud cheers. "We are feeling proud, we are participating in the recruitment drive despite facing many hardships." Several candidates, names not being disclosed, claimed they wanted to serve the mother Nation by joining the police force. "I am very optimistic, after clearing the first round without facing any major hurdle i am set to participate in the second round", a NCC cadet from Bhallessa in Doda district said.

Another candidate from Ramban claimed, "i want to help my family. We have seen many ups and downs during

our childhood days, now i want to help my parents as they had struggled alot while raising my siblings and ensuring better education facilities for us".

Senior police officers, supervising the recruitment drive told reporters in Jammu, "the morale of the aspiring candidates is very high and they are all keen to serve the police force".

Briefing media persons, Inspector General of Police (Armed) Danesh Rana said, "the current recruitment drive is aimed at raising two women battalions, one each for Jammu and Kashmir divisions".

He said, the candidates are being screened in a very pro-

fessional manner. We have allocated district wise quota for aspiring candidates. Rana said, "we are following a very transparent process. There is no scope of any human intervention during the recruitment drive and only meritorious candidates are expected to make it to the final list".

Union government had earlier announced two women battalions in June 2018 to enhance the representation of women in the Police force. The final sanction was given by the State Administrative Council (SAC) under the chairmanship of former Governor Satya Pal Malik in January 2019.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Miffed allies

Slighted by the BJP over seats, the Akali Dal and Dushyant Chautala refuse to contest Delhi polls



The allies are proving to be an itch again for the BJP in the run-up to the Delhi Assembly elections and though it may not be betting big on them, the mutual differences are worsening its arrogant and abrasive image. The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), its long-time ally, which was hoping to contest six seats, has now decided to withdraw from the race altogether, citing irreconcilable differences on several issues, primary among them being the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The SAD is dead against the religion-based conditionality in the new law and wants all minority communities (some Ahmadiyyas are in Punjab) to be included. Besides, the BJP was pushing it to contest under the lotus symbol, clearly intended to subsume federal parties under its umbrella than that of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Ever since the Akali leadership has passed into the hands of Sukhbir Singh Badal and the SAD has been pushed down the ladder of political dominance in Punjab, it has slowly and steadily been asserting its independence. By choosing to end the alliance in Delhi, it hopes to douse the fire of criticism in Punjab that it is now being guided by the Hindutva ideology and supporting contentious issues like the abrogation of Article 370 and CAA without looking at the bigger picture. Its core constituency feels these issues serve a predominantly Hindu voterbase and do not find much resonance among Sikhs, who have been shortchanged. This has become more pronounced after the Akal Takht jathedar, Giani Harpreet Singh, publicly lambasted Hindutva, going so far out as to seeking a ban on the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS).

Already Congress Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, by passing an Assembly resolution against the CAA, has pushed the Akalis into a corner. As for Delhi, there are around 10 lakh Sikh voters, who could potentially affect the results in about 10 of the 70 Assembly seats. Question is whether this slippage would impact the BJP vote share. Rifts between the Akali Dal and the BJP have been widening ever since the seat-sharing fiasco in the Haryana Assembly elections, with the latter attempting to poach some of its candidates. While all of these moves may seem hurtful to the coalition dharma, fact is the emaciated SAD needs the BJP's majoritarian weight to have a stake in both Central and State politics. The BJP, post the mammoth Lok Sabha verdict of last year, is not looking to be overtly dependent on the Punjabi vote in the city. In fact, it doesn't see too much of a community drift, arguing that the presence of the Akalis could have led to an ideology-based split. It claims the neutral Sikh vote would come its way and is, in fact, hoping to divide the Sikhs as those with Panthic loyalties and those that are non-aligned. In that sense, it is trying to undercut the Akalis. Besides, the Delhi BJP, which once thrived on the anti-Sikh riots sentiment to draw the Sikh vote towards it from the Congress and had the Punjabi Hindu vote with negotiators like Madan Lal Khurana, is now much more dependent on other community votes like the Purvanchalis while consolidating its hold among Baniyas. The shift in the power axis is apparent from the fact that the BJP has accommodated both the Janata Dal (United) and the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), allocating three seats between them, clearly with an eye to the Bihar elections. However, both these allies are not with their fair share of troubles. JD(U) senior leader Pawan K Varma has sought "ideological clarity" over the seat-sharing with BJP in Delhi while colleague Prashant Kishor continues asking questions on CAA. Other than the SAD, the Jannayak Janata Party (JJP), the BJP's newest ally in Haryana, will also not be contesting the Delhi elections. Led by the fiery young descendant of the Chautala clan, Dushyant Chautala, it claims it didn't get the electoral symbols of its choice and is, therefore, withdrawing from the race. But there were murmurs of the party wanting to contest at least 12 seats. There is a sizeable Jat population that can swing the results in Najafgarh, Mundka, Mahipalpur, Mehrauli, Nangloi, Badarpur, Devli and Chhattarpur. And while Dushyant may not openly challenge the CAA, fact is he is finding it hard to justify a relationship of convenience politically. The BJP may not need the allies numerically now because it has stepped out of the pretend politics of Modi 1.0 and is gung-ho about its solo majority status. But it cannot consolidate its India map without its federal partners given its recent drubbing at the State polls. And with its oldest ideologically-friendly ally, Shiv Sena, walking out, it certainly could do without more friends turning foes and eroding popular trust in the process.

Another deadly virus

With complex strains emerging in China, we should ask why this is happening at all when dealing with public health risks



It looks like every second year, a new deadly contagion emerges in China. First, it was SARS, then Avian Flu, which was followed by Swine Flu and now, a new coronavirus has taken over the Chinese city of Wuhan. This new virus is estimated to have infected over 400 people, nine of whom have died. Thanks in no small part to the boom in international air travel within and outside China, which connects even secondary cities such as Wuhan, cases have spread in several countries now, including across the Pacific in the US. Earlier viruses like Avian Flu or Bird Flu were thought to have originated in illegal poultry farms where animals were kept in unhygienic conditions. In the case of Swine Flu, too, the emergence of the virus was in pig farms. Avian Flu led to the killing of millions of birds at poultry farms as they were culled. With the emergence of Swine Flu, where the virus was thought to have passed from domesticated pigs to humans, thousands of pigs were eliminated as well. And now, this latest virus, which does not have a moniker as yet, appears to have emerged from the illegal trade in marine wildlife in that Chinese city.

All of this does raise questions about hygiene standards and food quality issues that many towns and villages in China face behind the new glass and concrete skyscrapers. In this part of the world, illegal trading of animals and bird farms is common, often next to human dwellings. It should not be a surprise then that when pathogens do the dreaded inter-species skip, such an environment becomes an enabler. It is, therefore, contingent upon the Chinese authorities to get to the bottom as to why these new pathogens are emerging. This should be done on an urgent basis because the next outbreak may not be as contained or worse but more virulent and deadlier. Public health officials have been warning about the potential of a next global pandemic to rival the Spanish Influenza of exactly a century ago when an estimated 50-100 million people died, including around 17 million people in India. This is one reason why Indian authorities must be vigilant. During the Avian Flu crisis, authorities pre-emptively culled millions of chickens in poultry farms across the country. It is good to know that passengers arriving from China are being scanned at Indian airports. However, we have to stay on our toes and urge the Chinese to clean up their act.

A never-ending crisis

As more details about the Boeing 737 MAX emerge, it is becoming clearer that a fair dose of arrogance pushed the American plane-maker



KUSHAN MITRA

Boeing's internal documents, which revealed that executives mocked aviation regulators and airlines across the world, including India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), were hugely damaging for the American planemaker and marked a torrid start to 2020 after a horrific 2019. The year began in the aftermath of the Lion Air 737 MAX crash in Indonesia. Using "friendly" media sources, Boeing executives said that poor pilot training (and the lack of it) was the primary cause of the crash. While there may have been an element of truth to that, the second 737 MAX crash of an Ethiopian Airlines jet, seconds after takeoff from Addis Ababa, dealt the final blow.

As a result, Boeing's 737 MAX fleet was grounded worldwide, some regulators doing it sooner than others, but the aircraft manufacturer kept on producing planes, even though they could not fly. Planes kept coming off the production line at over 20 a month, leading to over 200 aircraft being parked at Boeing's plant in Renton, Washington. However, with little space to keep so many airplanes — Boeing was also forced to park planes in employee car parking lots — the American manufacturer decided to suspend production a few weeks ago.

It is extremely fortuitous that the grounding of the Boeing 737 MAX has not collapsed the global aviation industry. It is noteworthy here that the MAX was still a new aircraft and had not been fully integrated with fleets across the world. The grounding is now beginning to impact growth opportunities for airlines. With large American carriers like American Airlines and Southwest Airlines, which are the largest operators of MAX, now delaying the re-introduction of the plane all the way till the middle of this year, this crisis is not going to end anytime soon. Boeing's nose has been grounded to the tarmac, its reputation ruined.

In most other industries, such a crisis might have been fatal for a company but the global airliner manufacturers' duopoly between the American Boeing and the European Airbus, where the latter has smartly and carefully not uttered a word or even celebrated the former's woes, makes the Coke-Pepsi duel look like a violent conflict in comparison. While the Chinese and the Russians are trying to up their game in the civilian airliner market — some could even argue that Boeing's fall has given them an opportunity — they are far from being an effective contender. It takes several billions of dollars and an army of engineers to develop a new aircraft. Right now nothing can beat the entrenched players.

But at the end of the day, the entire MAX crisis that has engulfed Boeing comes down to the fact that the manufacturer did not want to spend a huge sum of money on developing a new plane. The Boeing 737 is a design



that dates back to the early 1960s, the airworthiness certificate given to the aircraft is one that was issued almost seven decades ago. The Boeing 737 has been an immensely successful plane. During 2018, Boeing delivered its 10,000th 737 with a backlog of close to 5,000 aircraft remaining in its books. It has been off the competition over the years as well. The McDonnell Douglas DC-9 and Douglas MD80 family could not keep up with the success of the Boeing and eventually Boeing acquired McDonnell-Douglas.

However, the Airbus A320 family, developed by the European planemaker in the early 1980s, was a different kettle of fish. With its highly advanced wing and computerised fly-by-wire technology, Boeing had to develop new technology to keep the 737 competitive. So when Airbus decided to refresh the A320 with modern new high-bypass ratio engines, which would reduce fuel consumption, it got a lot of interest from airlines. While Airbus has had its share of problems over the years, particularly around the A380 super-jumbo, the A320 has been a money-spinner. With modifications in new engines — the New Engine Option (Neo) — it would become even more attrac-

ive. Despite the problems that India's low-cost carrier IndiGo has suffered with Neo aircraft, nearly a thousand such planes are in service currently. Boeing had to do something to keep up with the rising competition. Neo's efficiency gains over the existing generation 737 were massive.

But Boeing had a problem. When it started developing the 737 in the 1960s, it did not have to face much in terms of ground clearance and kept riding low to the ground. This made it easier for planes to service at smaller and less prepared airports, which were all but common in the 1960s and the 1970s. In fact, it was this very ability, coupled with it having lower engines, that made it attractive to the airlines. Even when the 737 was improved, few changes were made to this end. The problem with high-bypass ratio turbofan engines today is that to gain a perfect ratio, the front fan has to be massive. The 737's basic architecture made fitting such a new engine nearly impossible. And while Boeing should have ideally developed a new aircraft altogether, market realities made that an impossibility. It took it over a decade to develop the 787 Dreamliner with an overly optimistic entry into

service schedules. The subsequent delays left the company with a bloody nose.

The 787 is an immensely successful aircraft today, hundreds of them forming the backbone of airline fleets across the world. But Boeing did not have the time and its management thought of developing a new aircraft. A better option, no matter what the physics, would have been to re-engine the current airframe with minor modifications.

Well, the modifications were not simple. In order to fit a larger fan, Boeing engineers had to move the engine further forward and above the wing. This caused some major problems to the aerodynamic properties of the 737 but these could be solved. Pilots could be trained to deal with the changes. Then came another problem. One major selling point for airlines is to calculate the number of additional training pilots needed when they move to a new type of aircraft. Pilots trained on the regular Airbus A320 could fly the new A320 Neo with just a couple of hours of orientation. Boeing promised pretty much the same even though it was obvious — something that the stash of internal emails revealed — that pilots should have taken many more hours of training for

the MAX, even some hours inside the simulator.

The issue, as many people know now, is that Boeing decided to integrate much more software into the MAX to augment flying characteristics. One of those pieces of software was the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS), which in low-speed conditions, usually after take-off, would keep the plane from stalling. With the engines of the 737 MAX being shifted so much further forward, the centre of gravity of the plane, too, being far forward, only software could resolve it. As we know now, the MCAS system depended on good data from the sensors outside the aircraft. Sensors can fail and usually those failures should be notified, as on cars, to cite an example. But Boeing just made an alert system for a sensor data mismatch, an optional extra on the 737 MAX, even though it was but a software switch. The MCAS system made some sudden changes to the planes flightpath and without proper training to recognise the software intervention, pilots onboard had no clue how to deal with the issue. With little altitude, the pilots of the Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines aircraft slammed to the ground.

At the end of the day, a company, once known to be extremely fastidious on the engineering front, made a stupid mistake. A firm that almost bankrupted itself while developing the Boeing 707 and then almost did so again with the Boeing 747 — which has proven that it can redefine the market even in contemporary times with the Boeing 777 and Boeing 787 — has ruined its reputation, thanks to the unnecessary shortcuts it took. As is being made clear in the emails for the public to see, sheer arrogance of its executives made matters worse.

It is being made apparent that the Boeing 737 MAX will not make it back into the service before mid-year. A freshly empowered Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the civil aviation regulator in the US, will not be in the pocket of Boeing as it was once. It is unlikely that a company so vital to America's trading interests and its defence industry will be allowed to collapse. But the arrogance on display at the company was little different from that displayed by the bankers before the financial industry collapse of 2008. Boeing has to do a lot to repair its reputation and salvage the image of Boeing 737. Being humble shall make for a very good start.

(The writer is Managing Editor, The Pioneer)

SOUNDBITE

With no development on its agenda, the ruling party is making a complete exposition of its agenda to create a Hindu *rashtra*.

Congress MP
—Shashi Tharoor



Growing up in a country like India, you see wealth and poverty live together in such a symbiotic way... seeing that you become desensitised to it.

Actor
—Priyanka Chopra



What's going on between Pakistan and India... if we can help, we certainly will be willing to. We have been watching it very closely.

US President
—Donald Trump



Normalcy acrobatics is in full swing even as Kashmir continues to reel under a crippling internet shutdown and leaders remain detained.

PDP president
—Mehbooba Mufti



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Righting the wrong

Sir — A peaceful protest by Kashmiri Pandits to mark the 30th anniversary of their mass exodus from the Kashmir Valley grabbed some attention. Through it, they appealed to the Government to take plausible and sincere steps to rehabilitate them in the Valley. Successive Governments have only paraded their cause. Largely, they have either ignored the Pandits or used them for their selfish end. Left liberals, rights activists and secularists, too, have turned a blind eye to their rightful grievances though they have been campaigning for the rights of minority communities in general. Are Kashmir Pandits not a minority in the Valley? After the nullification of Article 370 and the revocation of special status to the former State of Jammu & Kashmir, it is the responsibility of the Union Government to restore normalcy in the Valley and rehabilitate the displaced Pandits willing to return. Even after the Supreme Court's directive, little action has been taken.

Nimai Charan Swain
Bhubaneswar

Crash barriers will make roads safer

This refers to the report, "Crash barriers planned to slash NH fatalities" (January 22). The Centre's plan to install crash barriers along its existing National Highways (NH) and make them mandatory for all future highway projects is welcome. This step is bound to bring down the number of crashes and fatalities. Coming closely on the heels of the enactment of the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019, that calls for stricter punishments for traffic violators, the installation of crash barriers will require a big push from the powers that be to make it a reality.

Crash barriers are designed to withstand the impact of even high speed vehicles and are expected to slide and roll the vehicles back on the road while keeping the level of damage to them as well as the barriers within acceptable limits. As per statistics, less than five per cent of the total network of about 1.50 lakh km of highways have installed crash barriers. India accounts for the highest number of road deaths in the world. The total number of accident-related deaths in 2018 stood at



1,51,417, indicating an increase of 2.3 per cent over 2017 figures. About 85 per cent of accident-related deaths happen in the most productive age group of 18-60. Cost effective solutions for crash barriers are available worldwide. All we need are implementation and adoption.

Shubham
Via email

Growth trouble

Sir — Once again, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has slashed India's growth estimate to 4.8 per cent for this fiscal year and 5.8 per cent for 2020-21. Observers attribute such grim forecasts to an economic slowdown.

In the Indian context, the current growth projection follows a downward trend from 7.5 per cent last year to 6.1 per cent in October. It is disheartening that while growth projections have continued to decline in the recent past, the Government has taken little cohesive action for revival and has instead been demanding rate cuts from the

Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Yet India is projected to be the second-fastest growing major economy in the world after China. There are miles to go for that to happen. The Government has to come up with a big bang strategy to revive growth.

Srishti Mathur
Ujjain

The clock is ticking

Sir — At a time when the country is faced with severe economic slowdown and given the seriousness of the problem of unemployment with agrarian crisis, too, at its peak, the common man is expecting relief and progressive measures in the Budget that is to be presented on February 1.

However, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is busy attending various forums and meetings to defend the Government's decision to implement the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). With just a few days left for the Budget, one would have expected the Finance Minister to be giving finishing touches to it. Despite the fact that Sitharaman has taken several measures to revive the economy, the situation isn't showing any signs of improving. The Budget must focus on reviving demand, investment and growth. All of this must be done in a transparent manner.

Anna Mary Yvonne
Chennai

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

The tech-savvy road to health

Technology has not been a disruptive force in senior healthcare but that story is set to change over the next six years, says **Sushant Reddy**

We have just celebrated our entry into a new decade. The defining theme of the first two decades of this century was the rise of technology start-ups and their transformative change in our lives. Just 10 years ago, none of us could have imagined the lifestyle changes created by internet-enabled platforms and aggregators like Uber, Amazon, Swiggy, Zomato, Hotstar or Netflix. However, there are some sectors where technology hasn't had such a transformative effect, yet. One such is healthcare and more specifically, healthcare for senior citizens. What is senior healthcare? This in itself is a very generic term; in fact, the term is so generic that everything, from an Out Patient Department to in-hospital care to the pharmacy can be grouped into this category.

Broadly speaking, senior healthcare can be classified into four areas: Hospital care, preventive care, home care and healthy living.

Hospital care: This is what everyone easily relates to as traditional healthcare. Episodic events such as emergencies, illness, injury treatments at a hospital come under hospital care.

Preventive care: All aspects of healthcare that are preventive in nature such as diagnostic tests, pharmacy, doctor consultations, disease management (diabetes, hypertension), health insurance and so on fall in the category of preventive care.

Home care: Healthcare services delivered at home such as nursing, physiotherapy, home Intensive Care Unit (ICU), dialysis and chemotherapy services, medical devices and so on come under this.

Healthy living: Services that enable a healthy lifestyle for seniors such as custom-designed senior homes, smart tracking devices, companionship services and so on come under this tag.

The fact remains that senior healthcare is a massive challenge. India is in the middle of a rapid demographic and cultural transition — senior citizens above 60 years are over a 100 million today and constitute eight per cent of the total population. This figure is expected to grow to 350 million, an estimated 20 per cent of the total population by 2050, a dramatic rise in the older population, both in size and proportion.

Another massive factor driving this transition is a mass migration, both domestic and international, of educated, urban youth that happened during the 80s, 90s and the first decade of the 21st century. The country recorded over 30 million international migrants and 139 million domestic migrants as of 2017.

These challenges have increased India's senior healthcare burden exponentially and the problem is compounded by the fact that despite massive technological advances in this century, it has not yet created a disruptive impact in the senior healthcare industry. This is because of three main reasons, fragmented and localised service providers, low tech savviness of seniors and language barriers.

Fragmented and localised service providers: Traditionally senior healthcare services have been very human-intensive. The role of care provider was and still remains extremely critical and everything else was not a deal breaker.

Low tech savviness of seniors: All things equal, technology adoption of millennials is much higher than that of senior citizens. While seniors are comfortable with popular apps like WhatsApp and YouTube, adoption of other technology in general has been less than spectacular.

Language barriers: English is not a preferred conversational medium for most senior citizens and as most technology platforms are designed for urban, English-speaking customers, this becomes a major mental obstacle not only for senior citizens but also for care providers.

So, the big question is, how can technology transform senior healthcare? There are multiple areas where technology can become a real force-multiplier.

Smart medical alert system: India does not have a reliable 911 emergency service that can be accessed by senior citizens. Having smart medical alert systems that can provide emergency support at the push of a button will be a great value addition for seniors.

Doctor-on-call services: Senior citizens usually avoid visiting a doctor for minor health issues because of mobility and logistic issues. A "doctor-on-call" service where general physicians and specialist doctors can talk over a voice/video call will be a great value proposition for senior citizens.

Internet of Things devices and smart tracking: Senior citizens have a higher risk of falls, rapid heart rate, breathlessness, low blood pressure and so on. Smart Internet of Things (IoT) devices that can track regular health vitals, detect abnormal patterns and alert care providers is another major opportunity in this space.

Smart senior living homes: The concept of senior living was a social taboo until recently. With reality developers revisiting the concept of "senior living", a lot of Indians are taking a fresh look at this concept.

Intelligent voice platforms: Voice is a major breakthrough when it comes to senior citizens. Easy, intelligent voice-based platforms to order medicines, schedule doctor appointments or health check-ups will be a major opportunity in future.

Technology has not been a disruptive force in senior healthcare but that story is set to change over the next five-six years. With rapid advances in voice-enabled platforms, artificial intelligence and IoT devices, start-ups are burning the midnight oil to come up with smart, easy-to-use technological solutions that create an impact in the senior healthcare industry. It is not a question of "if" anymore, it's just the "when" that needs to be answered.

(The writer is CEO and founder of a leading insurance aggregating platform)

THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS DIALOGUE (IN KASHMIR) IS TO GO CLOSE TO THE PEOPLE, LISTEN TO THEIR PROBLEMS AND FIND SOLUTIONS TO THEM.

—UNION MINISTER
MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI

POINT COUNTERPOINT



THE VISIT OF MINISTERS' BRIGADE IS TO HIGHLIGHT THE AGENDA OF THE BJP AT THE EXPENSE OF PUBLIC EXCHEQUER BY USE OF ENTIRE OFFICIAL MACHINERY.
— J&K CONGRESS COMMITTEE CHIEF
RAVINDER SHARMA

The changemakers

Young innovators Manav and Swati Subodh are empowering entrepreneurs to undertake social experiments, job creation and meaningful development in their communities



MOÏN QAZI

One of the dispiriting features of the modern development model is that despite oceans of research and studies, there has not been a substantive transformative impact on marginalised communities. Much of the outcomes have been purely academic and we need more dedicated, courageous and purpose-driven champions who can creatively apply their core competencies and new knowledge to enhance people's well-being. Similarly, we need to design tools and techniques that can help translate these insights into effective public policies and professional practices that can sustainably deliver quality outcomes on an exponential scale.

There is now a tribe of passionate entrepreneurs who are collaborating with like-minded allies and with those with different perspectives, to build a co-leadership of expertise to address pressing human challenges and accelerate the transition of the underprivileged from subsistence to sustainability in emerging economies. Some of them are bright people working to uncover and scale breakthrough disruptive solutions for leapfrogging meaningful social change. They have the vision to see the world the way it should be and create what is missing. They are combining business acumen with their conscience to solve problems in the community and foster a fairer society in an efficient and sustainable way.

A brother-sister duo, Manav Subodh and Swati Subodh, with diverse backgrounds and with careers on the cusp of steady and promising trajectories, decided to change track and pursue something that had relevance and meaning to the wider world, and in particular to the underserved communities. Manav was Global Manager, Marketing, Entrepreneurship and Corporate Affairs at Intel but found the canvas dimming his social horizon. Swati obtained her post-graduate in biotechnology and did her doctoral research in genomics at AIIMS. It was here that she had her moment of epiphany. Her laboratory was opposite the outpatients department where the daily sight of struggling patients stirred her and fired the imagination to furrow a path of concrete action. Manav and Swati realised that their path was never going to lead to the right level of fulfillment, because they were not doing something that exactly fitted the values they had cultivated over time.

Since it wasn't possible to change their values, they knew they needed to switch their careers. Manav was the first to take the plunge when he conceptualised the 1M1B (1 Million for 1 Billion) Foundation, an initiative to inspire a million young leaders, educators and entrepreneurs to generate jobs that will create better lives for a billion people in the underserved communities. The idea was to empower entrepreneurs who would undertake social innovations, job creation and meaningful development in their communities so that each in turn would create jobs and more stable economic lives for a thousand more.

With Swati's expertise in healthcare and Manav's expertise in entrepreneurship education and ecosystems, a social entrepreneurship model was conceptualised. They visualised that a million entrepreneurs — spanning different geographies and sectors — can come up with the right solutions that can impact one billion people. Everyone, according to them, is a natural entrepreneur and can play a vital role in promoting resilience in their communities. They believe that with relatively simple and inexpensive tools we can put the needle on tough problems but interventions fail to reach the right person at the right time. Sharing them equitably across the world to maximise the impact is a big challenge. Addressing these and other burning social problems requires understanding and reframing them with a fresh view. It is here that entrepreneurs like Manav and Swati

“ IT TAKES LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS, EMPOWERED TO ADAPT EASILY TO THE NUANCES OF LOCAL CULTURE, TO CREATE AND DRIVE CHANGE SUSTAINABLY ON THE GROUND. THE 1M1B FOUNDATION IS SERVING AS A MICRO-ACCELERATOR FOR GRASSROOTS ENTREPRENEURS BY GIVING THEM SKILL TRAINING, ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGIES, FINANCE AND THEN HELPING THEM LAUNCH THEIR OWN MICRO-ENTERPRISE ”



are stepping in and filling the vacuum. With a team of like-minded people who share this passion 1M1B started taking shape.

Manav and Swati understand that interventions for rural regeneration cannot be played out in the same way that society perceives the poor: Desperate citizens who need to be rescued by the elite. "We have to understand the local challenges to improve their composite livelihoods. You can't solve the problems of the last mile from the headquarters," explains Manav. According to him, it takes local entrepreneurs, empowered to adapt easily to the nuances of local culture, to create and drive change sustainably on the ground. The 1M1B Foundation is serving as a micro-accelerator for grassroots entrepreneurs by giving them skill training, access to technologies, finance and then helping them launch their own micro-enterprise. "We scan the local environment to get better assessment of needs of the area and prospective interventional aspects and partner with these entities to provide our know-how and execution pipeline to enable last mile access to maximise impact", he adds.

There are several interventions being promoted by 1M1B across segments. The Skills Accelerator programme helps individuals develop relevant skills to ensure that they are in line with the market needs. Fifty per cent of the participants get formal jobs and 15 per cent of them land up starting their own business. 1M1B is honing the leadership skills of micro-entrepreneurs along with building rural co-innovation labs. It helps accelerate the access of indigenous technologies to rural markets by pairing these entrepreneurs with mentors who help them in developing their ideas. It also connects global start-ups to rural markets. This access and exposure allows them to test their solution on the specific populations through other village-level players. The programme provides training in computer skills, communication, accounting,

finance, access to technologies and hands-on growth support to help them launch their own micro-enterprises. 1M1B believes that communities of artisans, particularly women, deserve economic opportunities and aims to keep alive the rich tradition of their craftsmanship. The foundation is working with *Kalamkari* weavers to provide a more robust economic base to the weaver community. It is also an implementation partner on providing training in Artificial Intelligence (AI) to 5,000 schoolchildren in New Delhi, Bengaluru and Hyderabad. Students are encouraged to come up with project ideas on how AI can be applied for societal good. Those selected are given access to the AI Youth Lab to advance their projects and create prototypes.

The Future Leaders programme is dedicated to identifying and nurturing the next generation of leaders committed to positive change. The target group comprises high school students and undergraduates who have the potential to have a meaningful influence on topics of relevance. During the course of the programme, they are imparted high-impact leadership development skills to develop the knowledge, resources and network needed to become an inclusive and socially-minded changemaker. These skills include thinking critically and from multiple perspectives, collaborating inclusively, communicating effectively and becoming empathetic leaders. The coaching also exposes them to an array of educational experiences that broaden their world view.

The latest batch participated in the fifth annual 1M1B Activate Impact Summit at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York. The summit provided them the opportunity to learn about leadership through the lens of the experiences of leaders of civil society, government, industry, non-government bodies, private entities, venture funds, entrepreneurs and influencers.

The foundation is a UN-accredited

non-profit organisation with special consultative status to the UN Economic and Social Council and associated with the UN Department of Global Communications.

The foundation has a very innovative business development programme, called *Business Raja* (king). An AI-enabled chatbot, it is guiding aspiring entrepreneurs in rural India to grow their nascent ideas, raise funds and run their businesses successfully. It is simple in design. For the user, it is just another contact on WhatsApp they talk to about their ideas in three languages — Telugu, Hindi, and Kannada — as of now.

The chatbot asks a user about their ideas, how they came up with it, measures the person's personality and attains a complete profile. It also assesses their responses to tough questions — a sort of psychometric test.

An aspiring entrepreneur needs to follow a three-step process: First, share a business idea. The chatbot will provide reference resources that need to be completed. Then, the candidate will have to design a financial plan such as product pricing. Finally, if the idea works well, the chatbot will help in raising funds. A final score of investment readiness is then sent to the lending institution.

"The idea of *Business Raja* emerged while our team was working with grassroots innovators and helping them navigate the challenging entrepreneurial landscape. The AI chatbot and the resources associated with it help to do this, at scale so we can enable more entrepreneurs faster", explains Swati.

It doesn't require a flash of genius or invention of any radical idea to change the story line. What is ultimately needed is practical compassion. Most revolutionary solutions have been evolved by people like Manav and Swati who looked at the familiar landscape with fresh eyes. They saw promise where others saw hopelessness.

(The writer is Member, NITI Aayog's National Committee on Financial Literacy and Inclusion for Women)

Vote for the environment

The spectre of climate change is looming large and pollution cannot be stopped by turning a blind eye to it. In the February 8 Assembly polls, Delhiites need to elect a Government that makes environmental policies its priority



SRIRAJ KOTA

Delhi has become used to being wooed with sops and benefits. Whether it is regularisation of illegal colonies and structures or subsidised electricity and so on, we just lap it up.

However, do we ever stop to think what the cost of these sops is and who is footing the bill? The answer is that we the people or the electorate are eventually going to pay for the sops, collectively. The sole beneficiary in this will be the political party we elect, who will be laughing all the way to the seat of power, for the next five years.

We, as voters, must critically evaluate the promises being made by the Government in power and all the other contending parties and see what their commitment is for pressing issues such as climate change and the environment. And, we also need to look at the environmental cost of an election. This also needs to be audited and made public in order to ensure that the people realise the environmental costs of



this democratic exercise and which parties have had the smallest carbon footprint. This will usher in a positive change in the thinking of the voter which will in turn compel the parties to shun anti-environmental activities in the form of excess use of fuel, plastic and paper during campaigning. The people of Delhi need to question the Government and ask it what it has done to safeguard the environment and

also assess what the environment-related promises and assurances other contesting parties are bringing to the table. The subject of pollution in Delhi has been a hotly debated matter, with the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) claiming tremendous success in reining in the same with the help of the vehicle rationing initiative the Odd-Even Scheme. However, as is the norm in politics, these initiatives have been

heavily criticised by the Central Government.

Both the Centre and the Delhi Government have been trading charges over this key issue and blaming each other for the sad state of affairs in the Capital.

As the common man continued to suffer the impact of the pollution shrouding the city in a pall of smog, the judiciary took it upon itself to express reservations on the efficacy of the scheme in controlling the spiralling pollution levels in Delhi-NCR and pulled up the Centre, the Delhi Government and even the neighbouring States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh on the environmental crisis caused by crop residue burning by farmers.

The Supreme Court also directed the Central Government to assess the feasibility of the use of hydrogen-based fuel technology in the Capital to mitigate air pollution.

However, the fact remains that

things should not have come to such a pass. We need clear, tangible and more importantly quantifiable results against efforts undertaken to protect the environment by all stakeholders. The city is what we will leave to the future generations and it cannot be inhospitable due to pollution that has reached unmanageable levels and turned it into a "gas chamber", choking and killing the people that reside in it.

The spectre of climate change is looming large and pollution cannot be stopped by turning a blind eye to it. Combatting pollution and climate change need a concentrated and sincere effort by the Government in power that has the resolve and the firm mandate of the people behind it. So this time let us elect the environment. A Government that makes environmental policies its priority will then automatically get elected.

(The writer is an environmental journalist)



FOREIGN EYE



BE ALERT, NOT AFRAID

Sounding the alarm unnecessarily has dangers of its own. People may fail to pay heed next time, or may overreact this time. Equally, muting discussions can backfire, especially in a world where information, or unfounded rumours, can be shared so quickly. It is essential that Chinese authorities at all levels are open about the coronavirus outbreak, as well as assiduous in tackling it.

(The Guardian editorial)

Budget will have plan of action on economy: Min

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government will unveil its "plan of action" to boost the economy in the Union Budget to be presented on February 1, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said on Wednesday, asserting that economic fundamentals remain very strong.



Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar briefs the media on Cabinet decisions at Shastri Bhawan in New Delhi

Responding to a question about the downward revision of India's growth rate by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), he said the economy is on the path of "revival" and nobody should have a pessimistic view about it.

"From the Union Budget, you will get Government's plan of action.

Our fundamentals are very strong. Therefore, nobody should create a pessimistic view about Indian economy," the Information and Broadcasting minister said at a briefing after the Union Cabinet meeting.

Asserting that the economy was on the path of "revival", he

said there are ups and downs in world economy, and it has reflection on economy of countries.

The IMF had on Monday lowered growth estimate for India to 4.8 per cent for 2019, citing stress in the non-bank financial sector and weak rural income growth as the major factors for the downward revision.

While providing an update on the global economy ahead

of the start of the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual summit, the IMF cut its India growth forecast.

India-born IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath had said growth in India slowed sharply owing to stress in the non-banking financial sectors and weak rural income growth.

Opposition parties have been attacking the Government over the economic slowdown and its policies.

Stock markets to be open on Budget day

New Delhi: Stock markets will be open for normal trading on February 1, Saturday, when the Union Budget will be presented. Generally, the markets are closed on Saturdays and Sundays, except for special circumstances.

In separate circulars on Wednesday, leading exchanges BSE and NSE said the markets would be open for trading on February 1 on account of Union Budget presentation.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is to present the Budget for 2020-21.

Trading would be conducted during normal hours from 9 am to 3.30 pm, as per the circulars.

According to markets sources, the decision has been taken following requests made in this regard by market participants as Budget contains several market-moving announcements.

In 2015, stock exchanges were open for trading on February 28, Saturday, when then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had presented the Budget.

Budget may offer production incentives for fabless chip cos

IANAS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Budget 2020 may unveil a scheme on production linked benefits to attract hi-tech manufacturing in semiconductors, and micro-processors to India, apart from giving tax incentives to solar electric charging infrastructure, computers, servers, and laptops.

For 'Make in India', there may be investment-linked income tax exemptions under Section 35AD of the Income Tax Act and other indirect tax benefits.

Many global semiconductor companies such as ARM, Qualcomm, Intel, Cadence and Texas Instruments have set up design and software development infrastructure here but per se, chip manufacturing plants are still elusive for India.

Intel, AMD and ARM for microprocessors, and Qualcomm, Samsung and MediaTek are the names in this segment globally who also cater to the telecom segment and their chips are imported by Indian companies.

core competencies in the strategic sub-sectors like fabless chip design industry. The Government could provide tax incentives to high-tech manufacturing plants in the fields of solar photovoltaic cells, lithium storage batteries, solar electric charging infrastructure, computers, servers, and laptops.

To make it look more attractive to MNCs to opt for domestic electronics manufacturing in India, the Budget may dish out production-linked subsidies for companies involved in semiconductor fabrication. This is aimed at inviting global semiconductor, and microprocessor companies to set up plants in India.

Earlier also, the government had announced schemes for setting up semiconductor plants in the country.

The National Policy for Electronics, 2019, argues for special support for developing

BUSINESS CORNER

SRM INKS MOU WITH KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY



Kattankulathur: SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Kansas State University (KSU), USA. Professors Ramasamy/Perumal and Krishna Jagadish from KSU visited SRMIST for the purpose. Both the faculties are also adjunct professors in SRMIST. Speaking on the occasion, Ramasamy Perumal said that the process of the MoU is lengthy, he is happy to have this association with SRMIST.

KAMDHENU PRESENTS GENNEXT CONSTRUCTION STEEL

New Delhi: Kamdhenu Limited has presented innovative steel in the field of construction steel. Power Alloy Steel 10000 (PAS10000) aims to take the industries to the next level. The alloy gives it better rust-proof qualities and gives this Rebar capability to bear 28 per cent more weight. Along with that it also gives double earth-quake prevention to the building.

Ujjwala inspires Ghana, India to assist Ghana in implementation of its LPG promotion policy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ghana wants to replicate the highly successful Ujjwala model of giving out cooking gas (LPG) connections to the need and has signed an agreement with state-owned Indian Oil Corp (IOC) seeking its assistance and technical expertise in implementation of the African nation's national LPG promotion policy.

Alhassan Sulemana Tampuli, Chief Executive, National Petroleum Authority (NPA) of Ghana and L K S Chauhan, Chief General Manager (LPG Operations), IOC signed the MoU in presence of Oil Minister Dharmendra pradhan and Michael Aaron, High Commissioner of Ghana to India.

"With India's emergence as a world leader in provision of clean energy to its citizens by the expansion of its LPG network, Ghana sought assistance from India in its own efforts to promote to safe, clean and environmentally friendly LPG for increased domestic, commercial and industrial usage," an IOC press statement said.

LPG coverage in Ghana is just 23 per cent and customers have to queue up at petrol stations with cylinders to get a refill. It wants to replicate the Indian model of setting up bottling plants where LPG can be filled in cylinders which are then transported to dealers who deliver them at customer doorstep with a view to expand the coverage to cover at least 50 per cent of the population.

Relief to Indians on card as New Jersey to lower college costs of H-1B visa holders' children

PTI ■ NEW YORK

The US state of New Jersey will enact a legislation that will make college and universities more affordable for the children of H-1B visa holders, mostly Indian IT professionals, bringing a huge financial relief to them.

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy on Tuesday signed the legislation "S2555", allowing New Jersey students, who are the children of H-1B visa holders, to qualify for in-state tuition at public institutions of higher education. A majority of H-1B visa holders are Indians and this legislation comes as a significant relief to them, amidst an environment of stringent immigration laws and scrutiny under the Trump administration.

"New Jerseyans deserve equal access to higher education, and today we are taking another step towards making that possible. I'm proud to sign the legislation to help our students achieve their education goals, pursue a successful future and live their dreams here in their home state," Murphy said.

The legislation exempts dependent students whose parents or guardians hold H-1B visas from paying out-of-state tuition provided they meet certain criteria, including having graduated from a New Jersey high school and having attended a New Jersey high school for at least three years. New Jersey is home to prestigious institutions such as Princeton University.

Secretary of Higher Education Zakiya Smith Ellis said New Jersey is working to make college affordable for New Jerseyans and the legislation will expand postsecondary opportunities to more residents such as dependents of H-1B visa holders. India's Deputy Consul General in New York Shatru Sinha welcomed the legislation, saying in a tweet that it is an "important initiative for the Indian community".

Primary sponsors of the legislation include Indian-American Democratic Senator Vin Gopal, Senator M Teresa Ruiz and Assembly members Raj Mukherji, Daniel Benson, and Robert Karabinchak.

President and CEO of Edison-based health technology company HealthEC Arthur Kapoor welcomed the legislation, saying it will tremendously benefit the Indian diaspora in New Jersey.

"Indian diaspora welcomes this bill since H-1B visa holders pay enormous amounts of taxes as well as social security contributions which they are never able to use as they return to India before they are eligible to receive benefits. This bill will allow their kids access to the best education," Kapoor said.

India falls to 51st position in EU's Democracy Index

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India slipped 10 places to 51st position in the 2019 Democracy Index's global ranking, according to The Economist Intelligence Unit, which cited "erosion of civil liberties" in the country as the primary cause for the downturn.

India's overall score fell from 7.23 in 2018 to 6.90 in the Index that provides a snapshot of the current state of democracy worldwide for 165 independent states and two territories.

Govt allows 3 last dates for filing GSTR-3B for different categories of taxpayers

New Delhi: The Finance Ministry on Wednesday staggered last dates of filing GSTR-3B, a monthly return form, and has provided three dates for different categories of taxpayers, a move aimed at de-stressing the system.

Currently, the last date for filing GSTR-3B is 20th of every month. From now onwards, there will be three dates — 20th, 22nd and 24th — of every month for different categories of tax payers.

In past, glitches in the return filing system of GST Network were reported on the

last day of filing of returns and trade and industry had to face problems. It may be noted here that about one-fifth of the total GSTR-3B returns were filing on the last day (January 20).

"From now on, the last date for filing of GSTR-3B for the taxpayers having annual turnover of ₹5 crore and above in the previous financial year would be 20th of the month. Thus, around 8 lakh regular taxpayers would have the last date of GSTR-3B filing as 20th of every month without late fees," the ministry said in a statement. The taxpayers

having annual turnover below ₹5 crore in previous financial year will be divided further in two categories.

The tax filers from 15 states/UTs — Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Goa, Lakshadweep, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh — will now be having the last date of filing GSTR-3B returns as 22nd of the month without late fees.

India advances 8 places to 72nd spot on Global Talent Competitiveness Index

PTI ■ DAVOS

India has moved up eight places to the 72nd position in the 2020 Global Talent Competitiveness Index that measures and ranks countries based on their ability to grow, attract and retain talent.

Switzerland topped the list of 132 countries, followed by the US and Singapore.

"Although more could be done to improve the country's educational system (68th in Formal Education), India's key strength relates to growing (44th) talent, due to its levels of lifelong learning (40th) and access to growth opportunities

(39th)," the Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) report noted.

The country's highest-ranked sub-pillar is employability, but the ability to match labour market demand and supply stands in contrast to the country's poor "mid-level skills", which result in a mediocre score in vocational and technical skills, the report said.

India's greatest challenge is to address its weak ability to attract and retain talent, where strengthening the role of minorities and women would raise the level of internal openness, it added.

The GTCI report was launched by INSEAD, a partner and sponsor of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Tent in Davos, Switzerland on Wednesday.

Switzerland topped this year's ranking, followed by the United States, its highest position yet, while Singapore is the third most talent-competitive country.

Other countries in the top 10 include Sweden at the 4th position, Denmark (5th), the Netherlands (6th), Finland (7th), Luxembourg (8th), Norway (9th) and Australia (10th).

Sebi comes out new framework to check non-compliance of listing rules

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi on Wednesday put in place a stricter mechanism to deal with non-compliance of listing conditions under which stock exchanges will have powers to slap penalties up to ₹50,000 for certain violations.

At present, a stock exchange is allowed to charge a maximum amount of ₹10,000 for each violation of listing norms that need to be complied with by companies.

According to a Sebi circular, exchanges can impose a fine of ₹50,000 per instance for non-compliance with respect to

obtaining in-principle approval of bourses before issuance of securities.

The bourses can levy a fine of ₹25,000 each in cases of non-disclosure of dividend distribution policy in annual reports and on the websites of the entities.

The amount would also be applicable in the cases of non-convening of annual general meeting within a period of five months from the close of a financial year and for not taking exchange's approval before filing request for change of name with Registrar of Companies (RoC).

The new framework would

come into force with effect from compliance periods ending on or after March 31, 2020.

The move is aimed at maintaining consistency and adopting a uniform approach in the matter of levy of fines for non-compliance with certain provisions of the listing regulations.

Besides, the exchanges can impose a penalty of ₹10,000 for delay in furnishing prior intimation about the company's board meeting as well as delay in non-disclosure of record date or dividend declaration, and non-compliance with norms pertaining to having a functional website.

Oil India moves SC against DoT seeking ₹48K cr payment on ₹1.47 cr revenue

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil India Ltd (OIL) on Wednesday said it has filed a clarificatory/modificatory petition in the Supreme Court against a ₹48,000 crore demand raised by the telecom department on cumulative revenue of ₹1.47 crore it had earned on an NLD telecom licence.

Following the October 24 Supreme Court ruling that non-telecom revenues of telecom firms such as Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea should be included for considering payments of Government dues, the

telecom department asked OIL to pay ₹48,000 crore in principal dues together with interest and penalty. The dues sought are double the net worth of OIL.

"OIL had obtained a National Long Distance Service Licence (NLD Licence) to establish Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System (SCADA System) for control, management, and protection of OIL's pipeline network used for transportation of crude oil, natural gas, and petroleum products," the company said in a statement.

The NLD licence is pre-

dominantly used for the SCADA system and only the spare bandwidth capacity is leased out to other telecom operators.

"As per the licence terms, licence fee is to be paid on gross total revenue from services provided under the NLD licence. Since the award of NLD licence, the cumulative revenue of ₹1.47 crore is earned by OIL from the leasing of spare bandwidth capacity on which all applicable licence fee and other statutory dues as per licence terms have been paid by OIL regularly," it said.

Tata Motors JLR to cut 500 jobs at UK factory

PTI ■ LONDON

Tata Motors-owned Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) on Wednesday said that around 500 jobs will be affected as it cuts down on shifts to optimise car production at its Halewood factory in Merseyside.

The factory, which builds the Range Rover Evoque and Land Rover Discovery Sport in the north west of England, will move from a three shift to a "two-plus" shift pattern from April as part of what the company says is an efficiency programme and does not imply a loss of volume.

India keen on importing more oil from Brazil

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India on Wednesday expressed interest in raising the import of crude oil from Brazil as the world's third largest oil consumer is looking at diversifying its import basket beyond the highly volatile Middle East region. Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan met visiting Brazilian Minister for Mines and Energy Bento Albuquerque to review cooperation between the two countries.

"India is diversifying its crude oil supply and our oil companies have expressed interest in sourcing more crude from Brazil if offered favorable

commercial terms," Pradhan tweeted after the meeting.

India imports 84 per cent of its oil needs and two-thirds of its import come from the Middle East with Iraq and Saudi Arabia being the top suppliers. Pradhan said he also sought intervention for the early monetization of India's existing investments in the Brazilian energy sector.

ONGC Videsh Ltd, the overseas arm of state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC), has two exploration blocks in Brazil — BC-10 and BM Seal-4 and is looking at monetizing discoveries made there.

Adani lays out plans to become world's largest renewable energy player by 2030

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Moving away from polluting coal, billionaire Gautam Adani on Wednesday laid out a blueprint to make his group the world's largest solar power company by 2025 and the biggest renewable energy firm by 2030 through aggressive capacity addition push in these areas.

The \$15-billion Adani Group — a sprawling conglomerate with interests in energy, agri-business, real estate and defence, among others — plans to double its renewable

power generating capacity of current 2.5 gigawatts (GW) by 2020 and further to 18 GW by 2025, Adani wrote in a LinkedIn post.

"Our vision is to become the world's largest solar power company by 2025 and largest renewable power company by 2030," the Adani Group chairman wrote. Adani Group not just owns coal-fired power plants but also coal mines in India and Australia. It has invested big time in coal as the Adani empire of mines, cargo ships, ports and power plants depend heavily on it.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made by me that accused namely Sunil@Sonu, S/o Jagdish, R/o H.No. F-44, Gali No.81, Mahavir Enclave Part-III, Dabri, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 237/19, u/s 356/379/34 IPC, Dated: 24.06.2019, P.S. Janakpuri, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the accused Sunil@Sonucannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Sunil@Sonu has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Processing U/s 82 Cr. P.C. has been initiated in the case. Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Sunil@Sonu, case FIR No. 237/19, u/s 356/379/34 IPC, Dated: 24.06.2019, P.S. Janakpuri, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 28.02.2020.

By Order
Sh. Deepak Vats,
Metropolitan Magistrate, Room No.9
Ground Floor, Dwarka District Courts,
Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi

DP/8592/WJ/20-(Court Matter)

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that one person (depicted in the photo) namely Raju, S/o Shri Jang Bahadur, R/o F-383, Karampura, Moti Nagar, New Delhi, Age 35 years has been reported missing from his house since 28.12.19 at 05.00 am vide DD No. 37-A, dated 01.01.20 has been lodged at PS Moti Nagar, New Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

Height : 5', Complexion : Fair, Built : Medium, Clothing : Wearing Blue colour jacket, blue colour jeans pant and brown colour shoes.

Any person is having any information or clue about this missing person may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail ID: cbc@cbi.gov.in SHO
Tele: 011-24368638, 24368641 PS: Moti Nagar, New Delhi
Fax: 011-24368639 Ph.: 25101150
DP/8591/WJ/20

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that one man Name: Vinod, S/o: Prambhai, R/o: N-18, Raghuraj Nagar, Delhi, Age: 24 Years, Height: 5'2", Face: Long, Complexion: Shallow, Built: Normal, Wearing: Maroon Shirt & Blue Pant and Black Shoes in Feet has been missing since 12.12.2019 from the area of PS. Khyala, New Delhi. In this regard DD No. 37A, Dated 13.12.2019 has been lodged at PS. Khyala, New Delhi.

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

Web-site : http://cbi.nic.in
E-Mail ID : cbc@cbi.gov.in SHO
Fax: 011-24368639 PS. Khyala, New Delhi
DP/8590/WJ/2020 Ph.: 011-28335696, 28335686

M/s Z Landholding LLP
LLPIN: AAB-4222

Registered office: 60B, SAINIK FARMS NEW DELHI, New Delhi-110062, NCR. Before the Central Government Registrar of Companies, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 4th Floor, IFCI Tower, 61, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019, NCR.

In the matter of: Section 13 (3) of the Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008 And

In the matter of : M/s Z Landholding LLP, a Limited Liability Partnership having its registered office situated At-60B, SAINIK FARMS NEW DELHI, New Delhi-110062, NCR. Applicant.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that M/s Z Landholding LLP proposes to make application to the Central Government under Section 13 (3) of the Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008 seeking confirmation of alteration of the Agreement of the LLP in terms of the special resolution passed at the Meeting of all Partners held on 02.01.2020 to enable the LLP to change its Registered office from New Delhi in the "State of NCR" to Bhubaneswar in the "State of Odisha". Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the LLP may deliver either on the MCA-21 portal (www.mca.gov.in) by filing investor complaint form or cause to be delivered or send by registered post of his/her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest and grounds of objection to the Registrar of Companies, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 4th Floor, IFCI Tower, 61, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019, NCR within Fourteen days from the date of publication of this notice with a copy to the applicant LLP at its registered office at the address mentioned above.

For and on behalf of the Applicant
M/s Z Landholding LLP
Sd/- Tapan Kumar Mohanty Designated Partner
Date: 20.01.2020, Place: New Delhi

MARKETS AT FIVE-WEEK LOW Sensex slips as investors cautious ahead of Budget

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The market gauge Sensex on Wednesday fell for the third straight session to mark its lowest level in over five weeks as participants moved to the sidelines exercising caution ahead of the federal Budget.

At close, the 30-share Sensex was down 208.43 points, or 0.50 per cent, at 41,115.38 — the lowest level for the index since December 16. After starting the session on a high note, the BSE gauge kept on shedding gains and touched the day's low of 41,059.04.

Likewise, the broader NSE Nifty settled 62.95 points, or 0.52 per cent, lower at 12,106.90 — marking its fourth straight session loss.

Both benchmark indices bore the brunt of heavy selling mainly in energy, financial and auto stocks.

A subdued corporate earnings season and banks' stressed assets situation have made investors realign their investment strategy, analysts said adding that the upcoming Budget will decide the course of the market in the near to mid-term.

Further, global agencies

slashing India's growth outlook is also weighing on domestic investor sentiment, they added.

On the Sensex chart, ONGC was the top loser, tumbling 5.13 per cent, followed by NTPC, Kotak Bank, Maruti Suzuki, HDFC, Asian Paints, ICICI Bank and Axis Bank.

On the other hand, Nestle India, TCS, Infosys, HCL Tech, SBI and Bharti Airtel ended with gains of up to 1.86 per cent.

Sectorally, BSE metal, oil and gas and power were among the major losers — dropping as much as 1.57 per cent.

While BSE IT, teck and telecom indices ended up to 1.09 per cent higher.

In the broader market, midcap and smallcap indices fell up to 0.32 per cent.

"Domestic markets after opening amid failed to hold on to gains amid profit-book-

ing across finance, auto, metal and pharma stocks; while FMCG and few IT stocks remained in green zone. Uncertainty ahead of Budget has resulted in investors' being cautious for the time being," Paras Bothra, President of Equity Research,

Ashika Stock Broking, said.

Besides, fears of contagion after the US announced its first case of a new virus that has claimed six lives in China also remained in hind-sight, he said.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services Ltd, said, "Banks, auto and midcaps are consolidating due to marginal slippage in NPAs and earnings growth than anticipated earlier.

The Q3 result had solid expectations but actual results are marginally below expectation for sectors like IT and banks, this is impacting the market. A lot will depend on the actual outcome of Budget for further direction, market is turning cautious before the big event."

On the currency front, the Indian rupee closed marginally up at 71.19 against the US dollar.

Global benchmark Brent crude fell 0.67 per cent to USD 64.16 per barrel.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul ended with gains.

European markets were also trading on a positive note in their early sessions.

'GDP to grow by 5.5 pc in FY21, downside risks persists'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's growth rate is expected to be marginally higher at 5.5 per cent in 2020-21 against the estimated 5 per cent for the current fiscal on the back of strong policy push coupled with revival in demand, a report said.

Citing an NSO report, India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) said the slow-down is a combination of several factors including an abrupt and significant fall in lending by non-banking financial companies close on the heels of a slowdown in bank lending and reduced income growth of households coupled with a fall in savings and higher leverage.

Although some improvement in FY2020-21 is expected, these risks are going to persist, India Ratings and Research principal economist Sunil Sinha said.

As a result, the Indian economy is stuck in a phase of low consumption as well as low investment demand, it said.

"A strong policy push coupled with some heavy lifting (even if this requires using the escape clause as suggested by the FRBM Service Committee headed by N K Singh) by the government is required to revive the domestic demand cycle and catapult the economy back into a high growth phase," it said.

The government has announced a slew of measures recently to prop-up the economy, but Ind-Ra believes they will come to aid only in the medium term.

The shortfall in the tax plus non-tax revenue to result in the fiscal deficit slipping to

6.3 per cent of GDP (budgeted 3.3 per cent) in FY2020, even after accounting for the surplus transferred by the RBI, it said.

"A continuance of low GDP growth even in FY21 means subdued tax revenue and limited room for stepping-up expenditure. Ind-Ra believes the government will have to construct the FY21 budget in a way that expenditure is rationalised and prioritised and all avenues of revenue generation are tapped," it said.

While rationalising, the focus of expenditure has to be on creating direct employment and putting more money in the pockets of the people at the bottom of the pyramid, it said, adding since their marginal propensity to consume is close to one, they are likely to spend what they receive.

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"This will support the consumption demand. Therefore, budgetary allocation to heads such as rural infrastructure, road construction, affordable housing and MNRREGA must be prioritised and allocation for non-merit subsidy/expenditure less critical for growth be rationalised," it said.

Also, gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) has become government dependent, as incremental private capex has been down and out, it said, adding, despite the fiscal constraints, the government has not shied away from infrastructure spending in the past and even resorted to fund them through extra budgetary resources.

Ind-Ra, therefore, believes the government will continue to focus on infrastructure spending and leverage all pos-

sible options — budget, off budget including National Infrastructure Investment Fund, it said.

Also, since a larger part of the government capex now takes place at the state government level, it will be important to keep a tab on the state government capex as well, it added.

With regard to inflation, it said, retail and wholesale inflation expected to be 3.9 per cent and 1.3 per cent, respectively as compared to 4.4 per cent and 1.4 per cent in the current fiscal.

Though oil prices are stable, retail food inflation after remaining subdued and in single digit for 70 months since January 2014, entered into double digits in November 2019 and accelerated to 14.12 per cent in December 2019, it said.

Govt approves pact with foreign countries for seafarers' certificate

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday said it has approved a model pact with foreign countries for recognition of seafarers' competency certificates.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi here.

This will pave the way for mutual recognition of maritime education and training of

seafarers by the countries involved.

"The proposed bilateral MoU will enable India and another country with which such an MoU may be entered, to mutually recognise maritime education and training, certificates of competency, endorsements, documentary evidence of training and medical fitness certificates, issued to the seafarers who are citizens of respective countries," the Shipping Ministry said in a

statement.

The pact will facilitate unilateral recognition certificates issued by the Directorate General of Shipping to Indian seafarers by another country, without seeking similar acknowledgment by India of the certificates issued by that country, it added.

Under the pact, Indian seafarers will be eligible to be placed on ships under the flag of that country for employment, thus leading to increased

employment opportunities, the ministry said.

The bilateral MoU would therefore, make the seafarers of both the countries to be eligible for employment on ships of either party based on the certificates so recognized, it added.

"The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its approval for the Model Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for unilateral/bilateral recognition of

Certificates, pursuant to Regulation 1/10 of International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) for Seafarers, 1978 as amended to be signed between the Directorate General of Shipping, Government of India and its counterparts in foreign countries, with the approval of Minister-in-charge of Shipping and the Minister of External Affairs," the statement said.

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	12218.35	12225.05	12187.90	12106.90	-62.95
ZEE5	278.00	304.00	272.00	298.00	13.90
GRASIM	770.85	799.00	767.10	792.00	20.35
NESTLEIND	15369.00	15585.00	15301.00	15561.80	281.05
TCS	2181.00	2210.00	2173.70	2209.80	38.75
ADANIPOWER	379.95	385.00	379.00	384.00	4.05
HCLTECH	585.20	595.00	581.50	590.20	6.15
INFY	768.45	778.00	766.00	769.80	7.30
SBIN	317.00	317.00	313.70	315.65	1.95
BHARTIARTL	514.75	523.75	506.70	514.55	2.80
YESBANK	38.70	39.00	38.00	38.45	0.10
MTAN	1181.80	1185.95	1172.00	1178.00	1.80
M&M	553.50	556.50	549.00	553.65	0.85
BAJAJFINSV	9590.00	9600.00	9495.00	9545.00	10.70
BAJFINANCE	4186.00	4186.50	4123.35	4143.00	4.40
RELIANCE	1544.00	1546.75	1531.10	1535.25	1.35
ADICHEMOT	21160.00	21280.00	20944.00	21070.00	13.45
TECHM	780.00	796.20	776.20	778.55	-0.35
ITC	239.60	239.60	237.10	238.30	-0.15
INFRAEEL	244.85	245.00	235.50	240.35	-0.15
HEROMOTOCO	2408.70	2410.00	2379.00	2397.10	-1.60
SUNPHARMA	448.40	453.85	445.35	447.00	-0.40
ULTRACEMCO	4505.00	4540.00	4463.00	4477.00	-6.55
DREDDY	3060.55	3105.05	3047.40	3055.55	-4.90
HINDUNILVR	2063.00	2065.50	2027.20	2051.90	-3.50
BRIITANNIA	3125.50	3138.70	3088.90	3105.30	-5.95
HDFC	1248.05	1255.00	1234.40	1241.85	-2.50
IOC	116.65	116.90	111.95	114.55	-0.25
VEDL	155.85	158.25	152.80	153.55	-0.35
WIPRO	248.60	251.95	245.40	246.40	-0.70
TATASTEEL	478.65	479.85	473.20	474.15	-2.00
JSWSTEEL	268.30	269.30	264.75	265.95	-1.30
CIPLA	474.40	480.30	475.20	478.00	-2.60
GAIL	127.20	127.90	125.50	126.05	-0.70
LT	1311.00	1312.00	1292.00	1294.90	-7.45
BAJAJ-AUTO	3105.00	3110.00	3071.10	3074.85	-22.20
INDUSINDBK	1346.35	1348.00	1323.00	1326.05	-10.30
HINDALCO	205.60	207.00	203.00	205.50	-1.65
INDUSINDBK	1348.00	1348.70	1323.00	1327.60	-0.50
AXISBANK	717.00	722.75	703.65	709.30	-1.75
BPCL	465.20	466.45	454.10	456.90	-6.95
ICICIBANK	511.50	534.95	520.75	521.00	-9.05
HDFC	2474.00	2483.35	2412.20	2418.00	-47.45
ASIANPAINT	1815.00	1818.70	1766.85	1773.20	-37.50
KOTAKBANK	1632.00	1637.90	1576.00	1591.00	-34.10
MARUTI	7340.00	7374.95	7107.95	7145.00	-157.65
UPL	582.85	582.85	575.40	564.45	-17.25
TATAMOTORS	191.95	192.50	184.25	185.60	-5.80
NTPC	114.90	115.15	112.50	112.50	-4.65
COALINDIA	199.10	199.40	196.00	191.55	-10.60
ONGC	122.00	122.00	116.50	116.30	-6.45

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	28711.35	28742.00	28522.90	28593.00	-24.35
ICICIPRULI	492.00	512.00	488.45	506.90	17.85
NHPC	26.00	27.20	25.15	26.65	0.80
INDIGO	1440.00	1474.95	1428.75	1473.00	34.20
ACC	1507.95	1537.00	1502.10	1523.00	28.90
HDFCLIFE	604.90	616.50	602.65	613.00	11.00
PPC	106.85	111.90	103.85	108.50	1.85
MCDOWELL-N	581.20	590.75	576.65	587.35	9.15
AMBUJACEM	208.90	212.00	208.30	210.00	2.40
PIDILITIND	1423.65	1444.95	1418.80	1429.05	14.30
AUROPHARMA	498.00	510.90	490.80	498.00	4.80
SRLIFE	980.00	992.60	972.00	980.00	7.25
DLF	258.40	261.25	255.00	258.90	1.80
CADILAH	268.50	276.50	267.75	269.60	1.25
PAGEIND	2332.25	2375.00	2311.25	2358.60	86.05
MOTHERSUMI	158.25	158.50	136.50	138.70	0.25
OFFS	2955.00	2968.95	2917.60	2953.00	3.40
DABUR	489.20	494.00	486.25	487.00	0.00
DMART	1930.00	1932.00	1907.60	1910.00	-2.35
NIACL	161.90	162.55	157.10	160.25	-0.25
UBL	1272.35	1276.95	1263.00	1269.50	-1.35
LUPIN	743.25	746.95	736.00	739.85	-1.30
MARICO	337.70	337.90	332.30	336.00	-0.75
SHREECEM	22960.00	23299.50	22870.00	22891.50	-62.00
CONCOR	951.00	952.95	946.30	950.00	-1.55
BANKBARODA	55.50	55.75	53.90	54.40	-0.35
SIEMENS	1588.00	1595.00	1565.50	1577.15	-5.95
PEL	1617.00	1629.20	1587.00	1604.90	-6.35
BANDHANBNK	479.80	487.50	473.50	474.60	-2.15
PGHIL	11262.55	11330.00	11132.00	11200.00	-50.10
BAJAJHINDP	3375.00	3389.95	3327.30	3354.00	-16.25
GOJREJPC	732.50	734.00	722.00	728.00	-3.55
HDFCAMC	3210.00	3262.00	3140.00	3162.00	-17.45
COPAL	1487.00	1494.15	1461.20	1478.00	-9.15
ASHOKLEY	86.75	87.25	85.00	85.75	-0.55
BIOCEN	295.50	297.00	290.10	292.50	-2.15
DIVISLAB	1872.10	1890.65	1843.95	1855.00	-15.80
PNB	62.10	62.20	60.65	60.90	-0.55
SRRTRANSFIN	1096.20	1096.20	1071.65	1077.00	-12.40
HINDZINC	123.00	124.70	120.75	120.85	-2.55
ICICI	1325.00	1342.90	1308.35	1313.90	-16.05
PETRONET	273.55	274.65	270.00	274.65	-3.65
IBULHSGFIN	305.30	305.95	295.00	296.60	-4.55
HINDPETRO	215.35	252.30	243.90	245.45	-4.00
L&TFH	119.25	120.00	116.75	117.15	-1.95
BERGEPAIN	550.10	551.60	547.00	539.00	-10.45
BOSCHLTD	14979.95	15087.85	14610.00	14650.00	-285.50
NMDC	135.00	135.20	128.65	131.00	-3.20
HAVELLS	604.50	618.60	588.30	599.70	-17.25
GICRE	256.30	257.85	247.55	248.00	-1.70
IDEA	5.95	6.05	5.45	5.60	-0.35

Senate OK's impeachment trial rules, puts off witnesses

Washington: The US Senate plunged into President Donald Trump's impeachment trial with Republicans abruptly abandoning plans to cram opening arguments into two days but solidly rejecting for now Democratic demands for more witnesses to expose what they deem Trump's "trifecta" of offenses.

Trump himself claimed he wants top aides to testify, but qualified that by suggesting there were "national security" concerns to allowing their testimony.

"We have a great case," Trump said on Wednesday at a global economic forum in Davos.

In a press conference before returning to Washington, Trump said his legal team was doing a "very good job."

He appeared to break with Republicans efforts to block Democratic motions to immediately call witnesses and subpoena documents. Instead, Trump said he'd like to see aides, including former national security adviser John Bolton, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, testify as witnesses Trump said he'd leave the "national security" concerns to the Senate.

Tuesday's daylong session



Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., walks from the Senate chamber as the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump concludes on Capitol Hill in Washington on Wednesday.

started with the setback for Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell and the president's legal team, but it ended near 2 a.m. On Wednesday with Republicans easily approving the rest of the trial rules largely on their terms.

With the rules settled, the trial is now on a fast-track. At issue is whether Trump should be removed from office for abuse of power stemming from his pressure on Ukraine to investigate Democratic rival Joe Biden and Biden's son Hunter as Trump was withheld aid to the country, and for obstructing Congress ensuing probe.

Chief Justice John Roberts gavelled open the session, with

House prosecutors on one side, Trump's team on the other, in the well of the Senate, as senators sat silently at their desks, under oath to do "impartial justice." No cell-phones or other electronics were allowed.

As the day stretched deep into the night, lawyerly arguments gave way to more pointedly political ones. Tempers flared and senators paced the chamber. Democrats pursued what may be their only chance to force senators to vote on hearing new testimony.

After one particularly bitter post-midnight exchange, Roberts intervened, taking the rare step of admonishing both the Democratic House man-

agers prosecuting the case and the White House counsel to "remember where they are."

"I think it is appropriate at this point for me to admonish both the House managers and the president's counsel in equal terms to remember that they are addressing the world's greatest deliberative body," Roberts said.

He told them that description of the Senate stemmed from a 1905 trial when a senator objected to the word "pettifogging" because members should "avoid speaking in a manner and using language that is not conducive to civil discourse."

Over and over, Republicans turned back Democratic amendments to subpoena documents from the White House, State Department, Defense Department and budget office. By the same 53-47 party-line, they turned away witnesses with front-row seats to Trump's actions including acting White House chief of staff Mulvaney and Bolton, the former national security adviser critical of the Ukraine probe.

Only on one amendment, to allow more time to file motions, did a single Republican, Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, join Democrats. But it, too, was rejected, 52-48.

As the visitors' gallery

filled earlier with guests, actress-and-activist Alyssa Milano among them, and Trump's most ardent House allies lining the back rows, the day that began as a debate over rules quickly took on the cadence of a trial proceeding over whether the president's actions toward Ukraine warranted removal from office.

"It's not our job to make it easy for you," Rep. Adam Schiff, the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee leading the prosecution, told the Senate. "Our job is to make it hard to deprive the American people of a fair trial."

White House counsel Pat Cipollone, the president's lead lawyer, called the trial "a farce." He scoffed that the House charges against Trump were "ridiculous."

The White House legal team did not dispute Trump's actions, when he called Ukraine and asked for a "favour," which was to investigate Biden as he withheld military aid the ally desperately needed as it faced off with hostile Russia on its border. But the lawyers insisted the president did nothing wrong. "Absolutely no case," Cipollone said.

Schiff, the California Democrat, said America's Founders added the remedy of impeachment in the Constitution with "precisely this type of conduct in mind - conduct that abuses the power of office for a personal benefit, that undermines our national security, and that invites foreign interference in the democratic process of an election."

Said Schiff: "It is the trifecta

of constitutional misconduct justifying impeachment."

The other lead lawyer on Trump's team, Jay Sekulow, retorted, "I'll give you a trifecta," outlining complaints over the House Democrats' impeachment inquiry process.

In Davos, Trump repeated his attacks on Democratic House managers serving as prosecutors in the trial, saying he'd like to "sit right in the front row and stare at their corrupt faces" on the Senate floor during the trial but that his attorneys might have a problem with it.

And he said he wants to deliver the State of the Union as scheduled on February 4 even if the trial is ongoing, calling the address "very important to what I am doing" in setting his administration's agenda.

He said the other nations being considered for new rules were Belarus, Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Sudan and Tanzania.

The first package of travel bans and restrictions — targeting mainly Muslim majority countries — were announced shortly after Trump took office in January 2017 and outraged his critics.

Trump to add 'couple of countries' to US travel ban

Davos: US President Donald Trump said his administration was preparing to add a "couple of countries" to the controversial list of states whose citizens are subject to travel bans or severe restrictions on entry to the United States.

"We are adding a couple of countries to it. We have to be safe. Our country has to be

safe," he said at the World Economic Forum in Davos, adding that the names of the new countries would be announced "very shortly."

The Wall Street Journal reported earlier that the administration planned to add seven countries including Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, and others in Africa and Asia.

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

virus that has killed people in China is a novel strain and not seen before.

Common symptoms of the novel coronavirus strain include respiratory symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties, according to the WHO.

The Chinese health authorities announced that 444 confirmed cases of pneumonia caused by a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) had been reported in 13 provincial-level regions in the country by the end of Tuesday.

Considering its potential to spread to different countries, the World Health Organisation (WHO) is holding a rare emergency meeting Geneva on Wednesday to consider declaring Wuhan virus as an international public health emergency, as it did with swine flu and Ebola.

Death toll in China's coronavirus outbreak rises to 17

Beijing: The death toll from the new coronavirus outbreak in China nearly doubled to 17 with the confirmed infection cases sharply rising to 444 on Wednesday, even as the cases of the deadly pneumonia were reported from the US, Hong Kong, Macao and Mexico.

Chinese authorities have warned that the disease could spread further in the ongoing holiday season during which millions travel at home and abroad amid official advisories to people of Wuhan, the epicentre of illness, not to leave the city.

Seventeen people have died due to the virus, state-run China Daily reported on Wednesday.

The coronavirus is a large family of viruses that causes illnesses ranging from the common cold to acute respiratory syndromes, but the

Chinese New Year and Spring Festival holidays starting from January 24.

The festival triggers biggest mass migration, clogging road, rail and air networks every year.

public concern," Chan said.

The man and four family members had taken the high-speed railway from Wuhan to Shenzhen on Tuesday before transferring to another train that brought them to Hong Kong.

He was put in isolation in hospital after tests, but Wednesday when his relatives showed no symptoms after a night at a city hotel they were allowed to leave for the Philippines.

Lanka Prez Gotabaya wants civil war disappearances probed: President's office

Colombo: Gotabaya Rajapaksa wants a probe into the disappearances of over 20,000 people in the country's brutal civil war with Tamil Tiger rebels, his office has said in a clarification after the Sri Lankan President declared the missing persons "dead" in a first-ever admission to a UN official.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the former wartime defence secretary who played a key role in ending Sri Lanka's nearly 30-year civil war with the Tamil separatist rebels, told UN Resident Coordinator Hanaa Singer last week that after the necessary investigations are completed steps would be taken to issue death certificates to the missing persons.

The President's office has said Gotabaya Rajapaksa had explained to the UN official that he will have the matter investi-

gated, but added, "however I can't bring back the dead."

The President told the UN official that as a result of the census carried out by the government at the end of the conflict in 2009, it had emerged that most of the missing persons had been conscripted by the LTTE, the statement said.

"Their families attest to being witnesses of their loved ones being taken by the LTTE. However, thereafter they do not have any information as to their fate. Therefore, as far as they are concerned these people are missing," the statement quoted the Sri Lankan president as saying.

"The unfortunate truth is that these people had died during the battles. Even in the security forces there are about 4,000 personnel listed as missing. But in reality these people had

died during the fights, but their bodies had not been recovered," it said. Rajapaksa told the UN official that after the conclusion of the necessary investigations, steps would be taken to issue death certificates and after that the families would be given the necessary support to rebuild their lives.

According to the government figures, over 20,000 people are missing due to various conflicts including the three-decade separatist war with Lankan Tamils in the north and east which claimed at 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.

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The coronavirus is a large family of viruses that causes illnesses ranging from the common cold to acute respiratory syndromes, but the

HK reports first 'preliminary positive' case of new virus

Hong Kong: Hong Kong reported its first suspected case of the new SARS-like virus Wednesday in a man who arrived in the city from Wuhan via the cross-border high-speed railway.

Health secretary Sophia Chan said the 39-year-old man was "preliminarily positive", but a final test result would only be known on Thursday.

"We decided to announce the case (early) due to heavy

HK reports first 'preliminary positive' case of new virus

public concern," Chan said.

The man and four family members had taken the high-speed railway from Wuhan to Shenzhen on Tuesday before transferring to another train that brought them to Hong Kong.

He was put in isolation in hospital after tests, but Wednesday when his relatives showed no symptoms after a night at a city hotel they were allowed to leave for the Philippines.

Told Trump war with Iran will be disastrous: Imran Khan

Davos: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday said he has told US President Donald Trump that a war with Iran would have disastrous consequences.

Asked whether Trump agreed with him, Khan said the US President did not say anything but he probably understood what he meant.

"Afghanistan is yet to be resolved and Iran would be much bigger (if war starts)," Khan said.

Khan met Trump on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) summit here on Tuesday.

Tensions between the US and Iran have escalated in the wake of the killing of powerful Iranian commander General Qasem Soleimani by America

3 African nations meet to draft deal on Nile dam dispute

Cairo: Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan started US-monitored talks on Wednesday in the Sudanese capital to try hammer out a draft deal to resolve their dispute over a Nile dam that Ethiopia is constructing, an Egyptian spokesman said.

The \$4.6 billion Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project on the Blue Nile, which promises to provide much-needed electricity to Ethiopia's 100 million people, has been a contentious point among the three main Nile Basin countries.

The issue is critical for Cairo as Egypt seeks to protect its main source of freshwater

for its large and growing population, also about 100 million.

The Blue Nile flows from Ethiopia into Sudan where it joins the White Nile near Khartoum, to form the Nile River. Eighty-five percent of Nile waters originate in Ethiopia from the Blue Nile, which is one of the Nile's two main tributaries.

According to Muhamed el-Sebai, a spokesman for Egypt's irrigation ministry, technical and legal teams from the three countries are to "prepare a draft deal" on how the dam's reservoir would be filled and how the dam itself would operate.

The meeting in Khartoum would last two days, he said. There was no immediate indication on whether it would succeed after several previous rounds of talks failed. But at the talks in Washington last week, the three countries said they had reached a preliminary agreement.

The US and World Bank are acting as observers at the Khartoum talks after Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi last year pleaded with Washington and the international community to mediate a solution for the years-long dispute. Egypt claims that filling the dam's reservoir too quickly could significantly reduce its share of the Nile water. A joint statement after the Washington meeting said the filling should occur in stages during the rainy season, which generally runs from July to August, though it did not give details on how long it would take to be completed. Another two-day meeting in Khartoum is planned for next week, with the goal of reaching a final agreement.

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Tensions between the US and Iran have escalated in the wake of the killing of powerful Iranian commander General Qasem Soleimani by America



on January 3.

"If there is conflict between Iran and the Western world it will be a disaster — it will cause poverty in the world — and who knows how long it may go on. In my opinion it would be insanity," Khan said.

"I spoke to President Trump yesterday and I told him it would be a disaster," Khan said.

The Pakistan Prime Minister also said he does not understand why countries try to resolve their differences through military conflicts.

"The moment you start a military conflict, you don't know where it will finish. It has unintended consequences," he said.

After meeting Khan,

Trump on Tuesday had said the US is watching the developments between India and Pakistan over Kashmir "very closely" and repeated his offer to "help" resolve the long-standing dispute between the two neighbours.

Trump told Khan, whom he referred to as "my friend", that he would speak to Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the ongoing Kashmir issue. Trump is expected to visit India in the coming weeks, marking his first visit after assuming office.

"What's going on between Pakistan and India... if we can help, we certainly will be willing to. We have been watching it very closely and it's an honour to be here with my friend," Trump had said.

EASTERN COALFIELDS LIMITED
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)

Name of Area: Mugma Area ECL. **Tender No. & Date:** ECL/HQ/GM(C)/e-Tender/19-20/98 Date: 17-01-2020. **Name of work:** "Construction of Coal transportation road from main road to fan house of Chapapur, Mugma Area, ECL". **Updated Estimated Amount:** ₹89,82,568.42. **Bid Submission start date & time:** 25-01-2020 at 12:00 Hours. **Bid submission end date & time:** 10-02-2020 at 17:00 Hours. **Tender Opening date & time:** 12-02-2020 at 12:00 hours. Details of tender can be seen in ECL website www.easterncoal.nic.in or www.tenders.gov.in

Please visit us our website "www.easterncoal.nic.in"

NORTHERN RAILWAY
Corrigendum No. 1 & 2
E-TENDER NOTICE

E-tender for and on behalf of the President of India, Pr. CE, Northern Railway, Headquarters office, Baroda House, New Delhi-110001 invites the following tenders through E-Procurement system:-

SN	Tender No.	Brief Description	Existing Para 30.1	Amended Para 30.1
1.	211-2651-2018-20-NR	Manufacture and Supply of Elastic rail Clip MK-V under this contract will be as per Drawing No. RDSO T-5919 of the Research Designs and Standards Organization, Lucknow and in accordance with IRS Specification IRS T-31-2018 (Fourth Revision) and as amended up to date of opening.	Railway will recover from the contractor as agreed Liquidated Damages (LD) and not by way of penalty, a such equivalent to 2% (Two percent) of the price of any stores (including element of taxes, duties) which the contractor has failed to deliver within the period fixed for delivery in the Purchase/ Supply Order or as extended, for each month or part of a month during which the delivery of such stores may be in arrears where delivery thereof is accepted after expiry of the aforesaid period subject to maximum of 10% value of the delayed supplies.	Railway will recover from the contractor as agreed Liquidated Damages (LD) shall be levied @ 1/2% (half percent) of the price of the store per week or part of the week during which delivery is accepted and the upper limit for recovery of LD in supply contracts is 10% (ten percent) of the value of the contract irrespective of delays. Unless otherwise provided specifically in the contract.

Corrigendum No. 2

Original date & time of opening	Revised dated & time of opening
24.01.2020 at 14.30 Hrs.	31.01.2020 at 14.30 Hrs.

Note:- The complete information of above E-Procurement tender is available on website "www.irps.gov.in" and "www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in".

E-TENDER NOTICE NO. 196-S/1/2018-20/TENDER NOTICE/TS/ERC-Mk-V Dated 21.01.2020 223/20

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Macron loses cool with Israeli security in 'Chirac moment'

Jerusalem: When French President Emmanuel Macron visited Jerusalem's Old City on Wednesday, he also trod in the footsteps of one of his predecessors, Jacques Chirac, by engaging in a heated argument with Israeli security.

The altercation broke out when Israeli security forces pushed past the French detail and were first to enter the Church of Saint Anne, which is French state property.

"Everybody knows the rules. I don't like what you did in front of me," an animated Macron loudly told the Israeli personnel, speaking in English, in the crush to enter the building, which remains French territory under international treaties. "Go out — outside please!" he added in a raised voice in scenes captured in video footage that quickly spread on social media. The Roman Catholic church, located at the start of Via Dolorosa in the Old City's Muslim Quarter, has been part of France's territories in the Holy Land since the 1850s. The rules that have been in place "for centuries," Macron told the Israeli officers, "will not change with me, I can tell you, OK? So everybody, respect the rules." Macron will on Thursday attend a ceremony to commemorate the liberation 75 years ago of Nazi Germany's Auschwitz death camp in what was then occupied Poland.

Wednesday's tense scenes recalled a 1996 Jerusalem visit by late former president Chirac during which he also lost his cool with Israeli security agents who were pressing him to move on.

Chirac heatedly told them their actions were a "provocation" and angrily asked: "What do you want? Me to go back to my plane and go back to France, is that what you want?"

Bolsonaro says no more media interviews

Sao Paulo: A frequent and fiery critic of Brazil's media, President Jair Bolsonaro declared Wednesday he would no longer speak to journalists.

Bolsonaro made the remarks outside his official residence in Brasilia where most mornings for the past year he has fielded questions from reporters and greeted fans. "I want to speak with you, but the national journalism association says that when I speak, I attack them," Bolsonaro told reporters.

"As I am a person of peace, I will not give more interviews."

The move comes after the National Federation of Journalists said last week Bolsonaro's presidency had "significantly affected the freedom of the press in Brazil."

It registered 208 attacks — including physical and verbal — against the media or journalists in 2019, an increase of 54 percent compared with the previous year.

FORM NO. 5
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow-226007
(Area of Jurisdiction- Part of Uttar Pradesh)

SUMMONS FOR FILING & APPEARANCE BY PUBLICATION
Date: 20/01/2020

O.A.No. 1222/2019
Summons to defendant under Section 19(3) of the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules, 1993.)

Original Application No. 1222 of 2019
ICICI BANK LTD. Applicant
Versus
ASHOK VERMA & OTHERS
Defendant

To,
1. MR. ASHOK VERMA
FLAT NO. 4504, SECTOR-50, ATS GREENS 2, NOIDA 201301
ALSO AT:
FLAT NO. 1202, 12TH FLOOR, TOWER G, CAPITAL GATEWAY, SECTOR 111, GURGAON 1224011.

2. MRS. AMRITA VERMA
FLAT NO. 4504, SECTOR 50, ATS GREENS 2, NOIDA 201301.
ALSO AT:
FLAT NO. 1202, 12TH FLOOR, TOWER G, CAPITAL GATEWAY, SECTOR 111, GURGAON 1224011.

3. M/S TASHIE LAND DEVELOPERS PVT LTD
REGISTERED OFFICE:
517 A NARAIN MANZIL,
23 BARAKHAMBRA ROAD,
CONNAUGHT PLACE, NEW DELHI 110001.

In the above noted application, you are required to file in Paper Book form in two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 20/04/2020, at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decide in your absence.

Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal
Lucknow

Trend Blazer

Developing my own stories: Shweta

Actor **SHWETA TRIPATHI** started the year by signing her next project, which she will be announcing soon. She is also working on developing her own concept and stories.

"As an actor, who is constantly surrounded by stories and good writing, story ideas keep popping out every now and then. I came up with two ideas, which I closely believe in and I thought it's time to invest some energy and heart into them and see these ideas bloom into full-fledged stories," said Shweta.

"I am aware that it will be a time-consuming process but I want to put in that effort into developing these stories because I believe in them. I will actively participate in conceiving the story ideas with the help of Ashish and I am hoping by mid-2020 I am in a position to speak more about them," she added.

I can never pay back what Kangana did for me at that tender age. My parents used to faint everytime they saw my face. But she stood by my side, and after years of struggle when things got better, she buried her face in my lap and cried. I am glad she did because strongest people often forget to share their pain.
—Rangoli Chandel

Veteran actor **BHARATI ACHREKAR** feels that Indian television continues to lack good content, as a result of which the young audience is moving

towards web shows. She says, "Good content is a rare thing in television these days. Mostly stories revolve around a single character. I don't blame anyone, even they have to survive. There are so many channels, so there is a tough competition. Also, people's taste has changed owing to western influence. You have to cater to the urban and the rural audience too, whose mindset and tastes are different."

No complaints in life: Brad

Hollywood actor **BRAD PITT** is enjoying his life and says he has no complaints.

While walking the Screen Actors Guild Awards red carpet on Sunday, the actor spoke about taking stock of his life now. "It's a beautiful day here in LA. We got it well, we got it really good," Pitt said.

He continued: "I got friends, I got lovely kids, I like my coffee, I like my dogs. I've got no complaints."

Pitt has six children with his former wife, actor Angelina Jolie.

Earlier this month, the actor won for "best supporting actor" at the National Board of Review Awards in which he said his "goals in life now are pretty simple" as he listed standard aspirations of being happy and staying healthy.



Amrita: Untitled

The Enforcement Directorate roped in Saffronart, an international auction house, to host two auctions featuring the seized assets of fugitive businessman Nirav Modi. While the first sale, a live auction, will be on February 27 in Mumbai, the second will be an online sale on March 3 and 4.

The auctions will feature 15 artworks by significant modern and contemporary Indian artists as well as a selection of luxury watches, handbags and cars.

Highlights of the auction include a 1,935 masterpiece by Amrita Sher-Gil, which has never been auctioned previously and a significant oil on canvas by MF Husain from his Mahabharata series. Both the artworks have been estimated to

A RICH HAUL

Saffronart to auction businessman Nirav Modi's seized artworks, luxury watches and handbags on behalf of the Enforcement Directorate

be priced at ₹12 crore or ₹18 crore.

The exhibition will also showcase a serene blue painting by VS Gaitonde from 1972, which is estimated to be priced at around ₹7 to 9 crore and a vivid red depiction of Krishna by Manjit Bawa (₹3 to 5 crore).

Apart from the modern artworks, important watches will also be on sale including a Jaeger LeCoultre Men's Reverso Gyrotourbillon 2 and a Gerrard

Perregaux Men's Opera One wristwatch. More than 80 branded handbags are there in the auction, out of which several are from the Birkin and Kelly lines by luxury retailer Hermes.

CEO and co-founder of the auction house, Dinesh Vazirani, said, "We are honoured to lend our services and expertise to the Enforcement Directorate. We are working with the ED to assess and evaluate each item and put together the catalogue for

both the sales, which include a distinguished line-up of artworks, too." He added that some of the brands offer the most popular luxury items internationally and have witnessed a great demand from celebrities and collectors.

This is the first time that the Enforcement Directorate has appointed a professional auction house to conduct an auction of seized assets in India. Earlier, in March 2019, the Income Tax Department had appointed the same auction house for the bidding that raised ₹54.84 crore.

Selected items from the forthcoming auctions will be exhibited at the Saffronart gallery in The Oberoi, New Delhi, during the India Art Fair later this month.

—With inputs from agencies



MF Husain: The Battle of Ganga and Jamuna Mahabharata

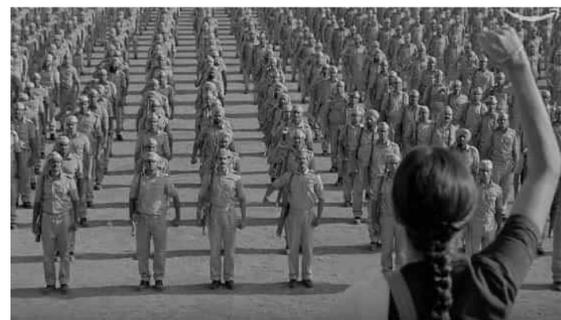
Making of Netaji's INA

Actors **SHARVARI WAGH** and **SUNNY KAUSHAL** say that even though their characters in *The Forgotten Army* might be fictional, the story and events that the audience will experience are real. By TEAM VIVA

I don't believe in enacting a character without knowing him or his background story," says actor Sunny Kaushal, who is set to make his debut with Amazon Prime Video's web series *The Forgotten Army*. So he studied deep. "There is always some blurred information that you have because of what you have read about history in school. But you would have never known the details of everything, including their betrayals, struggles and fights and even some part of their personal lives. We started reading and researching about everything through the 1999 documentary as well as internet and books. We collected a lot of material to educate ourselves on the topic," says he.

The series showcases the formation of Subhas Chandra Bose's Indian National Army after British army's defeat in Singapore during World War II. It has been told through the perspective of soldiers. Playing the role of soldiers could be highly taxing and challenging for debutantes. So how difficult did they find it to master all the moves? "For a week, we learnt how to live the way Army does. We had regular training on how to handle the gun and create formations. We worked on the standing postures, learnt what angles to hold and keep the gun so that you actually look like one from the Army. Apart from that, psychologically too, there was a lot of preparation to understand what soldiers have gone through in those three years during war," says Sunny.

Director Kabir Khan brought the story out to the public for the first time through the eponymous 1999 documentary, which also became the first reference for the actors to prepare for their respec-



'The personal lives and stories of the soldiers, their war rooms and battle set-up have been created based on archival footage and images to recreate the real history'

Ever since Khan passed out of film school he wanted to tell the stories of these soldiers. He says, "Twenty-seven thousand of them died fighting to liberate the country. Just imagine their patriotism and valour. They are a forgotten chapter in our history and this story is an effort to make people realise their existence."

Sharvari tells us, "The 1999 documentary really helped us get into the skin of our characters since they are based on real lives."

However, Sunny points out that even though the characters might be fictional, the story and events that the audience would experience are real. Surinder Sodhi, played by him, might not have existed in reality but has been inspired by real people. Sunny tells us, "My character is an amalgamation of Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon, Shah Nawaz Khan and Prem Kumar Sahgal, the three faces who were charged in the Red Fort trial. So different elements from their stories have inspired Surinder's story."

Maya, played by actor Sharvari Wagh, is a civilian who later becomes a part of the INA. She is inspired by one of the leaders of the Rani Laxmibai Regiment, which comprised women "who fought shoulder to shoulder with men and stood till the end. They have been trained very well and how to fight with guns and all kinds of weapons. I am very glad that my first project has

been inspired by such a powerful story."

Since it's a period drama, the personal lives and stories of the soldiers, their war rooms and battle set-up have been created based on archival footage and images to recreate the real history. But why is it that there are so many films and series being made around chapters of Indian history today given the recent trend in Bollywood? "With the growth of good content, we are fortunate enough to have come in the industry at such a time when history is being valued so much," Sharvari says. Sunny goes on to add that another reason why history is making its way into mainstream cinema is because of the enhanced technology that we are equipped with today. "We are much better equipped today to create such content. What the director envisions, he can bring it alive the same way he has imagined. To recreate those times really needs a lot, including the right kind of animation, costumes and set-ups. You need a lot of means to do that. It's only now that they are able to express their creative vision. The biggest instance is of Kabir Khan himself, who has been working on this script for 20 years since his 1999 documentary."

Sharvari, who is set for her Bollywood debut with *Bunty Aur Babli 2*, talks about her take on sequels and whether they revive the essence of an old blockbuster or just take away its originality. She says, "The second part will revolve around the story which happens 10 years later. Might be their kids (laughs). It's like a time lapse. It's somewhat the same storyline and same characters but just the people and their approaches are different this time. I think that it's going to be a fun thing and something that people wouldn't have watched. So a sequel always has something to add of its own while maintaining the originality of both the versions."
(The series releases on Amazon Prime on January 24.)
Photo: Pankaj Kumar

From memories of childhood

Chanel delves into founder's orphanage days at its couture show

an equally strict jacket in pastel blue and sand. Apart from the occasional flash of colour, most of the designs came in black and white.

"What interested me in this (abbey) was the paradox between the sophistication of haute couture and the simplicity of this place," Viard said. "The strict suits of the pupils rub shoulders with structured dresses of an ethereal finesse."

Viard has less humour and a stricter aesthetic take than the flamboyant Karl Lagerfeld, her predecessor who died last year. And this more austere theme gave the French designer a platform to design more naturally with her own voice.

◆GIVENCHY'S TIMELESSNESS
Musicians were suspended mid-air



while seated on chairs attached to stone columns for Givenchy's historic Left Bank show venue.

They played dramatic classical music to accompany spring's equally dramatic couture — an accomplished series of varied designs that made it seem as if designer Clare Waight Keller can't put a foot wrong.

The clothes spoke for themselves, without the need for cultural references, through deft plays of proportion.

A long charcoal tuxedo coat had a magnificent shape,

with a truncated full skirt billowing out unexpectedly at knee level in a clever reinterpretation of a knover silhouette.

Vividly coloured silk ruffles didn't just appear as details on gowns, but Keller used them to construct the structure and silhouette of trapeze-shaped garments that teemed like dense, oversize petals.

◆ALEXIS MABILLE 'TEESES' HIS GUESTS

Burlesque superstar Dita Von Teese opened the show for Alexis Mabile in a black tuxedo with sensual décolleté that dripped down the leg with brooding black

sequins. The French couturier this season used Von Teese — and her styles — as the touchstone for a collection that explored corsetry, lingerie and seductive undressing.

A white satin bustier was covered gently by a see-through lace chemise. A white floor-length gown had a bold dropped shoulder in which the segments seemed to fall off the bust, as if the model were in the process of undressing.

Mabile also used his signature bow theme to produce a gargantuan abstract neck bow whose proportions drowned the model. It was highly inventive.



◆ARMANI LOOKS TO COLOUR, ASIA

The iconic Place Vendôme square was the enviable location for Italian design legend Giorgio Armani's latest display.

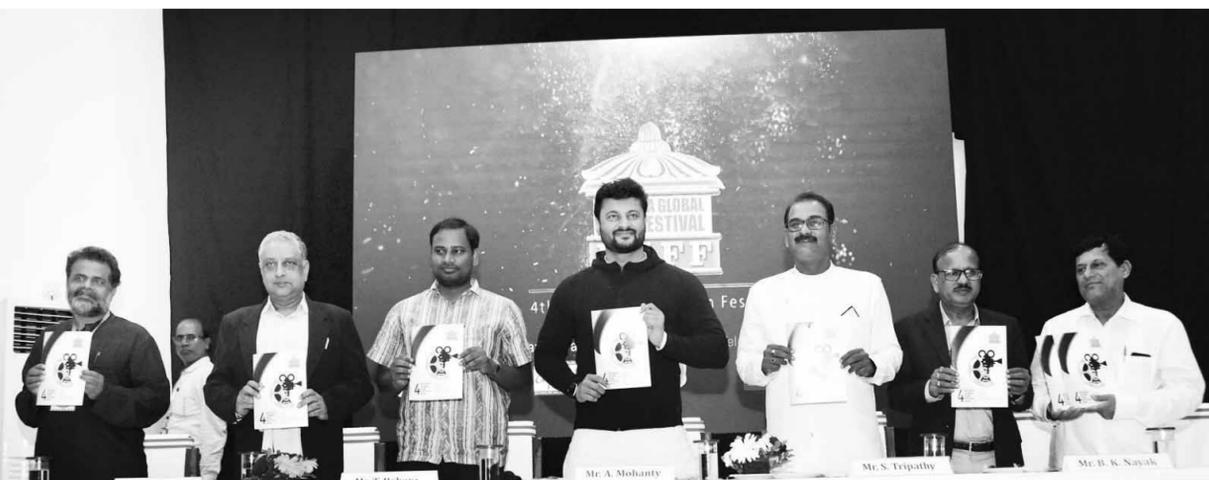
For Armani, couture is about celebrities and razzmatazz, and Tuesday was no exception as actresses Reese Witherspoon and Juliette Binoche held court.

The Asian-themed designs, though beautifully constructed, were secondary to that, sadly, and tended toward the repetitive.

Statement colour — sometimes overly bold — also defined the spring aesthetic. But the exhaustive show held no surprises.

A structured white silk tuxedo in a crossover design opened the show. The model wore a stiff black wig, a styling feature that appeared throughout the show.

The signature tuxedo led to a terracotta obi belt on hot pink loose pants and a V-neck tuxedo in imperial blue.
—AP



KIT HOLDS FOURTH FILM FESTIVAL

The 4th edition of Kalinga Global Film Festival (KGFF) was inaugurated at KIIT School of Film and Media Sciences. The inauguration ceremony was graced by Tusharkanti Behera, Minister of Sports and Youth Service, Electronics and Information Technology, Government of Odisha; Anubhav Mohanty, MP, Lok Sabha; Satyabrata Tripathy, Chairman of Odisha Film Development Corporation; Bijay Kumar Nayak, Director of Culture Department, Government of Odisha; Pankaj Saxena, professor of Screen Studies and Research, FTII, Pune; Dr Achyuta Samanta, Founder of KIIT and KISS and Himanshu Khatua, CEO of KIIT School of Film and Media Sciences.



While inaugurating, Behera said, "Odia cinemas

have to improve more. It should maintain their uniqueness." Professor Saxena said that students of KIIT should reflect what they learn from Odisha in their films.

The objective of this film festival is to encourage and ignite young minds, enrich intellectually inclined cineastes and promote aspiring film makers. "KGFF intends to organise a festival that would connect regular movie-goers, budding filmmakers and distinguished filmmakers so as to bring greater understanding of the art and craft of film making," said Khatua.

KGFF presented a selection of feature films, short films and documentaries from all over Asia. There were three panel discussions on Film Society Movement, Film Appreciation and Critical Analysis and Film Education.

Rajnath honours NCC bravehearts



During his visit to NCC Republic Day Camp 2020, Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh conferred *Raksha Mantri Padak* and Commendation Cards to NCC cadets for their exemplary performance and devotion to duty. Rajnath Singh was welcomed by the Director General of National Cadet Corps, Lt Gen Rajeev Chopra, AVSM. A contingent of smartly turned out NCC cadets drawn from the three wings — Army, Navy and Air Force — presented an impressive Guard of Honour to the Defence Minister.

Raksha Mantri Padak was instituted in 1989 and since then it is awarded to the most deserving cadet every year for bravery or exceptional service of the highest order. This year, the *Raksha Mantri Padak* was awarded to Lieutenant Raison Sam Raju of Kerala and Lakshadweep Directorate and Under Officer Rahul Sharma of

Uttar Pradesh Directorate. *Raksha Mantri Commendation Cards* have been awarded to Sr Under Officer Shavetana Sambyal of Jammu and Kashmir Directorate, Capt (Dr) Rajeev Thomas of Kerala and Lakshadweep Directorate, Sr GCI Seema Rai of Uttar Pradesh Directorate and Cadet Soumya Ghosh of West Bengal and Sikkim Directorate.

Rajnath Singh also inspected the well laid out 'Flag Area', prepared by the cadets from all the 17 NCC Directorates depicting various social awareness themes. He was given a briefing by the cadets on their respective models. He also visited the 'Hall of Fame', which has an archival collection of alumni photographs, models and other achievements of the NCC.

In his address, he complimented the NCC for doing exceptional work towards *Swachhata Abhiyan*.

MoU signed between FSSAI and NIOS

National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) have signed an MoU to create awareness in the field of food safety, hygiene and nutrition.

NIOS provides education at school stage up to pre-degree level through open learning system. Besides acad-

emics, NIOS provides around 100 vocational courses in different areas such as Agriculture, Business and Commerce, Engineering and Technology, Health and Paramedical, Home Science and Hospitality Management, Teacher Training, Computer and IT related sectors.

FSSAI, an autonomous body estab-

lished under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, is responsible for protecting and promoting public health through the regulation and supervision of food safety.

NIOS and FSSAI by coming together in a collaboration will not only create awareness about the need and

requirement of food safety and hygiene but would also provide knowledge, skill and abilities to the learner to undertake employment (self/wage) in this key sector. The content developed by FSSAI on food safety and hygiene will also be incorporated in NIOS learning materials for home science and relevant academic and vocational programmes.

President Dr Ram Nath Kovind awarded Parth Sarathi, a resident of Noida with Bal Shakti award along with ₹ 1 lakh, a medal and a certificate in Rashtrapati Bhawan on Wednesday.

It will always be a memorable day for Parth because it is not often that you receive an award in Rashtrapati Bhawan from the President. He received this opportunity because of his consistent hardwork, optimistic behaviour and dedication towards the society.

Earlier, Parth received an award for finding the lost kids through Aadhar camps. During the summer vaca-

NEVER TOO YOUNG



tions, he helped 12 students meet their parents. He is the founder of Raasta foundation whose theme is — Maths and Music. In this foundation, he teaches mathematics and music to the kids so that they are stress free and happy. During the Greater Noida carnival, he organised a mini concert where eight kids sang a beautiful song. Those students performed the first time on the stage and received immense praise and appreciation from the audience.

Parth is only 16 years old and a student of class 11th. It is commendable to see this passion, hardwork and dedication at such a young age.

Why not follow Vedas?



What an astonishing preach exists in *Vedas* — *Anti santannajahati*, *Anti Santannapashyati* — which means that even though the soul of a human being is closest to god yet he can't leave or see him. Indeed, soul can never be away from god at any time. This eternal fact is also stated in *Yajurved* mantra that god is near to *yogis* because they follow *Vedas* and practise *Ashtang Yog*, which let them feel god's presence. On the contrary, god is not close to those who are sinners and against *Vedas*. He knows every pious and sinful deed of the soul and accordingly awards each person in the form of happiness or sorrows respectively.

If we deeply study *Bhagwad Geeta* under the guidance of acharya of *Vedas*, we find that *Bhagwad Geeta* at every step inspires readers to follow *Vedas*. *Rigved* mantra preaches that soul cannot destroy his sorrows and can never experience pleasure until he realises the presence of god, which can only be attained by following the *Vedic*

path. *Rigved* mantra also preaches that without following the *Vedic* path no one can attain happiness.

Further, *Samved* mantra points that when an aspirant listens to *Vedas* from Brahma, he can actually feel the presence of god. But nowadays, it is sad that people misled by so-called saints. Hence, there occurs a problem. We must thank god that he mercifully has enlightened all human-beings with knowledge of four *Vedas* to feel his presence and to destroy all sorrows of life. It becomes our utmost duty, which is entrusted to us by god himself that we follow the *Vedic* path. Otherwise peace cannot be maintained among public.

The knowledge of *Vedas* emanates directly from god and like god it neither gets destroyed nor becomes old. It is immortal and has been preached by god to us to attain salvation. Nowadays people don't pay attention to invaluable *Vedic* knowledge. As a result, they get stressed, dishonour women, thefts increase and many such

problems arise.

It is mentioned in *Ramayana* that earlier daily *Vedic* preach and *agnihotra* was performed in every house. As a result, there was no man or woman who was affected with vices like anger, greed, meanness and many others. So during those days there was no question of insulting women or disgracing their honour which is observed nowadays. Why can't *Vedic* atmosphere be everywhere now?

Manusmriti shlok and *Bhagwad Geeta shlok* state that all karmas or rather duties emanate from *Vedas* and they emanate from god. So why don't we follow the *Vedas* to destroy corruption and sins from the society?

This fact is very well clarified in *Rigved* mantra that the human-life only achieves its motto when a it attains salvation along with pious worldly pleasure.

(The author, Swami Ram Swarup, is the chief editor of *Ved Ishvareeya vani*, a bi-annual magazine.)



SK Sinha, Director (HR) of SPMCIL and BJ Gupta, General Manager (HR), recently received Nurturing Leadership Award 2020 for SPMCIL from SN Tripathi, Director, IIPA at DMRC Bhawan, New Delhi.



Meenakshi Davar, Director HR of POSOCO, has been awarded with Top Rankers Excellence Awards 2020 for HR Leadership for her significant contribution in the field of HR. The award was presented at the 21st National Management Summit.

In 1969, history was written in the Punjabi film industry with the release of *Nanak Naam Jahaz Hai*. New records were created at the box office, which were never broken. People removed shoes before entering theatres. The film was an unprecedented hit across the globe.

After breaking all box office records, the film went on to win the coveted "National Award"

too! Now after 50 years of its release, producers Maann Singh Deep and Kalyani Singh are going to produce a new film under the same title *Nanak Naam Jahaz Hai*. Before becoming films producers, Maann and Kalyani were famous journalists.

Talking about his thought behind making this film, Maann said that at a time, when people are spreading hate in the

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

name of religion, caste, language and colour, he wanted to make a film which depicts compassion, love and true faith in god. "Whenever I can't seek solutions for my problems, I go to the Gurudwara to stay calm. I love the *shabads* recited there. Sikhism preaches love for

mankind, irrespective of religion, caste, language and colour. "When I read the writings of Guru Nanak Dev ji, I was lost in the magic of Gurbani. Every word was so pure and touching. (The only holy book that has great writings of six *gurus* and saints of all religions)

that I wanted to spread this message of faith and love all across," said he.

He feels that the best way to spread this message was through a film because he has a deep understanding of it.

"Initially, I discussed the idea with my wife Kalyani Singh

who is a writer-director and has avid knowledge of Sikhism. She loved this idea and came out with a beautiful story," said Maann.

It took them a while to get to this title but they feel that Baba Nanak blessed them with it. They worked on the story till

the time they were convinced that it was perfect to plan a film. They went on to hire the best people who could execute this task. "We were not looking for the perfect team only from the commercial point of view but we also wanted the team which believed in the spiritual and

social teachings of Guru Nanak, fit perfectly to the characters of our story and join us not as professional actors or technicians but as a member of our mission," he said.

The shooting lasted for 42 days in various parts of Punjab including Golden temple at Amritsar. "I hope this film will be remembered as one of the best devotional and social films," he added.

OSAKA SETS COCO CRUNCH

Defending champion will take on American prodigy in mouth-watering third round fixture

Australian Open
Live from 5:30am IST
SONY SIX & TEN 2 NETWORK

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Fifteen-year-old prodigy Coco Gauff set up an Australian Open blockbuster with defending champion Naomi Osaka on Wednesday, as a pumped-up Serena Williams took another step towards a record-equaling 24th Grand Slam title.

On a day when men's seeds tumbled, Serbia's Novak Djokovic strode into the third round to be joined by Roger Federer, who dismissed Filip Krajinovic 6-1, 6-4, 6-1.

American teenager Gauff, showing a tenacity which is becoming her trademark, clawed her way back from a set down to beat the experienced Sorana Cirstea 4-6, 6-3, 7-5.

Gauff, who screamed and pumped her fists as she completed her victory, said her "will to win" had got her through the tough second-round match at a windswept Melbourne Park.

"My parents always told me you can always come back — no matter what the score is," said Gauff, who beat seven-time Grand Slam champion Venus Williams in round one.

Gauff also beat Williams on her Grand Slam debut last year at Wimbledon, and in another quirk, she faced Osaka in the US Open third round, going down meekly in straight sets.

Japan's 22-year old Osaka, beat China's Zheng Saisai 6-2, 6-4 but briefly lost her cool mid-match, hurling and kicking her racquet when she gave up a break in the second set.

"I was thinking that I really don't want to play a third set this time," explained Osaka, who is



Defending champion Naomi Osaka reacts during her second round match against Zheng Saisai

defending a Grand Slam title for the second time.

Former world number one Wozniacki, playing her final tournament before retiring, came from behind in both sets for a 7-5, 7-5 win over Dayana Yastremska of Ukraine.

Serena Williams shouted at the

top of her voice during a testing second set against 70th-ranked Tamara Zidasek, before seeing off break points to win 6-2, 6-3.

"She was a really good fighter — she did not just let me win," said Williams, who can equal Margaret Court's all-time mark of 24 Grand Slams if she lifts the trophy.

WIND 'MASSIVE FACTOR'

Earlier, Australia's world number one Ashleigh Barty raced through 6-1, 6-4 against Polona Hercog, buoying hopes of a first home winner since 1978.

"It was very different end to end, I think the wind was a massive factor particularly with the new



Serena Williams reacts after missing a shot against Tamara Zidasek

ball," she said. Djokovic also weathered the breeze — which followed heavy rain on Monday, and smog from bushfires last week — to beat Japanese wildcard Tatsuma Ito 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 in 95 minutes.

"They were tough conditions, pretty windy and it was hard to know where the balls were going. My serve helped a lot to get me out of trouble," said the Serb.

Federer was barely detained by Krajinovic, the world number 41, as he moved smoothly through in 92 minutes in the night match on Rod Laver Arena.

In other results, Petra Kvitova, last year's runner-up, came through 7-5, 7-5 against Paula Badosa of Spain, and China's Zhang Shuai ousted American Caty McNally 6-2, 6-4.

Former US Open champion Marin Cilic won a five-setter against French seed Benoit Paire, and one-time semi-finalist Milos Raonic beat Chile's Christian Garin in straight sets.

Also, Tennys Sandgren took the biggest scalp when he ousted eighth seed Matteo Berrettini in five sets.

Sandgren's fellow American Tommy Paul also pulled off a five-set upset when he beat Bulgarian 18th



Novak Djokovic celebrates after defeating Tatsuma Ito in second round match

seed Grigor Dimitrov 6-4, 7-6 (8/6), 3-6, 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (10/3).

And Australia's John Millman further trimmed the number of high-ranked players when he ended the campaign of Polish 31st seed Hubert Hurkacz.

But Greek sixth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas was handed a slice of fortune when Philipp Kohlschreiber withdrew injured.

Among eight first-round matches held over from Tuesday, after rain wiped out half of Monday's schedule, Spain's Carla Suarez Navarro, also retiring this year, upset Belarusian 11th seed Aryna Sabalenka in straight sets.

Divij advances, Rohan Bopanna knocked out



Divij Sharan and his partner Artem Sitak

MELBOURNE: India's Divij Sharan and his New Zealand partner Artem Sitak progressed to the second round of the men's doubles event but Rohan Bopanna was knocked out of the Australian Open here on Wednesday.

Sharan and Sitak got the better of the Portuguese-Spanish duo of Pablo Carreno Busta and Joao Sousa 6-4, 7-5 in a thrilling one hour, 28 minutes encounter.

The pair will next face the winner of the first-round match between 10th seeds Mate Pavic-Bruno Soares and Ben Molachlan-Luke Bambridge.

Partnering Yasutaka Uchiyama of Japan, Bopanna went down to USA's Bryan brothers, Bob and Mike, 1-6, 6-3, 3-6 in a hard-fought one hour, 17 minutes contest.

Meanwhile on Wednesday Sania Mirza pulled out of the mixed doubles due to a calf injury. She was supposed to partner compatriot Rohan Bopanna.

Mirza will, however, play in the women's doubles event.

Sania, who won the doubles title in Hobart International, will team up with Nadiia Kichenok of Ukraine for the Australia Open today.

The duo will face Chinese pair of Xinyun Han and Lin Zhu in their women's doubles first round clash.

"It's unfortunate that this niggling injury got aggravated in the Hobart final just as I was getting to the top of my game. It is a lot better now and I intend to give it my best shot in doubles. It's disappointing to miss out on the chance to partner Rohan in mixed," Mirza was quoted as saying by the Times of India.

Agencies



Arsenal forward Gabriel Martinelli moves past Chelsea's N'golo Kante to score his side's first goal

LAST GASP DRAMA

Ten-man Arsenal hold Chelsea in torrent of late Premier League goals

AFP ■ LONDON

Ten-man Arsenal slowed Chelsea's charge for a Champions League place on Tuesday as Manchester City kept their distant pursuit of Liverpool with victory at Sheffield United on a dramatic evening of Premier League football.

Fourth-placed Chelsea twice took the lead against Arsenal, who were reduced to 10 men after former Blues defender David Luiz took out Tammy Abraham when he was through on goal.

Jorginho put Chelsea 1-0 ahead from the penalty spot in the 28th minute but Gabriel Martinelli equalised for Arsenal in the second half.

Cesar Azpilicueta put Chelsea 2-1 up with just six minutes remaining but Arsenal levelled only three minutes later through Hector Bellerin.

The 2-2 draw leaves Chelsea six points ahead of fifth-placed Manchester United having played a game extra while Arsenal are in 10th spot, seemingly out of the running for a place in the top four.

AGUERO SPARES BLUSHES

Pep Guardiola's City, with defender Aymeric Laporte back in the side, looked as though they might rue Gabriel Jesus's squandered first-half penalty but their Argentine hitman Sergio Aguero came to the rescue.

Despite the 1-0 win, second-placed City remain 13 points behind runaway leaders Liverpool, having played two games more, and their bid to defend their title appears hopeless.

City's French central defender Laporte has been out of action since suffering a knee injury at the end of August and he was a surprise inclusion at Bramall Lane.

Sheffield United goalkeeper Dean Henderson denied Jesus from the penalty spot about 10 minutes from half-time after a foul on Riyad Mahrez.

But City made amends when substitute Sergio Aguero, on for Jesus, tapped in from Kevin De Bruyne's cross in the 73rd minute.

Southampton's 2-0 victory against Crystal Palace, thanks to goals from Nathan Redmond and Stuart Armstrong, continued a remarkable turnaround for the club, who hit rock bottom ear-

Laporte surprised to be back in action

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City defender Aymeric Laporte admits he has returned from his serious knee injury earlier than he expected.

The Frenchman was a surprise inclusion in Pep Guardiola's starting line-up against Sheffield United, having not been involved with the first team for almost five months.

He required surgery after suffering a knee injury during City's home win against Brighton on August 31.

Laporte's comeback in the 1-0 win for City at Bramall Lane lasted 78 minutes and he is now looking forward to the rest of the season.

"Normally it would have been later but I spoke with the manager and tried today (Tuesday) and he told me I would play so I

am very happy to be back as soon as possible and have minutes and help the team," said Laporte.

"It was very important for me to try to be with the team, to be involved. It was



a good test of fitness. The game was difficult because they are very strong, a good team."

"It was difficult for me (being out), my team-mates see me suffering," he added. "But now I can help the team out and give my best."

City have had problems at the back in Laporte's absence and his return helped City record their first clean sheet in any competition since December 29.

After the match, Guardiola admitted his team had missed the 25-year-old and described him as the best left-sided central defender in the world.

Laporte said: "It's great to hear that from this manager as he is one of the best in the world, if not the best. I am very happy to hear that but I have to work to stay there and keep going."



Alvaro Odriozola poses with Bayern crest

Odriozola moves Bayern on loan

MUNICH: Bayern Munich have signed Real Madrid right-back Alvaro Odriozola on loan until the end of the season, the two clubs confirmed on Wednesday.

The 24-year-old Spain international will bolster Bayern's defence, which has been left short on cover with centre-backs Niklas Suele and Lucas Hernandez sidelined by knee injuries.

"We decided to comply with the request of our head coach Hansi Flick for reinforcements in defence and together we decided on Alvaro Odriozola," said Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge in a statement.

"We were very happy about his signing and would like to thank those in charge at Real Madrid for their very friendly and cooperative discussions."

The move helps both parties as Odriozola, who was signed from Real Sociedad for 35 million euros (\$39 million) in 2018, has struggled for game time in Madrid, where Dani Carvajal is preferred in the right-back role. AFP



Lyon down Lille on penalties

LYON: Lyon beat Lille on penalties after a dramatic 2-2 draw at the Groupama Stadium on Tuesday to reach their sixth French League Cup final, setting up a possible clash with record eighth-time winners Paris Saint-Germain.

Renato Sanches dragged what proved to be the last penalty of the shootout wide to send Lyon through. This is the final season of the League Cup after the French league voted to suspend the competition from next term to ease fixture congestion.

Lyon will bid to lift the trophy for the second time when they take on the winner of second semi-final between Reims and PSG on April 4 at the Stade de France.

Portugal midfielder Sanches gave visitors Lille a 13th-minute lead with a low left-footed strike from outside the area to score his second goal of the club since joining from Bayern last August.

But the hosts were gifted a way

back into the game four minutes later when centre-back Gabriel handled inside the area.

Moussa Dembele drilled the spot-kick into the top corner to grab his sixth goal in five games.

Houssem Aouar appeared to have fired Lyon into the final with a fine long-range strike with five minutes remaining.

There was another twist in the tale, though, as despite a lengthy delay for a VAR review, Lille were awarded an injury-time penalty for what appeared to be an excellent tackle by former Manchester United full-back Rafael on Jonathan Bamba.

Loic Remy, on as a 78th-minute substitute, stepped up with a cool Panenka finish down the middle of the goal to force more spot-kicks.

But Ciprian Tatarusanu, playing in place of usual Lyon goalkeeper Anthony Lopes, saved Bamba's opening penalty before Sanches' miss sealed Lille's fate. AFP

India's campaign end in Thailand

BANGKOK: Top Indian shuttler Saina Nehwal suffered a second consecutive opening round defeat as she went down to Line Hojmark Kjaersfeldt to bring curtains on the country's campaign in the Thailand Masters tournament here on Wednesday.

The fifth seeded Saina lost to unseeded Kjaersfeldt 13-21, 21-17, 15-21 in a hard fought 47-minute contest. World number 18 Saina had a 4-0 head-to-head record against the number 29 Dane before Wednesday's match.

With Saina's defeat, India's campaign came to an end in the BWF World Tour Super 300 event.

In the men's singles, the trio of Kidambi Srikanth, Sameer Verma and H S Prannoy, too, faltered in the first round.

Verma lost to Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia 16-21, 15-21 in a 39-minute men's singles match. The story went on similar lines for the fifth seeded



Srikanth, who went down to Shesar Hiren Rhustavito of Indonesia 21-12, 14-21, 12-21, in a match that lasted 48 minutes.

This was Srikanth's third consecutive first-round exit this season.

It was curtains for Prannoy too. He lost 17-21, 22-20, 19-21 to Malaysia's Liew Daren. PTI

'Strong chance' Cavani will join Atletico



Edinson Cavani celebrates after scoring for PSG

PARIS: Edinson Cavani wants to join Atletico Madrid and is being treated "unfairly" by PSG, the Uruguayan striker's father said on Wednesday. Cavani, 32, has fallen out of favour at PSG, where he is competing with Kylian Mbappe, Neymar, Mauro Icardi and Angel di Maria for starting spots in attack.

A number of clubs are reportedly keen on signing Cavani, who has scored a club-record 198 goals for PSG and whose contract expires in the summer. Atletico appear to be the 32-year-old's preferred choice but the La Liga outfit and PSG are yet to agree a fee.

"I would like him to play there, (Atletico coach Diego) Simeone wants him now," Cavani's father Luis told Spanish programme El Chiringuito.

"I think there is a strong chance he will go to Atletico. There is also the option to join the club in June. There are lots of other clubs interested but when you give your word to a team, you respect it.

"If he is allowed to leave tomorrow and Atletico still want him, I think he will sign. He is a player who needs time to play. PSG are treating him unfairly." AFP

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

LIGHTNING QUICK

Rana's unbeaten 68-ball 105 helps Delhi beat Vidarbha by 6 wickets in 347 run chase

British Rana played the "best knock" of his first-class career as Delhi shocked defending champions Vidarbha by six wickets in an incredible final day run chase in the Ranji Trophy here on Wednesday.

With this memorable run chase on day four, Delhi handed Vidarbha their first outright defeat in a first class game after three years.

Chasing 347, Rana, who has made a name with his big-hitting exploits in the IPL, smashed an unbeaten 105 off only 68 balls as Delhi reached the target in 73 overs, leaving Vidarbha gutted.

Delhi now have 16 points and stay in hunt for a quarterfinal berth while Vidarbha stay put on 17 points.

The chase was set up by openers Kunal Chandel (75 off 146) and Hiten Dalal (82 off 146) with a steady stand of 163 in under 49 overs.

The left-handed Rana then took charge and sent the Vidarbha bowlers including fancied Umesh Yadav (0/85 in 19 overs) on a leather hunt with eight fours and seven sixes.

"I had promised our coach (KP) Bhaskar sir that if its 75 overs and around 320 runs, we will win. This is the best first class knock that I have played. I haven't forgotten the 2017 final in Indore, which Vidarbha won without playing outstanding cricket.

"I knew I can hit their spinners out of the ground," Rana told reporters having ripped opposition off-spinner Akshay Wakhare (64 off 9 overs) with slog sweeps, cuts and drives.

Vidarbha coach Chandrakant Pandit took a gamble with a sporting declaration but it backfired as a side with its back to the wall produced the best performance of the season.

Openers Kunal and Hiten played confidently without taking pressure on an eased out track.

Once Rana came in, Vidarbha sensing danger, deployed a negative field '7-2' (seven on the off side) field.

Their pacers Rajneesh



Sarfraz Khan celebrates after completing his maiden triple hundred during Ranji Trophy game against Uttar Pradesh at Wankhede Stadium on Wednesday

Gurbani (0/64 in 12 overs) started bowling on an imaginary seventh off stump line.

The umpires started calling no ball and then Delhi started

attacking as they were forced to change the line.

"I knew they would bowl negative line but what I didn't like was time wasting tactic. Once



Maharashtra players pose after win against Assam during Ranji Trophy game

HIGHEST SUCCESSFUL CHASES IN RANJI

Score	Team	Opponent	Venue	Season
372-4	Saurashtra	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow	2018-19
371-4	Assam	Services	Delhi	2008-09
360-4	Rajasthan	Vidarbha	Jaipur	1989-90
357-5	Rajasthan	Services	Jaipur	2018-19
348-4	Delhi	Vidarbha	Delhi	2019-20
344-4	Punjab	Bengal	Ludhiana	1992-93

FAISEL FEATURES

they started bowling within the stumps, I knew I will blast them if it's in my arc," said KKR's dependable middle-order batsman.

"This is my natural game and I don't like advise if people come and tell me to change my mindset. I only welcome advise when I need them," he said.

MAIDEN TRIPLE HUNDRED

MUMBAI: Staying true to his words, young Sarfraz Khan stuck his maiden triple hundred to single-handedly give Mumbai the crucial first-innings lead and grab three points on the last day of their Elite Group B match against Uttar Pradesh.

Uttar Pradesh had posted a humongous 625/8 declared in

their first-essay courtesy wicket-keeper Upendra Yadav's unbeaten maiden double-ton.

But Sarfraz's (301 not out off 391 balls; 30x4; 8x6) Herculean task overshadowed Yadav's double-ton on a flat track, which had absolutely nothing for the bowlers even on the final day.

Right-handed Sarfraz was the cynosure of all eyes at the Wankhede Stadium, as he batted for as long as 633 minutes and hammered 30 fours and eight sixes.

What is more special about his knock is that the pint-sized batsman was suffering from fever two nights ago, but he came out

to bat and did the job for his team.

Sarfraz, who had played for Uttar Pradesh and returned to Mumbai, had all shots in the book.

But more importantly, contrary to his style, he showed restraint and respected the good balls.

Sarfraz, in the process, became the seventh Mumbai batsman to score a triple ton in first-class cricket and joined the illustrious list comprising Wasim Jaffer (301 and 314 not out), Rohit Sharma (309 not out), Ajit Wadekar (323), Sunil Gavaskar (340), Vijay Merchant (359 not out) and Sanjay Manjrekar (377).

The hosts resumed the final day on overnight score of 353/5 needing 273 more runs to overhaul Uttar Pradesh's first innings total, with 22-year-old Sarfraz unbeaten on 132 in company of his skipper Aditya Tare, who was unbeaten on 9.

Sarfraz first got able support from Tare (97 off 144 balls, 14x4) and then Shams Mulani (65 off 82 balls; 5x3; 1x6), as they took the game away from Uttar Pradesh.

While Sarfraz and Tare added 179 runs for the sixth wicket, he and Mulani added 150 runs for the seventh wicket and it was their partnership that ensured Mumbai crossed Uttar Pradesh's first-innings total.

Sarfraz, who had completed his individual 250, took a single, as Mumbai surpassed Uttar Pradesh's mammoth total and celebrated like the team had won the match.

Then Mumbai allowed Sarfraz to complete a well-deserved 300.

He completed his triple ton with a six over wide long on, after which the match was called off.



Sanju Samson in a file picture

Shaw, Samson celebrate senior team call up

PTI ■ LINCOLN

The in-form Prithvi Shaw flourished yet again as India A notched up a convincing five-wicket victory over New Zealand A in the first unofficial ODI here on Wednesday.

A day after being picked as the injured Shikhar Dhawan's replacement in India's ODI squad for the assignment against New Zealand's senior team, the 20-year-old Shaw smashed 48 off 35 balls to lay the foundation for the visiting team's chase.

Wicketkeeper Sanju Samson, who replaced Dhawan in India's T20 squad, blazed away to a 21-ball 39, while Suryakumar Yadav hammered 35 off a mere 19 deliveries.

Chasing 231 after opting to field, India completed the task with more than 20 overs to spare at the Bert Sutcliffe Oval.

With the ball, Mohammed Siraj was the most successful bowler for India A, picking up three wickets for 33 runs in 6.3 overs, while there were two wickets apiece for Khaleel Ahmed and Axar Patel.

Their efforts helped India A bowl out New Zealand A for 230 with nine balls to spare in the 50-over match.

Quite a few home team players got off the blocks easily but could not go on to make substantial contributions. Rachin Ravindra top-scored with 49 off 58 balls and skipper Tom Bruce made 47 off 55.

India A got their chase off to a brisk start with Shaw and his opening partner Mayank Agarwal (29) picking the gaps at will.

The visitors had raced to 79 in 9.1 overs when Shaw fell to James Neesham. The 20-year-old Shaw, who came into the match after a 100-ball 150 in a practice game, hit five fours and three sixes.

Captain Shubman Gill (30) got out after getting his eye in and after that, Samson showed his prowess, smoking two maximums and three boundaries.

Mumbai player Suryakumar, who can also use the big handle to good effect, struck three fours and two sixes to take his team close to victory.

Vijay Shankar (20) and Krunal Pandya (13) then got the job done as India A took lead in the three-match series.

Tri-series before WC will help in team composition: Smriti

MUMBAI: Playing in a tri-nation tournament before the Women's World T20 will help in strategising and team composition, senior India player Smriti Mandhana said on Wednesday.

The marquee event will start in Australia next month but before that, the country is hosting India and England in a tri-series. "Most of them have played in Australia, I think India A touring Australia last month is also going to be a big help (as) four-



Smriti Mandhana in a file picture

five players were part of that team as well," Mandhana told reporters.

She added, "The tri-series is going to be a really important tournament, thinking about the team composition or what is needed or what target we need to aim at on Australian wickets."

The left-handed batswoman said the tri-series matches could tell them a lot about what will be a safe target during the World Cup. "How can our bowlers plan better, all those things we are

going to understand once we land in Australia and play the tri-series.

"Specially the targets, tri-series will define the targets, like what the scoreline will be for the World Cup.

"England, Australia and India is always going (to be challenging). We are going to aim at good targets so I think that (tri-series) is an important tournament leading up to the World Cup," the 23-year-old said.

According to Mandhana, the team has been thinking about the WorldT20 for the past one year.

"Last one year, whatever we were doing during the matches, we were thinking about the World Cup, so finally we are leaving for the World Cup, it is quite exciting.

"I'm looking forward to playing this World Cup with this team as it is a new team with a mixture of experienced and new players," she said.

Jemi working on increasing bat speed to hit big shots



Jemimah in a file picture

DUBAI (PTI): To make up for "lack of strength", India opener Jemimah Rodrigues is working on increasing her bat speed, which, she hopes, will aid in hitting big shots in the upcoming Women's T20 World Cup.

The lively 19-year-old is also striving to hone her backfoot skills ahead of the marquee event, starting in Australia next month.

"I'm working more on my back foot, developing my back foot more and trying to increase my bat speed. Because looking at my size, you can

make out I don't have that much strength to hit the sixes... But I've been working on that for quite some time," said Jemimah in a *Road To The T20 World Cup* podcast.

Since making her international debut in 2018, she has consistently put in commendable performances to established herself as a key member of the team.

India take on defending champions Australia in the opening game of the tournament in Sydney on February 21, and the youngster believes her side will have to be mentally strong against the hosts.

"I think when it comes to Australia, you got to be the best or you can't play. That's the kind of team they are. My favourite team to play against is also Australia. It's more of a mind game than just skills (when you play them on the field)," Jemimah said.

Jemimah, who will be playing her first World Cup, is looking forward to play in the final of the tournament, which will mark an important milestone in her life.

"I can't put it in words, how important it will be for me to be a part of the Indian team that plays in a World Cup final. It's quite exciting. I'm really looking forward to it," she said.

Southee 'looking forward' to India series

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

New Zealand's veteran seamer Tim Southee is "looking forward" to the India challenge, leaving behind the disappointment of being dropped for the final Test of Australia series earlier this month.

"It's about making that adjustment. What's gone is gone and it was very disappointing, the guys would have learnt

from it, and now we've got to look forward to the Indian series," Southee was quoted as saying by *stuff.co.nz*.

Then, coach Gary Stead had said it was felt Henry would offer more pace than Southee.

But the 31-year-old is expected to lead the New Zealand attack when the five-match Twenty20 series against India starts at Eden Park on Friday.

He admitted he was disappointed not to have played in Sydney but said he has moved on.

"It's disappointing. You're gutted every time you're left out. It's an absolute dream to play for NZ and every time you do miss out it hurts, but you've got to respect the decisions and try to help out and give back to the team, even when you're not playing."



Angelo Mathews celebrates after double hundred

Mathews 200* hurt Zimbabwe

AFP ■ HARARE

Angelo Mathews struck his highest Test score with an unbeaten double century on Wednesday as Sri Lanka left Zimbabwe battling to save the series opener going into the final day at Harare.

Former skipper Mathews eclipsed his previous Test best of 160 and finished 200 not out after a marathon knock spanning 468 balls, as Sri Lanka declared their first innings on 515 for nine.

Zimbabwe, playing their first Test since November 2018, ended the fourth day on 30 without loss and trailing by 127 runs after Brian Mudzinganyama was drafted in as a concussion substitute for opener Kevin Kasuza.

Debutant Kasuza, who made 63 in the first innings, suffered a delayed concussion after he took a blow to the helmet while fielding at short leg on Tuesday.

Mudzinganyama became the fourth Zimbabwean to make his Test debut in this match. He was unbeaten on 14 with Prince Masvaure 15 not out at stumps.

The 32-year-old Mathews brought up his 10th Test century, his first since December 2018, in the morning session and steadily added to his total with considerable support from Dhananjaya de Silva and Niroshan Dickwella.

De Silva and Dickwella both scored 63 but two quick wickets for Sikandar Raza, who finished with three for 62, hastened the declaration as Mathews reached 200 with a sweep to the square leg boundary.

With one day remaining, the visitors appear the only team capable of victory although the pitch looks likely to have the final say.

I see 'incredible' Kohli breaking more records: Smith

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

It's the year of the World T20 and it isn't just Virat Kohli and the Indian boys who are looking to take every opportunity to prepare for the showpiece event slated to be held later in the year. Run-machine Steve Smith is already excited at the prospect of playing another ICC event at home after the 2015 World Cup. In fact, he believes that his stint in the IPL with Rajasthan Royals will have a major role to play in the build-up to the mega event Down Under.

Speaking to IANS, Smith spoke about the much-debated proposal to have four-day Tests, India skipper Kohli's gesture to ask fans to support him during the 2019 World Cup, the Indian Premier League and how Tim Paine has done a brilliant job leading Australia in Test cricket.

For a man who has dominated batting charts in the last few years, Smith's numbers in the shortest format of the game definitely has room for improvement. But the former Australia skipper wants to keep playing and improving on the go rather than changing his style of training going into the World T20.

"No real specific training, but just playing a lot more T20 cricket and just getting the right tempo I guess for the game is the most important thing for me. I would love to be a part of the World Cup, it's obviously at home in Australia. I was involved in the ODI World Cup here in 2015 and had the most amazing six-weeks of my cricketing career and loved every minute of it. So yeah would love to be

involved in another World Cup at home for sure!" he smiled.

Asked if he was looking at his time with Rajasthan Royals to try some new stuff as it will be the perfect training ground for the World T20, Smith doesn't sound the sort who likes to tinker much with his training ritual. But he does have it on his mind to give his leg-spin skills a thought.

"Ah, don't want to try too much different. I don't really know, maybe a bit more bowling perhaps, but then that takes time away from my batting. So yeah, it's a difficult one but we'll wait and see," he reveals.

A chat with Smith can never move forward without discussing Kohli. It looks like these two will go ahead and share all the records between them when they hang their boots. The greatness of Smith though is in his humility. The moment the talks move towards the comparison, he decides to highlight how brilliant Kohli has been both as batsman and leader.

"Yeah, he is terrific. His batting numbers just speak for themselves. I think he's an incredible player in all three formats and I think we will see him break many records. He's already broken plenty of them and I see him breaking many more over the years. He has got the hunger for runs and doesn't stop getting them. Hopefully he can stop getting them against Australia, that'll be nice.

"As a captain he's already made India the number one side in the world in Test cricket. From what I have seen he sets really good standards for

them. He is a lot about fitness and is health conscious and things like that. He's got the Indian side into a really good place and leads them exceptionally well," the 30-year-old pointed.

Asked about Kohli's gesture to ask fans to show him support during the 2019 World Cup, Smith feels it was really nice of the India skipper. "In the World Cup it was really nice of Virat to do what he did. He did not have to do that and yeah it was a lovely gesture and really appreciated that," he smiled.

Kohli, in fact, won the 'Spirit of Cricket' award for his gesture in England. There have been talks that Smith is a natural leader and that the national captaincy could well return to him in the near future. But for the batsman, Paine is the captain and someone who is doing a good job with the boys.

"Yeah, Tim's done a terrific job. He has led the troops really well. Obviously retaining the Ashes in England in twenty-four years was an exceptional effort and yeah he has led the team exceptionally well," he said.

From the Ashes to the ICC's proposal to have four-day Test matches on a regular basis from 2023, Smith is a traditionalist in the matter and wants the format to stay as it is.

"I am comfortable with five days. I like the challenge of a five-day Test match. Obviously, there has been a lot of talk of the four-day Tests, but my personal opinion is I like five days. I don't make the decisions obviously of who it all works out but my opinion is five-days Tests is what it is all about," he signed off.

SINGLES

TOP FIELD FOR B'URU ATP CHALLENGER

BENGALURU: The third edition of the Bengaluru Open from February 10 to 16 will see one of the best fields in the ATP Challenger Tour event with four players from the top-100 world rankings taking part in it. Lithuanian Ricardas Berankis, ranked 69th in the ATP rankings, followed by 74th ranked Stefano Travaglia will lead the top field. Japanese journeyman Yuichi Sugita (91) and Australian James Duckworth (94) are the other players in the top-100 who will be vying for honours in the biggest ATP Challenge Tour event in Asia which offers a total prize purse of \$ 162,000. Defending champion Prajesh Gunneswaran, currently the highest ranked Indian at 123, will lead the home challenge in company of 2017 winner Sumit Nagal (131).

NIKHAT, SHIVA ENTER STRANDJA QUARTERS

NEW DELHI: Four-time Asian medalist Shiva Thapa (63kg) and defending champion Nikhat Zareen (51kg) on Wednesday sailed into the quarterfinals of the Strandja Memorial Boxing Tournament with resounding victories in their second-round bouts in Sofia. Also making the quarters was national medalist Duryodhan Singh Negi (69kg) after a comprehensive 5-0 triumph over Ireland's Kieran Molloy. Zareen was declared the winner after local favourite Saida Asenovva forfeited during the opening round of the contest. Former world Bronze-medallist Thapa defeated Poland's Pavel Polakovic 5-0 in his last 16 stage clash.

MEXICAN STRIKER HERNANDEZ JOINS GALAXY

LOS ANGELES: Javier Hernandez completed his long-awaited transfer to the Los Angeles Galaxy on Tuesday, saying the lure of playing regular football had prompted his move to Major League Soccer. The Mexican international striker, who will reportedly become the highest paid player in MLS, with *Sports Illustrated* saying he will earn \$6 million (5.41 million euros) a year, joins the Galaxy after a frustrating spell at Spanish side Sevilla. The Mexican star heads to the MLS after a successful career in European club football which included stints with Manchester United, Real Madrid, Bayer Leverkusen and West Ham, as well as Sevilla. Hernandez has scored more than 200 goals for club and country throughout his career.

AUSTRALIA TO HOST INDOOR CRICKET WC

MELBOURNE: Australia is set to host the 11th edition of the Indoor Cricket World Cup from October 10 to 17. The tournament will be held at the state-of-the-art indoor cricket venues in Melbourne — Casey Stadium & CitiPower Centre. Last held in 2017, Australia are the reigning men's and women's champions and the host will be seeking to continue the run of never losing a World Cup in either division in the 25-year history of the tournament. Cricketers from up to 10 countries will compete in the tournament in four divisions: under-21 men and women and open men and women.

GIBSON IS B'DESH NEW PACE BOWLING COACH

DHAKA: Bangladesh have appointed Otis Gibson as their new pace bowling coach, replacing South African Charl Langeveldt who resigned in December. The 50-year old former West Indies fast bowler signed a two-year agreement. Gibson, who has enjoyed two successful stints as bowling coach with England and has served as head coach of the West Indies and South Africa, will join the squad for the Pakistan tour which begins in Lahore on Friday.

IRAN TEAMS AFC CL MATCHES MOVED TO UAE

KUALA LUMPUR: Two Iranian football clubs' AFC Champions League preliminary round matches have been moved to a neutral country because of security fears. The Asian Football Confederation said the ties — Shahrood FC of Iran v Riffa of Bahrain and Iran's Esteghlal FC v Kuwait SC will now be played in the United Arab Emirates on Jan 25. Both the matches were scheduled to be played in Iran on Tuesday but were postponed and "moved to neutral venues because of ongoing security concerns and the decision of several governments to issue travel warnings to the Islamic Republic of Iran," said an AFC statement.

AGENCIES